

Christianity and Culture

By Andrew McColl, 2016

1.

Whatever replaces humanism must be comprehensive: a world-and-life view that addresses every area of life. Its recommended alternative programs must also be philosophically consistent with its declared world-and-life view. If it is to survive over long periods of time, its recommended programs must also be practical. The programs must work, meaning that they must be consistent with the way the world really works, as well as consistent with its own presuppositions.

A world-transforming gospel is not one that offers a religious way of life whose visible positive effects are strictly confined to family and church-hearth and home-because people demand more from a world-and-life view than the promise of a safe place of temporary retreat when the work day or work week is done. What people insist upon is a system for their life's work that really does work. What they demand, in short, is a system for dominion.¹

The Great Commission (Mat.28:18-20) was an all inclusive statement. After being told that Jesus has “all authority...” we are told to “go...” Every aspect of human activity is encompassed by the authority of Jesus Christ, so nothing is left out. This means that all aspects of a fallen culture are to be not just affected by the gospel of Christ; they are to be utterly transformed.

We ought to be the first to admit that we haven't done this very well, of late. Because we haven't done this very well, the world has been steadily declining. It is always declining when the leaven of the gospel of the kingdom of God is absent, for without a Biblical foundation, the cultures of this world will collapse into the void. They are collapsing today.

The kingdom of God is to be a transforming agent in the world affecting culture, because culture is a part of life. Cultures differ around the world, for they are an extensions of religious belief, and religious beliefs around the world differ too. The culture of North America differs to that of Finland, Japan and Turkey.

Why? Because the religious beliefs of each place give rise to specific individual cultures. In some of these places, there will be some evidences of Christian culture, and in other parts, none.

When the children of Israel entered the promised land, they confronted cultural and religious beliefs that God wanted destroyed. There was to be no compromise with the institutionalised paganism. God said,

When you cross over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then you shall drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images and demolish their high places (Num.33:51-52).

¹ Gary DeMar & Peter Leithart, “The Reduction of Christianity,” 1988, p.360.

Some of this was physical and tangible, other parts of it were subtle and ideological. Are subtle things important too? Absolutely, because ideas have consequences. All forms of idolatry are to be confronted and destroyed.

We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (II Cor.10:5).

This doesn't mean we have a licence as Christians to go destroying everything about us that we consider pagan. That would create more problems than it solves. It may be pagan, but it might not be ours to destroy, and we'd best be patient. The place to begin to confront paganism and idolatry is within our own hearts, in our family, and wherever possible, in church. Some aspects of our society can and should be challenged, but institutionalised paganism may take us generations to overcome. Some of it has been with us for generations, and will be vigorously defended by its proponents. It won't disappear overnight.

Take abortion. Of course it's pagan and evil: the shedding of innocent blood (Prov.6:16-17), which the Bible plainly forbids. But the bulk of the community couldn't care, so politicians take no notice. Why should they? They're not really interested in morality, and they want to be sure a solid crowd of people is always behind them.

What's to be done?

The church needs to believe and be taught from scripture that abortion is evil, and begin to act on it. Yes, we can turn up and protest against abortion at an abortion clinic, and we can also do something constructive for the girl or woman who is considering an abortion. Help her to understand there is a baby in her womb, and offer her some pro-life options for having and caring for the baby, one of these being adoption.

We could have a sign outside church that says, "We help pregnant girls and women," with a phone number underneath. We'd need prepared people (especially women), ready to come to someone's assistance at short notice, because this is the heart of the gospel: saving lives, especially the most vulnerable in the community, like babies in the womb.

Is that what we're ready for? Maybe not yet, but we quickly could be. It wouldn't take long. It would take willingness and Christian responsibility, and we've done this before in history.

Conclusion:

Cultures that are not founded on the gospel of Jesus Christ are unregenerate and deathly, and are crying out for the transformation that only the gospel of Jesus can bring. Christians can do something about it, beginning at home and locally. Are you willing?

If you consent and obey, you will eat the best of the land (Isa.1:19).

2.

...Faith in God is not simply played out in a person's internal spiritual life, or in church on a Sunday, but faith in God is in fact a magnificent system of thought that affects every

aspect of a Christian's life - be it family, work and business, hobbies, wealth, politics, music or philosophy.²

The Promised Land for the children of Israel was never meant to be a place of peaceful co-existence with their enemies. Every aspect of pagan culture was to be removed. It was hostile to God, and would be a thorn in the side of God's people if it was left alone.

