

CHRISTIAN FAMILY VALUES ARE BEING ATTACKED¹

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Our entire western civilization, which was built on Christian principles, is now in moral decline. The social fabric of American society appears to be unraveling. Christian homes are not immune to this process of social *and* moral deterioration. While Christianity appears strong superficially, it is nonetheless being undermined by insidious philosophical, social and political forces.

According to Herbert Schlossberg, (*Idols for Destruction*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983), many people think that “Western civilization has entered a period of breakdown from which it may never recover” (1). A few of the many quotations he gives are: ‘The end of the Roman Empire was a minor event compared with what we behold. We are looking at the liquidation of what is known as the modern world!’ ‘Since the time of Christ there has been no period in which there has been the same feeling of . . . spiritual impoverishment.’ ‘Civilization is collapsing before our eyes.’ ‘American society is at an impasse similar to that of the Hellenic world at the time of Christ.’ ‘The United States is undergoing a third time of trial, which may be even more severe than those of the Revolution and the Civil War.’ He then observes that in 1978 the Roper Poll, commissioned by the U.S. Department of Labor, reported that for the first time since that poll was initiated in 1959, “the respondents rated their expectations for the future lower than their assessment of the present’ (2-3).

Another observer, Donald Wildmon, declared in the *National Federation For Decency Journal* (Tupelo, MS, October, 1984) that “We are caught up in a great battle, one which historians will write about in the future as one of the most important in the history of mankind, . . . There is a great war under way - a spiritual war - and the overwhelming majority of Christians aren’t aware of it. We are losing, and we are losing by default. . . the future of all generations to come after us depends on the outcome of this conflict which we now ignore” (2).

We are living in times comparable to the decline and fall of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah. While all may appear prosperous on the surface, as it did in the days of Jeroboam II in the northern kingdom of Israel, there is real danger of national collapse. (Jack Lewis notes that “Jeroboam’s reign was a time in which Israel extended its borders farther than at any period following the days Solomon. It was a time of ease and prosperity, but at the same time on the horizon was Assyria who would eventually swallow up Israel” [*Minor Prophets*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966, 39]. That happened within fifty years of Jeroboam’s death). When a nation sows immorality, as ours now does, with its excessive fornications, abortions, and other indecencies, it must reap the consequences (Galatians 6:10).

As there were prophets then calling people to repentance, so too must we call people to repent of their sins and turn to God. Although prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah were ultimately unsuccessful in producing national repentance, they may well have lengthened the life of the southern kingdom of Judah. And as the preaching of John Wesley and others is said by historians

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to have averted a bloody revolution in England, so too perhaps our preaching can help turn our world back to godliness. If our world should repent, as Ninevah did at the preaching of Jonah (Jonah 3; Matthew 12:41; Luke 11; 32), then perhaps God will spare us as he did Ninevah.

Our world is in trouble, and our homes are falling apart. That our homes are falling apart is abundantly evident. A casual listing of current social evils, of itself, reveals something about our home problems, the magnitude of which would have been unthinkable even two generations ago. Such a list would include not only excessive divorce, battered wives and deserting husbands, but also abortion, missing children, child abuse, sexual molestation, alcoholism and drug abuse, suicide epidemics among teens and the elderly, lonely elderly people, extensive poverty of single parent families, and on and on the list could go. Christian homes, while perhaps not as gravely endangered, have nonetheless suffered to an extent often indistinguishable from the rest of society.

It is no accident that these things are happening in our homes. Christian homes are being destroyed because Christian family values are being attacked! Most attacks against Christian family values have not been consciously perceived as such because they have been labeled in some affirmative fashion - such as "pro-choice," "no-fault" divorce, "state's rights", or some other positive sounding designation. Moreover, the source of these influences may be perceived as originating with some individual or some organization, whereas they generally come from ungodly philosophies.

To repair and strengthen our Christian homes we must identify the source of these attacks. We must understand our enemies' values, and their weaponry. We must then plan our strategy and tactics for a counter attack. When we have fortified and strengthened Christian family values, we will find that we have also put our nation on a better footing because the strength of a nation is no greater than the cumulative strength of its homes.

Ungodly philosophies are now attacking four distinct categories of Christian family values. These are - first, the sanctity of human life; second, lifetime commitment to marriage; third, family authority and responsibility, and fourth, family heritage.

The most pressing and the most important cultural issue now confronting Christians is the defense of human life. It is now primarily being fought over the specific issue of abortion. This is not the only major issue that Christians must fight, however. Christians need to launch major campaigns to overthrow easy divorce laws in this land. Christians need to reassert the primacy of family authority and responsibility. And Christians also need to restore inheritance rights to individual family members.

