

## *Proclaim God To A God-Forsaking World*

Robert L. Waggoner<sup>1</sup>

Faulkner University Lectureship Committee is to be commended for this year's theme, "Soldiers of Christ, Arise." In every generation, Christians need to be motivated to resist godlessness, but especially in times like now when proclaiming God and his word is being challenged on every hand.

I begin by stating a little about my background and interest in this subject. In the late 1970s I was engaged in local preaching work with the church in Salt Lake City. While there, I became aware of the anti-God philosophy of Humanism. I then began to read and preach a few sermons on the subject. Shortly thereafter, my family moved to work with the church in Selma, Alabama. In 1984, I was invited to speak at the Alabama Christian College lectureship. My assigned subject was "What's Happening To Our Christian Homes." Afterward, Dr. W. B. West, Jr. and Jack Zorn encouraged me to put that speech into tract form for distribution. I was also encouraged to begin speaking on the subject. I therefore put together some lectures and started writing some articles.

After I had worked with the Houston Park church in Selma for a few years, I resigned from pulpit preaching in order to conduct church seminars about anti-God influences in our culture that are against the family, the church, and the nation. For about five years I researched the Humanist worldview, I also spoke about it whenever I had opportunity. But, for whatever reasons, I was not able to provide a livelihood for my family doing that, and therefore cut back on those efforts. I started teaching at Southern Christian University where I've had opportunity to teach a graduate course nearly every year about the conflict between humanistic and theistic worldviews

Now let me now share with you what I see happening in our world. Of course, what's happening is not without biblical precedent. Therefore, I'll also reflect with you about people

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forsaking God in biblical times. After that, we'll look at why people are now turning away from God and then turn to some practical considerations about what we may do about it.

What's happening in our world today is surely not altogether unfamiliar to you. You hear the news and you may even have been personally impacted by some anti-Christian social condition, legal statute, educational policy, or some other kind of cultural influence. But to be sure that we agree on what we're talking about, I'll mention a few recent anti-Christian happenings in our country. Everyone with a Christian worldview will surely concur that these are but a few of the many incidents in our culture that indicate God is being forsaken in our world.

- In May of 2004, the city of Redlands, California was pressured to change its city logo because on that logo was a cross, a symbol of Christianity.
- In 2004, Air Force Academy officials took action twice to crack down on religious references in e-mails by cadets and staffers. In March, they admonished cadets against using academy e-mail to encourage people to see Mel Gibson's movie "The Passion of the Christ." In the fall, the Air Force Academy prohibited the practice by some staffers of putting Bible verses at the bottom of their e-mails.<sup>2</sup>
- In late 2004, some public schools sought to keep pupils from exposure to God in the context of Thanksgiving and Christmas – even prohibiting citations of historical documents such as the Declaration of Independence. Maryland school teachers did not mention that the Pilgrims thanked God, nor did they tell about the origins of Thanksgiving Day. They did not quote George Washington's 1789 proclamation establishing Thanksgiving Day, which stated: "It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor."<sup>3</sup>
- In December of 2004, the South Orange/Maplewood School District of New Jersey banned from the schools all Christmas music, even if only in instrumental form.
- In December 17, 2004, a third grade student at Dean Elementary School in Crystal Lake, Illinois was prohibited from handing out to fellow students some peppermint candy canes as gifts because they each had an attached message about Jesus.
- In January of 2005, a federal judge ordered the removal of stickers in biology textbooks that declared evolution a theory, not a fact.
- In January of 2005, Michael Newdow of Sacramento, California was overruled for his attempt to have prayer removed from the Presidential Inauguration. In 2004 he

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<sup>2</sup>Associated Press, 11-19-04

<sup>3</sup>Capital News Service, 11-22-04.

unsuccessfully tried to have the statement “under God” removed from the Pledge of Allegiance. Nonetheless, he was attempting to remove God from cultural practices.

These are but a few of the many incidents we observe wherein Christianity is being attacked. Many major issues associated with conflicting cultural worldviews may be easily identified. These include categories such as **sexual issues** related to sexual permissiveness, homosexuality, legalization of same sex marriages; **free speech issues** related to profanity, pornography, and street preaching; **human life issues** related to abortion, euthanasia, infanticide, suicide, cloning, and surrogate motherhood. Gambling is also a major cultural issue in our times.<sup>4</sup> Because each of these issues may be valued from either a Christian or a non-Christian perspective and because non-Christians in our country are intensifying their anti-Christian agenda in the political arena, our nation is becoming strongly polarized. While all these issues will continue to confront Christians in cultural, political, and social contexts, those which appear major and most threatening are issues related to abortion, divorce, same sex marriage, pornography and gambling.