God had commanded Israel even before they entered the promised land that in relation to the inhabitants,

...you shall utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them, and show no favour to them. Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods... (Deut.7:2-4).

But the early chapters of Judges show that the children of Israel quickly capitulated. They had abandoned the Lord, so they didn't have the capacity to continually confront the evil people and practices of the land.

What does this show us? A vigorous, Biblically based Christian culture is vital for the health of any nation. Without it, that nation will commence its downward spiral, just as clearly as Israel did in the time of the judges.

As Buchanan observed,

There is a small problem with neutrality. As Trotsky observed, 'You may not be interested in war, but war is interested in you.' For the church to absent itself from the culture war is to not to end that war, but to lose it.³

Furthermore, a Biblically based Christian culture will be based in God's law. It was the law of God that Moses had said would be critical for taking the promised land. The laws of paganism were to be replaced by the law of God, and this would be the foundation for a godly culture and lifestyle in Israel.

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success (Joshua 1:8).

As Rushdoony pointed out,

The foundations of all law are in essence religious and theological: they are questions of ultimacy and moral necessity. Law without faith is an impossibility. Every law order is a moral and a theological order, a structuring of society in terms of a fundamental faith.⁴

When Paul was at Athens (Acts 17), he saw their pagan practices, and confronted them in it (v.22-33). He didn't consider their paganism to be harmless or without cultural and thus practical implication. For the progression is always the same: Religion-Culture-Lifestyle. A

² Taken from a funeral eulogy to Australian Reconstructionist Ian Hodge (1947-2016).

³ Patrick Buchanan, "Papal Neutrality in the Culture War?" (www.lewrockwell.com), 16/11/2013.

⁴ Rousas Rushdoony, "Roots of Reconstruction," 1991, p.893-894.

people which has rejected the God of the Bible will inevitably show forth that rejection in its cultural attitudes, which will quickly manifest in lifestyle choices as well.

What's happened to France since its godless Revolution of 1789? Because it threw away whatever was left of a Christian foundation, the nation of France has continued its decline.

Our modern society has clearly followed this progression. It has rejected the God of the Bible, and so a generation ago our legislators added this practicality: they passed atheistic, pro-abortion legislation, which not only kills babies, but harms women also. We thus abort 90,000 babies a year in Australia, and think nothing of it.

The solution to the problem as always, is in the hands of the church. It is we who must go back to the Ten Commandments, along with the rest of the law of God. Our faithfulness in preaching and teaching the law and all its applications, will be the first step towards reclaiming the nations of the world.

That will require our faithfulness and leadership, and there will be opposition, both within the church and without. The task of fearless preaching and teaching, with all the social applications called for, is something we simply cannot avoid any more.

Hasn't it always been this way?

3.

The superstructure of society is not the mode of production. It is religion and culture (Gary North, 2011).

The godless have always seen government and politics as central to their cause. To them, these are the big levers to shift in a society to effect change. But this was not God's focus with Gideon. God wanted to begin with something else entirely. He commanded Gideon,

...Take your father's bull and a second bull seven years old, and pull down the alter of Baal which belongs to your father, and cut down the Asherah that is beside it; and build an altar to the Lord your God in an orderly manner... (Judges 6:25-26).

It seems God wasn't interested in Israel's politics, at least not yet. He wanted to confront and destroy its idolatry, and this was His initial purpose in apprehending Gideon.

Religion is central. The First Commandment was "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Ex.20:3). Israel's departure from God was a religious departure, with implications that included politics and every other field of human activity, for all fields of human activity are important to God and subject to Him.

The Bible gives us this warning: "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday and today and forever" (Heb.13:8). The God of Gideon is our God today, so we should expect Him to be challenging His people to confront the idolatry of our day, especially that within the hearts of His people.

What is the besetting sin of Western man in our time, including God's people?