These latter areas of attack against Christian family values go largely unnoticed by Christians today, and hence Christians are doing very little to combat these attacks, because the few Christians who are highly concerned about these issues are concentrating their efforts in the battle against abortion advocates. The attack against the sanctity of human life comes primarily from the philosophy of humanism through the immoral but now judicially legalized practice of abortion. Closely associated with abortion are other human life issues such as euthanasia, infanticide, suicide, and genocide.

Without question, abortion is the greatest single moral issue Americans have ever faced. It is much greater than was the issue of human slavery. The total number of abortions in America is now well over twice the number of people killed in Hitler's holocaust of the Jews. Worldwide, the number of abortions exceeds fifty-five million annually. It is now estimated that one-third of all conceptions in America are aborted. Moreover, about thirty-five percent of abortions in any given year are of those who have already had previous abortions.

There are two standards by which human life may be viewed. One is that every human life is sanctified by God. This standard is based upon the fact that God exists, that human beings are made in God's image, and that everyone is accountable to God for his or her conduct. Therefore, no one has a right to take the life of another human being (Genesis 9:6; Exodus 23:7; Deuteronomy 27:24; Proverbs 6:16-17; 1 Peter 4:15; 1 John 3:15). When a society lives by this standard, human life is preserved, human beings are considered responsible for their conduct, and trained to care unselfishly for other human beings. This is the standard of life that made America a great country. This is the legal concept by which Americans lived until recently.

The other standard is sometimes thought to present a greater "quality of life." This standard is easier understood by use of an illustration. Suppose a thirteen year old unmarried girl, whose father may have deserted his family, finds herself expecting a baby. If she gives birth to the baby and keeps it, she must provide for it. However, being unmarried, she has extremely little economic support for herself and her baby. Moreover, being so young, she has limited education, and therefore is very limited in employment potential. What little income she might have could hardly be expected to provide for her economic desires. On the other hand, she might reason, she can abort her unborn baby, finish her education, then in time be able to obtain good employment and have a better "quality" of life for herself and whatever children she may later have.

The "quality of life" concept has certain flaws, however. It is totally pragmatic. The "quality" of life is measured only in terms of the economic and materialistic standards for the mother who lives. It refuses to consider that its so-called "quality" is only possible at the cost of death to the unborn. This standard is totally selfish. It operates on the standard that "might makes right." This is a standard which permits a mother to refuse to be her baby's "keeper" (Genesis 4:9).

This standard assumes that whatever works best for one person at the moment is the right thing to do. It does not recognize that everyone is accountable to God for his or her conduct because everyone has been programmed to act that way by their social and cultural environments. Legalized abortion is based upon these false premises.

A society built upon this so-called "quality of life" philosophy is a selfish society. In time, such selfishness will produce a society marked by the absence of joy, peace, and love. In such a society there can be no real quality of life.

The practice of abortion devalues all human life. Left unchecked, it can only lead to widespread infanticide. It will also lead to uncontrollable euthanasia. The same doctors who accept money from parents to abort babies will, in time, accept money from adult children to destroy their deformed, retarded, or aged parents. Abortion weakens the family, at all levels of society. It produces selfish and uncaring attitudes that find their outlets in wife beating and child

abuse. Abortion prompts sexual permissiveness and experimentation. It contributes to vice and pornography. It destroys personal integrity, creates despair, and diminishes morality. It leads to suicide, sears the national conscience, and left unchecked, will lead to national destruction.

The Christian voice has not been sufficiently heard. The opposition has spread its ungodly philosophies in the influential halls of government, education, and industry while professed Christians are often busy here and there voicing their doctrinal differences to each other. Christians now find themselves shocked by moral and spiritual deterioration evidenced in current events. Most wonder what happened to produce such drastic social changes in such a short time. Some, but not many, understand the philosophical causes, and realize the ongoing consequences if present trends are not reversed. A few are rising up to do battle.

If, and when, Christians win the battle against humanism regarding abortion, then Christians must immediately concentrate their energies on stabilizing the institution of marriage. After that, family authority and responsibility must be restored. Finally, individual family members must be assured of their rights to family inheritances.

Christians are now on the defense, and, for the most part, are fighting defensively. This is short-sightedness on the part of Christians, however. Its time that Christians take the offensive position in this struggle for family values. The battle must be waged and won on all fronts. Christian family values are inter-related. While the battle, at different stages in the war, may rage over one area of Christian family values more furiously than another, Christians must understand that all areas are under attack, and must defeat their philosophical enemies in every area. This can be accomplished only by Christians taking the offensive position in every area of this spiritual war.