If you were born before World War II and have a sense of cultural values as they existed then, you can probably contrast them with current values. That was a time when if you used profanity, your grandmother might have washed the inside of your mouth with soap! That was a time when in the vast majority of communities a single standard of morality prevailed. That was before the days when large numbers of teenagers run a way from home. That was before we began to see rising social problems of juvenile delinquency, high divorce rates, battered wives, legalized abortion, widespread gambling addiction, sexually transmitted diseases, sexually abused children, AIDS, and other social problems. That was a time before Hugh Hefner used his *Playboy* magazine to popularize the lifestyle of recreational sex throughout the country. That was

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<sup>4</sup>A recent survey of senior citizens revealed that as much as 70 percent of those sampled were gambling regularly. A spokesman for an organization that helps problem gamblers says the percentage is even higher for the entire U.S. adult population, which includes those in the Church. While the number of potential at-risk senior gamblers is alarming, it only mirrors a growing trend among the 85 percent slice of the American population who are regular gamblers. Keith Whyte of the National Council on Problem Gambling says that demographic segment is not getting help with recovery treatment from the faith community. “In our experience, most of the mainline U.S. churches are pursuing more anti-gambling efforts than treatment and support services,” Whyte explains. The NCPG spokesman says that is probably because church leaders do not realize just how many of their members are in the gambling majority. “I think they are unaware of the amount of gambling that’s going on -- and neither the treatment folks, which we represent, nor the faith communities have really been able to put their hands around how to respond to this surge,” he says. The ability to do that and to make people less reliant on gambling, says Whyte, could ultimately move states to stop relying on lottery revenues to bolster their state budgets. (Agape Press, 1/27/05)

a time before Elvis Presley and the Beatles promoted debased forms of music. That was a time before the Courts ruled against Bible reading and prayer in public schools. You can probably think of many other differences between social values then and now.

If we had the ability to comprehend differences in moral values in society before World War II with those that existed before the turn of the twentieth century, we would probably find just as large a disparity of values between those times as we do between just before World War II and the turn of the twenty-first century. Even now we may see some of these changes by reading a book titled, *Therefore Stand*, written by Wilbur Smith in 1945. In the first chapter Wilbur Smith quoted Henry B. Smith, who wrote in 1881, that

“[t]he main characteristic of the attack upon, and the defense of Christianity is, that it is all along the line. Forces that have been gathering for centuries are concentrating simultaneously. Forces of science and philosophy hitherto at war have made peace with each other that they may attack the common foe, viz., Christianity.”<sup>5</sup>

Wilbur Smith then named a number of philosophical enemies he perceived to be attacking Christianity. Among others, he identified and discussed, Marxism, the theory that Christianity is an enemy of man’s welfare, the depersonalization of God, the deification of humanity, the dethronement of Christ’s deity, distinguishing between Christ of faith and Jesus of history, denials of the importance of the historical Christ, denials of the significance and importance of the Bible, the repudiation of supernaturalism, the rise of humanism, atheism being openly taught in theological seminaries, etc.

It is surely fair to observe that, without exception, all these enemies of Christianity are just as strong now, if not stronger, than they were when mentioned by Wilbur Smith at the end of World War II. Moreover, these enemies have been joined by others and they are all better entrenched now within the culture of the whole world than they were then. Together they have produced the sexual revolution, a multi-billion dollar pornography industry, a growing acceptance of homosexuality, the rise of profanity, and other evil social symptoms. Anticipating just that possibility, Wilbur Smith declared in 1945 that

Unless some unexpected supernatural force enters our contemporary civilization

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<sup>5</sup>Henry B. Smith, *Apologetics*, 11, as quoted by Wilbur Smith, *Therefore Stand*, Natick, MA: W. A. Wilde Co., 1945, 7

compelling a change in the course which it is now pursuing, no carefully drawn chart of the intellectual, religious and economic tendencies of the twentieth century will foretell anything else, for the years immediately before us, than that there will be even more frequent and increasingly powerful attacks upon the Christian faith. If the next fifty years should reveal in western civilization an apostasy from the Christian faith, and a widening of its hold upon thinking people, as great as the last fifty years have witnessed, true believers will then become hardly more than a persecuted remnant, the church for the most part nothing more than an institution devoted to the welfare of men, and a true knowledge of the Bible rarer than a knowledge of Greek myths.<sup>6</sup>