Statism. North comments,

Men in their rebellion against God want to believe in a State that can heal them. They believe in salvation by law. They prefer to live under the authority of a messianic State,

*meaning a healer State, rather than under freedom. They want to escape the burdens of personal and family responsibility in this world of cursed scarcity. They want to live as children live, as recipients of bounty without a price tag. They are willing to sacrifice their liberty and the liberty of others in order to attain this goal.*⁵

If and when the Messianic State fails, people's false hopes go down with it. Their dreams will lie shattered, and this is a very good thing; painful but essential. They then have to say, "My god has failed me. Who is the true God?"

This is why I have every hope that the welfare State of our modern era is not going to survive. It's many and mounting internal contradictions (including perpetual debt) have led to its destabilisation, which has been building now for decades. This will not be an economic aberration, but the judgement of God on an idolatrous belief system, predicated in this pagan ideal: "The State can save you."

This will be painful for society, but also for the church, which has not been immune from this nonsense. The acids of statism have been eating away at the foundations of the church for generations too, and it will need to repent of its false beliefs, ask for God's forgiveness, and seek His right way, from His Word. Evil beliefs have to be torn down before the right beliefs can be sought out and embraced.

The Christian church thus needs a good clean-out, a Reformation from within. This cannot have any other valid source than God Himself, showing that He is at work amongst His people, bringing repentance and change within His house. This will be painful, sometimes embarrassing, humiliating and ignominious for us. There will be resignations and upheaval as God takes His people to the cleaners for a work-over.

All the refuse in the house that's build up over generations will have to be gotten rid of. The foolish ideas and practices that have no justification in scripture, the superficial doctrines that we've entertained, that have gotten us to the low place we are in today: out the door.

The leaders who got us to this low place won't be those who get us out of it, because they have been part of the problem. So, just as occurred in the Reformation, there will need to be new leaders raised up who will teach the whole counsel of God, based in His law.

Conclusion:

Godless men try to effect change through politics, but the godly understand that it's the church that under God, has the prime responsibility to lead the way in national change. This will require of leaders what it's always required:

We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4).

This will require our faithfulness, flexibility and a willingness to work with others to get the job done; and there is much to do, for generations-forever.

⁵ Gary North (www.garynorth.com), "The Covenantal Ideal of Economic Growth," 26/4/2016.

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Ready for it?

6.

Culture follows from, arises from, and is dependent upon faith. Spiritual loyalty to God, in faith, must precede and be the ground of all cultural change. It not only must be, it inevitably will be. The gospel has inevitable consequences, and so does Baalism.⁸

When Christian leaders are unsure of the fundamentals, can you blame those who are supposed to follow them for being confused? As the saying goes,

Mist in the pulpit-fog in the pew.

If we are really serious about the infallibility of scripture, we have to make consistent application of this through all we do. And this applies to everything, bar nothing. Clearly in the garden, Adam and Eve were not particular about their means of obtaining knowledge. So, we can understand that even in the field of epistemology, or how we gain our knowledge, the use of God's Word is critical. Do we really believe in a sovereign God who rules all things, and knows all things? Rushdoony has written,

An infallible Scripture means an absolutely sovereign God who rules all His creation and determines the course of all things. Man's thinking then cannot be interpretative but only re-interpretative, not creative but analogical; man must think God's thoughts after Him and re-interpret time and history in terms of an already established divine interpretation. This orthodox faith challenges man's claim to autonomy...⁹

The sin of the garden was for man to seek autonomy from God; Adam and Eve were duped into believing they could be intellectually promiscuous, that they could seek knowledge wherever they wanted, even from sources apart from God. That lie has taken humanity down some terrible paths.

If Christian leaders really want to be faithful to God's Word, they need to begin with 6 Day Creation. They need to believe it and teach it, and return to it regularly, as a foundational, non-negotiable issue of basic Christian doctrine.

The heart of the gospel is torn out, when we compromise, flounder and flap over Genesis 1-11, and the Biblical 6 day Creation perspective is missing. In fact, all the evidence from science tells us that the Biblical record is totally consistent. True science and the Bible are not at war at all. Jesus himself affirmed the concept of the Genesis record. He said to the Pharisees,

Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?' (Mat.19:4-5).

⁸ James Jordan, "Judges: God's War on Humanism," 1985, p.59.

⁹ Rousas Rushdoony, "By what Standard," 1959 [1995], p.137.