No one will deny that our nation has drastically altered its cultural values since World War II. Attacks against the Christian faith have not only affected the nation, they have also greatly diminished the quality of Christian thinking. Less than twenty years after Wilbur Smith wrote his book, an Englishman by the name of Harry Blaimires wrote that in 1961, saying,

“There is no longer a Christian mind. It is a commonplace that the mind of modern man has been secularized. For instance, it has been deprived of any orientation towards the supernatural. Tragic as this fact is, it would not be so desperately tragic had the Christian mind held out against the secular drift. But unfortunately the Christian mind has succumbed to the secular drift with a degree of weakness and nervelessness unmatched in Christian history. It is difficult to do justice in words to the complete loss of intellectual morale in the twentieth-century Church. One cannot characterize it without having recourse to language which will sound hysterical and melodramatic.”

“There is no longer a Christian mind. There is still, of course, a Christian ethic, a Christian practice, and a Christian spirituality. As a moral being, the modern Christian subscribes to a code other than that of the non-Christian. As a member of the Church, he undertakes obligations and observations ignored by the non-Christian. As a spiritual being, in prayer and meditation, he strives to cultivate a dimension of life unexplored by the non-Christian. But as a *thinking* being, the modern Christian has succumbed to secularization. He accepts religion – its morality, its worship, its spiritual culture; but he rejects the religious view of life, the view which sets all earthly issues within the context of the eternal view which relates all human problems – social, political, cultural – to the doctrinal foundations of the Christian Faith, the view which sees all things here below in terms of God’s supremacy and earth’s transitoriness, in terms of Heaven and Hell.”<sup>7</sup>

Just a little more than forty years after Harry Blaimires wrote that statement, George Barna reported in 2004 that only seven percent of Protestants may be said to have a Christian world view. Moreover, only fifty one percent of all Protestant pastors have a Christian

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<sup>6</sup>Same source, 101-102

<sup>7</sup>Harry Blaimires, *The Christian Mind: How Should A Christian Think?* 1963, pp. 3-4

worldview and that six out of seven congregants do not share the Christian world view of their pastor, even if he has one.<sup>8</sup> For research purposes,

“a biblical worldview was defined as believing that absolute moral truths exist; that such truth is defined by the Bible; and firm belief in six specific religious views. Those views were that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life; God is the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe and He stills rules it today; salvation is a gift from God and cannot be earned; Satan is real; a Christian has a responsibility to share their faith in Christ with other people; and the Bible is accurate in all of its teachings.”<sup>9</sup>

Observers of our national trends may easily conclude that we are rapidly forsaking God, especially when current conditions are contrasted to cultural thinking that existed a couple of centuries ago.

- In 1782, the United States Congress voted this resolution: “The Congress of the United States recommends and approves the Holy Bible for use in all schools.”
- Of the first 108 universities founded in America, 106 were distinctly Christian, including the first, Harvard University, chartered in 1636. In the original Harvard Student Handbook, rule number 1 was that students seeking entrance must know Latin and Greek so that they could study the scriptures: “Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life, John 17:3; and therefore to lay Jesus Christ as the only foundation for our children to follow the moral principles of the Ten Commandments.”
- James Madison, the primary author of the Constitution of the United States, said: “We have staked the whole future of our new nation not upon the power of government; far from it. We have staked the future of all our political constitutions upon the capacity of each of ourselves to govern ourselves according to the moral principles of the Ten Commandments.”
- William Holmes McGuffey, author of the McGuffey Reader which was used in our public schools until 1963, said “The Christian religion is the religion of our country. From it are derived our notions on the character of God, on the great moral Governor of the universe. On its doctrines are founded the peculiarities of our free institutions.”

That our country is forsaking God is not seriously questioned by Christian observers. We see our culture in a downward slope away from God, and we are rightly alarmed by it. Statistical evidence supports the idea that Americans are turning away from God.

“Since 1991, the adult population in the United States has grown by 15%. During that same period the number of adults who do not attend church has nearly doubled, rising from 39 million to 75 million – a 92% increase! These startling statistics come from the

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<sup>8</sup>Barna, George, *Only Half Of Protestant Pastors Have A Biblical Worldview* (01/12/2004) The Barna Group, Ltd., 1957 Eastman Ave. Ste B, Ventura, California 93003.