When we get the 6 Day Creation perspective right, this leads to much more. It is one of the first stages of fleshing out a Christian world view. The Bible is true, as opposed to the falsifications of humanism. And if the Bible is true, then all the outpourings of humanistic thought that have plagued and deceived people (including within the church), are false and must be utterly rejected. Some of the recent ones are socialism, progressivism, feminism, statism and environmentalism. They all commence with either an implicit or explicit rejection of scripture, and then try to re-establish “facts” on this totally unsustainable foundation.

This should give us confidence to confidently press ahead with studies based in the infallibility of God’s Word, making the applications of God’s Word to all of life. Thus all of life should be impacted and directed, through logically applying scripture. For as the Bible says,

The one who despises the word will be in debt to it, but the one who fears the commandment will be rewarded (Prov.13:13).

Is there any limit to this? In human activities, no. This means law, economics, the family, education, government, defence, foreign affairs, charity, welfare and social policy, all impacted, subjected to scripture and brought to health and life.

A massive task? Of course, with generational responsibility for those following us, which was exactly God’s purpose with Adam and Eve, who were commanded to

Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth (Gen.1:29).

Conclusion:

Adam and Eve were to be stewards of creation and culture developers, in harmony with God’s Word. So should we. They were to apply the Word of God to their lives. So should we. They were to be thinking in harmony with God’s commands. So should we. In the garden of Eden, they were to “...cultivate it and keep it” (Gen.2:15). We have a similar charge, expanded. Now we have “...all the nations...” (Mat.28:19).

Are you ready to be a cultural developer? Go forth and do it, in faithfulness to God our Creator and Redeemer.

7.

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success (Joshua 1:8).

Cultures are based on belief systems and documents, which is not wrong. What's wrong is when they are the wrong belief systems and documents. Is there a right one?

Absolutely, the Bible. God required that His Word be central in Israel, and He requires that it be central in the Church today. Whenever Israel departed from His Word, it started going backwards into some form of idolatry which led to His judgement, and the church historically has been the same.

Consider the issue of sodomy today. With Darwinism gaining ascendancy in the church and the world since the publication of "The Origin of the Species" in 1859, churchmen started doubting the inerrancy of the scriptures. They decided the best response was retreat from the confrontation, and we haven't stopped since.

Has this caused no end of drama for us? Absolutely. Our retreat has not left us looking confident and assured, but spineless and foolish. The world perceives us largely through our leaders. When they've discarded the Bible, departed from the ideological battlefield and clearly been in headlong retreat, what do we expect the world to think?

This doesn't mean we have a blind faith. Biblical faith in God is never blind, but is based on the sure facts of scripture, which are actually supported by science. The Psalmist cried,

Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law (Ps.119:18).

With the church in retreat post Darwin, it was logical that World War I would decimate Europe as it did. It wasn't just that there were new, more efficient ways of killing people like the machine gun, heavy artillery, the torpedo or the economic blockade (which Britain pursued relentlessly against Germany). The leaven of the kingdom of God, which God commanded His people to spread, had departed from Europe. So governments in pursuit of victory, were prepared to cast away all restraints and wage total war. It's been one hundred years, but still Europe hasn't recovered.

The devastation that struck Europe in 1914-18 was inconceivable even to pessimists in 1913. The face of the world was permanently altered. Whole cultures disintegrated, and the rise of Bolshevism and Nazism brought decades of additional devastation. We still live under the shadow of that great war.¹⁰

The slide continued, so that by the 1960's, we have the beginnings of the gay movement in the U.S., which simply exemplified the continuum. Social beliefs in the family were breaking down, because the Western church's beliefs in scripture had already been broken down.

What's there been to replace it?

Nothing, only humanism. Has this got to be the end of the story?

Not at all. Consider these verses, which I will later summarise:

The one who despises the word will be in debt to it, but the one who fears the commandment will be rewarded (Prov.13:13).

Adversity pursues sinners, but the righteous will be rewarded with prosperity (Prov.13:21).

¹⁰ Gary North (www.garynorth.com), "Impending Judgement," 20/5/2016.

The Bible is to be applied to individuals, families, churches, communities and nations. You didn't think it applied to nations? Think of this: the word "nation" is used some 480 times in scripture, like this one:

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord (Ps.33:12a).

And,

Open the gates, that the righteous nation may enter, the one that remains faithful (Isa.26:2).

This is the simple, Biblical principle:

When an individual, family, church, community or a nation despises the Word of God, they will be in debt to it, and God ensures they will be pursued by adversity. But when an individual, family, church, community or a nation is righteous and fears God's commandments, they will be rewarded by God.

But the church by and large has not believed its own book. Or when it has, it's selected those parts it chose to believe, and discarded the rest. And God holds us accountable for our indifference to His Word, and deals with us accordingly.

How would you feel if your spouse was faithful to you 60% of the time, but 40% of the time was sleeping around? That's exactly how God feels when His bride, the Church refuses to act covenantally with her Lord, but goes about soliciting the favours of others. His wrath and judgement come, as an aggrieved husband, and that's the explanation for the state of the church in the Western world today.

It happened frequently with Israel, beginning with the episode of the golden calf (Ex.32), it was happening in Jesus' day, when Israel's religious leaders were deeply in league with Rome, and didn't want Jesus to threaten their corrupt relationship (Jn.11:47-53), and it's happening today.

Conclusion:

You'd like the culture and state of the church in the West to change?

Well that's good. It begins with individuals, families, churches, communities and nations doing what He told us to do: be covenantally faithful to Him.

If you consent and obey, you will eat the best of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword. Truly, the mouth of the Lord has spoken (Isa.1:19-20).

8.

Western civilization is the historical product of Christianity. Without Christianity, the development of the West would have been radically different. Of course, secular humanism and various intermediary philosophies have contributed greatly to the growth and shape of Western institutions since about 1660, but without the impact of Christian thought and culture, the foundations of Western secular humanism would not have been

laid. It is impossible to think of Western culture without considering the historical impact of Christianity.¹¹

We give thanks to God for all the good things in life we have. We thank Him for bicameral legislatures in most of the West, the rule of law, and the fact that (generally) political leaders are not above the law. We thank Him for freedom of the press, and (when it's practiced) the free market, for the technical revolution in communications particularly in the last 20 years, that has made communication so cheap.

The internet and Google means that knowledge on any subject known to man is no further away than my office computer, and it's essentially free. Who needs volumes of encyclopaedias any more, which were out of date the moment they were printed?

The internet and Google all make life easier and cheaper for the average person. Why would I ever bother to go to a shop and buy a newspaper again, when I can look up the latest news on the internet, any time of day, more cheaply?

Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), a Christian, discovered the laws of planetary motion. Michael Faraday (1791-1867), a Christian, was the father of modern electronics. Matthew Maury (1806-1873) was a Christian man who was raised in a godly home, who took Psalm 8:8 seriously ("...whatever passes through the paths of the seas...") when he joined the US Navy. He became the world's first oceanographer, who published "The Physical Geography of the Sea," in 1855.

In the arts as well as science, Christians have made vital contributions. Think of Bach and Handel in music, Milton in literature, and Rembrandt and Durer in art.

Christopher Columbus was a Christian, as were Alfred the Great and Florence Nightingale. Christians have had important contributions to make in the past, and the future will require the same. We all have work to do, in all aspects of society.

This requires that Christians are willing to assume their place confidently and without reservation, in the callings God has placed upon us. Some of the most fundamental of these are as godly fathers and mothers.

Why is this fundamental?

If Christians really want to begin at the beginning when it comes to changing their culture, they'll have to start being teachers of their children. This is such an important task, we should be cautious before delegating it to others, who could (and often do) misrepresent us.

In speaking to Timothy, Paul said:

For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well (II Tim.1:5).

Education in the life of children is a significant responsibility in the cause of the dominion of Jesus Christ. Consider these scriptures:

Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. How blessed is the man who

¹¹ Gary North, (www.garynorth.com), "The 'Little Things' of Life," 16/5/2016.

quiver is full of them; they will not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate (Ps.127:3-5).

Then there is,

The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, and he who sires a wise son will be glad in him. Let your father and your mother be glad, and let her rejoice who gave birth to you (Prov.23:24-25).

In Western society today, there is nothing glamorous about being a responsible father or mother, taking on the education of their child. But it is a clearly transformational task, when the task is accepted as unto God, according to scripture. A child who grows up having the understanding that God made the world in 6 days, and He made me to be a capable and responsible individual in His world, who will ultimately give an account to Him in eternity, has an entirely different perspective.