<sup>9</sup>WorldNetDailey, *Church Doesn't Think Like Jesus*, [http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/printer-friendly.asp?ARTICLE\\_ID=35926](http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/printer-friendly.asp?ARTICLE_ID=35926) Dec 3, 2003, retrieved 03/03/2005

most recent tracking study of religious behavior conducted by The Barna Group, a company that follows trends related to faith, culture and leadership in America. The latest study shows that the percentage of adults that is unchurched – defined as not having attended a Christian church service, other than for a holiday service, such as Christmas or Easter, or for special events such as a wedding or funeral, at any time in the past six months – has risen from 21% in 1991 to 34% today.”<sup>10</sup>

Moreover, the quality of Christian faith in our culture appears to be diminishing. As a result, the moral condition of the nation is not conducive to receptive hearts for evangelism. We now have greater difficulty in raising our children to be strong in the Christian faith. Heretofore, we’ve tended to think that nearly everyone has Christian values. Now we’re sometimes shocked to realize that Christian values are in a minority status in workplaces, in volunteer organizations, in schools etc. We can no longer expect our children to be taught Christian values in public schools or even in day care centers. Christian parents have to exercise greater care in allowing their children to play with other children in the neighborhood.

In short, we live in a country that is now forsaking God, and we are disturbed by it. But then, our situation is not new! From the beginning of time, people have been forsaking God. The first couple forsook God, but their son, Abel, was faithful. During the days of Noah, every thought and imagination of men’s hearts were only evil continually (Genesis 6:5), yet Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5). During the wilderness wanderings, the Israelites forsook the Lord on numerous occasions, most notably when twelve spies influenced people to turn away from God’s promise to give them the Promised Land (Numbers 13:25-14:3), but there were a few that were faithful. During the period of the judges, Israel forsook God (Judges 2:10-13). All of the kings of Israel, and most of the kings of Judah turned away for the Lord.<sup>11</sup>

Hear what the prophet Isaiah said in chapter one, verses two through four of that book.

“The LORD has spoken: ‘I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me; <sup>3</sup>The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master’s crib; But Israel does not know, my people do not consider.’ <sup>4</sup>Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, They have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward” (Isaiah 1:2-4).

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<sup>10</sup>*Number of Unchurched has Doubled Since 1991*, May 4, 2004, Ventura, CA, retrieved 03/03/2005, <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=163>

<sup>11</sup>(*Solomon*, 1 Kings 11:3-4, 9; *Amon*, 2 Kings 21:19-21; *Jehoram*, 2 Chronicles 21:10; *Joash*, 2 Chronicles 24:20, 24; *Amaziah*, 2 Chronicles 25:27; *Ahaz*, 2 Chronicles 28:6, etc.).

In that same chapter, verses twenty-one through twenty-three, Isaiah also observed,

<sup>21</sup>How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers. <sup>22</sup>Your silver has become dross, your wine mixed with water. <sup>23</sup>Your princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; everyone loves bribes, and follows after rewards. They do not defend the fatherless, nor does the cause of the widow come before them” (Isaiah 1:21-23).

Hear what Jeremiah said in chapter two, verses five through eleven of his book.

“Thus says the LORD: “What injustice have your fathers found in me, that they have gone far from me, have followed idols, and have become idolaters? <sup>6</sup>Neither did they say, ‘Where is the LORD, who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, who led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and pits, through a land of drought and the shadow of death, through a land that no one crossed and where no one dwelt?’ <sup>7</sup>I brought you into a bountiful country, to eat its fruit and its goodness. But when you entered, you defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination. <sup>8</sup>The priests did not say, ‘Where is the LORD?’ And those who handle the law did not know me; the rulers also transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit. <sup>9</sup>Therefore I will yet bring charges against you,” says the LORD, “And against your children’s children I will bring charges. <sup>10</sup>For pass beyond the coasts of Cyprus and see, send to Kedar and consider diligently, and see if there has been such a thing. <sup>11</sup>Has a nation changed its gods, which are not gods? But my people have changed their glory for what does not profit (Jeremiah 2:5-11).

Many of Jesus’ disciples “went back and walked with Him no more” (John 6:66). During the apostolic age, the author of the Hebrew letter wrote to encourage disciples to remain faithful. Moreover, the book of Revelation seems to have been written to encourage brethren to remain faithful in the midst of persecution.

When we see our world forsaking God, we need to understand that people today are not unlike people in former times who have forsaken the Lord. Some people never turn to God because they have had no occasion to learn about God. People that forsake the Lord, after they have learned about him, do so because they do not believe him. In Old Testament times, the Israelites forsook the Lord to serve other gods. If we want to proclaim God to a God-forsaking world, we need to understand why people forsake the Lord in our times. Why do people today not trust the Lord? Only when causes are understood will proper solutions be forthcoming. We do not claim to have all the answers, but we think we are mindful of some that need consideration.