This perspective is radically different to the evolutionary approach, which essentially teaches a survival of the fittest, dog eat dog, kill before you are killed approach. Darwinism, when logically and consistently applied throughout society, really is awful and frightening, as exemplified by Communism and Nazism. Most modern politics is little better.

You may never be famous being a parent who educates your child, but it is a vital aspect of Christian faithfulness. Your name won't be in the headlines tomorrow, for teaching your 6 year old to read, or as you explain the first chapter of Romans to them. But doing these things is simply a logical step for a Christian parent, who takes the Bible seriously.

Conclusion:

Christians have impacted culture in the past, and they most certainly can today, beginning in the Christian family. And this will require the action of Christian parents, picking up and following through on their scriptural, God-given tasks.

The most common adjective Paul used to describe his fellow workers, was faithfulness. The Bible teaches us it's better to be faithful than famous. Christian parent, is faithful the adjective that God will apply to you, in eternity?

9.

It is the family unit which is central for the construction, or reconstruction, of culture...The day-to-day instruction in righteousness which all child-rearing involves is the very heart of a civilization. It is the law-order imparted by parents to children which will determine the success or failure of a society.¹²

If the gospel is going to be triumphant in a society, His people will need to work long and hard at establishing that gospel, in the family. This involves parents really taking charge of the teaching of their children, grounding them in the scriptures.

What does this really mean?

If we really believe the Bible is true, we have to accept its facts, and its plain implications for today as well. Yes, God did create the world in 6 days, Samson really did kill a lion, and

¹² Gary North (www.garynorth.com), "The 'Little Things' of Life," 16/5/2016.

Jonah really was swallowed by a whale and was vomited up on a beach, and Jesus really did walk on water.

But is that all? Is there more than this? And if there is a lot more, what are we supposed to do about it, beginning in the church and family?

On this point, the church has been very confused. Generally speaking, it hasn't had the confidence to go any further. And if the teachers of the church have been confused for centuries, what are the pew-sitters to do? So, we've had mist in the pulpit, fog in the pew.

But this is what we have to understand:

The prophets of the Old Testament believed that there is a fixed relationship between the moral character of a nation and the external blessings or cursings visited by God on that nation. They believed in the reliability of biblical law. They knew that if people continue to cheat their neighbors, commit adultery, break up the family, and defy all lawfully constituted authorities, the land will be brought under judgment. They had no doubts in this regard. They recapitulated the teachings of Deuteronomy 28, warning their listeners that God's laws cannot be violated with impunity forever.¹³

But this idea of a direct cause and effect has been set aside by over 95% of the church. It's been set aside because Biblical law has been set aside by the so-called "experts," in favour of natural law. But natural law has no fixed limits, and can mean anything to anybody. Furthermore, it is of Greek and pagan origin, which is essentially why the today's pagans love it.

Biblical law is not politically acceptable within the church, because the church has been deeply contaminated by the follies of humanistic thought. Ask you fellow believer (male or female) these two questions:

1. Should we utilise capital punishment for murder?

2. When we do, will you be willing to serve on the firing squad, carrying out the law?

You probably won't see them for the dust. That kind of accountability is way too much for the modern church-member, when it is the community (according to Biblical law), who is responsible to carry out executions:

If, however, a man acts presumptuously toward his neighbour, so as to kill him craftily, you are to take him even from My altar, that he may die (Ex.21:14).

The church will have to be convinced that this is right, and begin to teach it. Parents will need to teach it to their children, which is just what we were supposed to do, from the beginning:

These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up (Deut.6:6-7).

Conclusion:

¹³ Gary North (www.garynorth.com), "Impending Judgement," 20/5/2016.

There will need to be an ideological revolution within Christian families, and the church. The Christian family will need to take on the Christian education of their children, with an ambitious plan of discipleship. This is radical but Biblical, and it certainly is counter-cultural: counter to fallen, Western culture, which for hundreds of years now, has been mostly hostile to the Bible and everything Christian.

But what are we to do? Throw up our hands and complain about the state of the world?

No. We do something about the state of the world, beginning in the Christian home, then the church, then the community.

The walls of Jerusalem need rebuilding. It will require a Christian culture to do it.

10.