First, the primary reason why people are now turning away from God is because of an opposing philosophy that may be designated in various ways. Some of the major terms by which this anti-God philosophy is known are naturalism, materialism, secularism, humanism, hedonism, socialism, statism, rationalism and scientism. Briefly put, this philosophy contends that since nature is all there is then there is no supernatural, things exist as they are because they have evolved. Since matter is all there is and since matter is physical then there can be no spiritual, no after life, and no eternal destiny. Since humanity has evolved then there is no deity, humanity must save itself from its problems. Since pleasure is the greatest good then pleasure should be pursued. Since the best way to produce and distribute wealth is through the corporate society then private ownership, production and distribution of wealth should be discouraged. Since the state is the highest authority in society then its powers are limited only by the will of its people. And since knowledge is obtained through reason and the scientific process then there can be no divine revelation. Those who hold these anti-God ideas are likely also to think that those who believe in God are unrealistic, or perhaps even insane!

Second, these anti-God ideas are now taught to our youth in all our government schools in all grade levels – kindergarten through university doctoral studies. These values constitute the educational foundation and psychological methodology of all government school curricula. While our nation's schools once promoted belief in God, that teaching is no longer allowed. Government schools cannot be reformed. They cannot be made to conform to godly values because the schools are now teaching precisely what their designers intended. When children grow up, because they have been taught these ideas in public schools, they carry these values into every profession and occupation in the marketplace. While public schools are the primary disseminators of this anti-God philosophy to our school children, the media – i.e., television, radio, literature, theatre, movies, music recordings, art, etc. – are major distributors of these ideas to the public at large.

Third, inasmuch as this philosophy, with its many ramifications, has grown extensively since the time of the Renaissance – especially since the mid-nineteenth century – and inasmuch as this philosophy has become a strong contender for our minds, many believers in God have been intimidated and have succumbed to its many and varied influences. Values of a society at large tend to influence all members of that society, even those who claim to put God first in their

lives. That was true in Old Testament times. When the Israelites allowed idol worshippers to live in their midst, they were thereby influenced to worship the idols. Likewise churches in New Testament times – like the seven churches of Asia – tended to hold values peculiar to their respective communities. So it has always been. And so it is now in our world that Christians tend to assimilate values of their fellow countrymen. In short, Christians now have absorbed many non-Christian values, and have thereby greatly weakened their ability to promote God in this God-forsaking world.

These are but three of many causes why our world is forsaking God. Moreover, each of these might well be expanded for further consideration. But having given evidence that our world is forsaking God, and having briefly illustrated why, we must now turn to some practical considerations about what we may do in proclaiming God to a God-forsaking world.

First, we Christians must not fall into the pattern of thinking and acting like non-Christians. Christians must think about the existence and character of God; about how and why the world was created; about the nature and purpose of humanity; about eternal destiny; about spiritual realities; about absolute truths, about obedience and faithfulness to God; about being compassionate servants to others, etc. Only by thinking in terms of these and other spiritual values can we Christians transform our lives to be like Jesus.<sup>12</sup> Only by thinking like Jesus can we Christians hope to transform our world to think and act like Jesus.

Second, we Christians must proclaim the word of God. Whenever ancient Israel forsook the Lord, God sent prophets to proclaim his word to them. The prophets reminded people about the goodness of God. They gave facts about the people's sins against the Lord. They pointed to consequences of failure to be faithful to God. They also tried to persuade the people to return to God. Likewise, Christians must proclaim God and his word to everyone. We must proclaim the goodness of God and his love for mankind. We must call attention to sin and its consequences. We must point to the prospects for eternal salvation from sin and the temporal and eternal blessings of obeying God. We must also not fail to declare the consequences of failure to abide by God's word. We must use our persuasive abilities to turn people back to God.

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<sup>12</sup> See Exodus 33:16; 2 Corinthians 6:17; Romans 12:1-2

Third, we Christians must understand that preaching and teaching the word of God is not enough in itself. Christians must act however we can to remove currently existing obstacles to following God and to promote conditions helpful to obeying and serving God. The judges of Israel did not restore the people to God simply by talking to them or to their enemies. Rather the judges rallied the people together to fight against their enemies. In like manner, we Christians must do whatever we can to train Christians to remove barriers that currently prohibit us from practicing Christian ideals.

While the church is not authorized by God to be a political activist organization in confronting ungodly organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Education Association, Planned Parenthood, and a host of other philosophical and political enemies of Christianity, the church is authorized to train disciples in godliness. And when disciples seek to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and a leavening influence in society, then disciples, individually and collectively, can and should confront and engage these philosophical, cultural and political enemies.

Individuals can make, and have made, a great difference in fighting these cultural battles. You may recognize some names of people who in the forefront of these cultural battles. Phyllis Schlafly, Donald Wildman, James Dodson, Mel and Norma Gabler, and Judge Roy Moore are just a few who might be named. To these and others, we owe a great debt of gratitude for the leadership they have given in fighting our cultural battles. Moreover, many educational and political organizations and groups are engaged in battles contending for Christian social, cultural, and political values. These include such organizations as Eagle Forum, Concerned Women of America, Focus on the Family, American Family Alliance, etc.

One point of clarification may be in order. While both talking and policy making are important, neither is sufficient by itself. Unless people's hearts are conditioned to conform to public policies, those policies will not be lasting. Christians must teach the superiority of a Christian value system over a non-Christian system value, and then seek to implement public policies that will direct public conduct to conform to Christian values. To this end, Christians should seek to be leaders in every possible legitimate role available in our society.

But Christians cannot be double minded. Effective Christian leadership can come only when Christians are themselves right with God. Just as God did not allow the Israelites to conquer the land of Canaan until the sin of Achan had been removed,<sup>13</sup> so also God will not allow us to be victorious until we have repented of whatever wrongs may exist within and among us. Moreover, whenever we Christians believe that God would have us overcome some evil within society, Christians must not hesitate to engage the enemy in battle. We may not think ourselves capable of doing what needs to be done, but we must remember that our responsibility is to engage the enemy. And just as the people of God were victorious in Old Testament times because they went forth in faith to confront their enemies, so God expects us to proceed with faith and to rely upon him to give the victory.

To this end we must know not only what to say, but also what we want to accomplish. We must set goals and objectives. We must develop strategies and employ specific tactics. For example, inasmuch as compulsory government schools are now monopolized by an anti-Christian humanistic philosophy, Christians should develop strategies whereby parents of our nation's children might have options other than compulsory humanistic education. Christian parents may choose to home school or educate their children in Christian schools, but what about other parents and their children? Remember, as long as the nation's children are educated in anti-Christian compulsory government schools, our culture will continue in its anti-God secular drift.

In summary, we Christian soldiers have much to do. We must learn to think always like God. We must teach God's word in every corner of our culture. We who are Christians must act to implement godly values in every sphere of society. If we have a temperament to think and act in behalf of God, then, like Isaiah, when he heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" we too will respond, "Here am I. Send me!"<sup>14</sup>

Then the voice of the Lord said,

"Go, and tell this people: keep on listening, but do not perceive; keep on looking, but do not understand. I will render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, lest they see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Joshua 7:1-26

<sup>14</sup>Isaiah 6:8

<sup>15</sup>Isaiah 6:9-10

We like Isaiah may wonder, "Lord, how long?" And we, too, may expect to be answered, as was Isaiah:

"Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, houses are without people, and the land is utterly desolate, the LORD has removed men far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. Yet there will be a tenth portion in it, and it will again be subject to burning, like a terebinth or an oak whose stump remains when it is felled. The holy seed is its stump."<sup>16</sup>

Isaiah was not the only one who prophesied to a people that forsook the Lord and were so hardened of heart that they refused to return to him. Both Jesus<sup>17</sup> and Paul<sup>18</sup> quoted this passage in Isaiah and applied it to people in their respective times.

Just as people in the times of Isaiah, Jesus, and Paul refused to hear a message from God, so also people may refuse to hear us deliver God's message today. But Isaiah, Jesus, and Paul did not cease their preaching. Neither must we. Soldiers of Christ must arise to proclaim God to a God-forsaking world.

### *Discussion – Questions and Answers*

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<sup>16</sup>Isaiah 6:11-13

<sup>17</sup>Jesus quotation of Isaiah – *Matthew 13:14-17*, And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive;<sup>15</sup> For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'<sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear;<sup>17</sup> for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. (See also *Mark 4:11-12; Luke 8:10*)

<sup>18</sup>Paul's quotation of Isaiah - *Acts 28:25-28*, So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers,<sup>26</sup> saying, 'Go to this people and say: "Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive;<sup>27</sup> For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'"<sup>28</sup> Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!"