By Andrew McColl, 19th July, 2016

God be gracious to us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us-Selah. That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations. Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for You will judge the peoples with uprightness and guide the nations on the earth. Selah (Ps.67:1-4).

Changing a culture is clearly a long-term proposition, but it may be a lot easier than we have imagined. People may not be enthusiastic about long-term goals that will last well beyond their life-time, but they would be if they understood it can and will be accomplished through some simple things amongst God's people: faith and patience.

When a culture has been in decline for centuries, God doesn't expect it to be all changed completely by tomorrow afternoon. But what we must do is start the process, and do what we can in our day to begin the reversal of the trend. In David's era, all he could do was receive the plans and gather materials for the temple, for Solomon was charged with the task of building. So, long-term plans are an integral part of God's plan for His people; there is nothing new about them.

The Bible speaks of this. Paul spoke in Hebrews, that

We desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you." And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise (Heb.6:11-14).

After serving God on Mount Carmel, Elijah was prompted to action when he heard from his servant that "...a cloud the size of a man's hand is coming from the sea" (I Kings 18:44). God said to Zechariah, "Who has despised the day of small things?" (Zech.4:10).

But there is more. In Noah's day, God warned him of what was coming because of His judgement on the earth due to the wickedness of man. So, in faithfulness to God, and for the

sake of himself and his family, Noah laboured for 120 years to build an ark. If he had said, "That will take way too long, I can't be bothered," he and his family would have drowned.

So we have very definite reasons of self-interest to commence trend reversal. There is indeed an economic judgement coming in our era, and indifference or melancholy in the church won't change the trends.

And let's not kid ourselves that our political leaders from around the world will come up with a solution. All of them seems to be no better than an empty beetroot can: either useless, or next to it.

No, the solutions to the problems of our era have to come out of Mount Zion, which typifies the church. In the New Testament, Paul tells that

You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all... (Heb.12:22-23).

This has always been God's plan. The Psalmist declared,

Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When God restores His captive people, let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad (Ps.53:6).

It is God's people who are charged with the responsibility of preaching the gospel, and seeing the nations transformed as a result. We have the commands of the Lord to do this. We do not have a command to sit in a cave and avoid confronting the problems of our era, for they will not improve without the logical applications of scripture, coming from the church.

It was when the church began losing confidence after Darwin, that the decline of the world accelerated. Intimidated, we withdrew from the ideological conflicts. We packed up our Bibles and went home, left the ideological fields of battle to the humanists, and two generations later the nations were tearing at each other in World War I. Then there was Communism and Nazism, and another World War, in which supposedly Christian nations like Britain and the US firebombed the civilians of Dresden, then dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And still, with all the technology, nothing gets any better.

Yes, we can like Pilate wash our hands of the problems, and then mutter about the wicked atheists who did this. But the wickedness didn't begin with them. It began with a sleeping, indolent, irresponsible church, which has studiously ignored the Lord's warning to His people:

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men (Mat.5:13).

All this will have to change, and it will. We'll be obliged to go back to scripture, to God's law, and think again about what a godly society would look like. We'll need to apply those same scriptures to economics, education, law, government; to everything we haven't applied the scriptures to. Only when we do this will we be able to see lasting change come. It will have to begin in the church, then it can spread to the world.

I close with a wonderful, favourite Biblical promise for the church age:

Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. And many people will come and say, "Come, let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations... (Isa.2:2-4).

11.

Conclusion

God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation (II Cor.5:19).

Men have and will continue to try and change the world by other means than the Gospel, but the gospel is the only lasting one. Why?

It addresses the roots of the real and perennial problem that people have. People are alienated from God through their sin, and the only remedy is the blood of Jesus Christ.

So cultural change really is possible, but it has to be initiated through individual conversion, so that individuals, families, communities and nations are changed from the ground up, not by some kind of human imposition from on high.

Of course this seems impossible and unbelievable, apart from faith in God. But conversion seems unbelievable, too. The God Who can convert a sinner by the power of the Holy Spirit, can most certainly convert whole nations, too. What's good for one will be good for millions.

Clearly, this can be the work of the Holy Spirit alone, as He uses His faithful servants to preach and effect change, through the gospel.

Even nationally? Of course.

"Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," declares the Lord. "Many nations will join themselves to the Lord in that day and will become My people. Then I will dwell in your midst, and you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you" (Zech.2:10-11).

We Christians say we believe the Bible, and believing it, we should then act on it. We are obliged to figure out what Biblical culture would be like, and pursue it. It means that we change. We accept that every government is a theocracy, and so we believe in the whole-hearted acceptance of the legitimacy of the Ten Commandments in the church and society, along with those aspects of Biblical law which are carried into the New Testament, such as Exodus 21-23, along with parallel passages in the Pentateuch.

We change by doing the things we should be doing. That means tithing to our church 10% of after tax income (Mal.3:8-12), we are committed to church membership, taking an interest and participating in all of our church's affairs (I Tim.3:1-10).

We are frugal with the money the God of heaven entrusts to us (Luke 16:10), we get our children out of public education and keep them out, taking the entire responsibility for their education (Eph.6:4). And we oppose abortion, as the murder of the unborn.

We put money aside to care for those who truly can't work or care for themselves (Gal.2:10; 6:10), beginning with our own family (I Tim.5:8), while we vote in opposition to socialist, high tax candidates who want to keep us in bondage by borrowing more money and wasting it on evil, foolish schemes, even when it is supposedly for the poor (Prov.12:10).

We vote against all government attempts to manipulate the economy directly or indirectly, by "stimulus packages," manipulating interest rates, handouts to selected groups within the community, encouraging negative gearing on investment properties, providing government "guarantees" to maintain banks in a crisis, and giving tax breaks to companies in selected industries.

We oppose the legitimisation of dangerous bank practices such as fractional reserve lending, when banks have promoted inflation by sometimes lending money they don't have in reserve, thus placing their whole institution in danger in a time of widespread bankruptcy.

We take responsibility for our health and don't expect the government to give us money to get medical assistance, we are diligent employees wanting to do the best job we can, seeking to be resourceful by working 6 days a week to maximise income, and we make plans for the time when we really won't be able to work anymore, so we never become a burden on others (Prov.12:27; II Thess.3:7-12; II Cor.12:14).

We oppose all government interventions in the free-market and oppose tariffs, so that those who want to buy things from overseas can do so at the lowest possible prices, so that overseas producers get our money, and local producers of such goods either have to get competitive or get out (Lev.19:35-36).

We oppose the politics of envy, manifested in such forms as graduated taxation. No one should have to pay a higher rate of taxation, merely because they earned more (Lev.19:15, 35-37).

We oppose all foreign wars as being expensive, foolish adventures by political leaders who are more concerned with appeasing military contractors, along with other nation's political leaders, gambling with the lives of their own soldiers who joined up to defend their nation, not invade other nations (II Cor.6:14-16).

We encourage laws to be changed to obey the Bible. We vote to see capital punishment replace gaol sentences for murder, with the community being made responsible to carry it out properly and publicly, rather than the tax-payer be burdened with maintaining convicted murderers in gaol, only to be let out to do it again (Gen.9:6).

We vote for restitution for much criminal behaviour, so that thieves and like criminals have to restore at least twice what they steal, and they don't go to gaol (Ex.22:7). After 3 offences they are obviously stubborn and rebellious, deserving execution (Deut.21:18-21).

We vote to strengthen traditional marriage between a man and a woman only, to oppose No-Fault Divorce (Heb.13:4), along with all perversions (Lev.18:22-30), and we vote to repeal

anti-discrimination legislation, so individuals and companies are free to conduct business with those individuals or companies they wish to (II Cor.3:17).

As the church progressively shows itself capable of taking up greater levels of social responsibility, we vote to progressively close down the multitude of unnecessary government functions and departments, with their these tasks being taken up by individuals, companies and community groups, like churches (Titus 3:8, 14). And all with a view of getting taxes down to under 10% (see I Sam.8).

Conclusion:

No society can or should be changed by imposition from on high; it has to begin and be embraced in the grass-roots, for there to be lasting, healthy change. Christians must preach the Gospel, and to be responsible to preach the law of God as being normative for a free, just and healthy society.

We cannot ever expect to have a Christian culture without Biblical law, for culture springs from law, which itself always comes from religious origins.

Do we really want a Christian society?

Christianity can reconstruct the culture; nothing else can (Gary North).

