

The Culture War: Why Christianity Appears to be Losing!

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Christianity began 2000 years ago with a ragtag handful of refugees and poor traveling preachers within a culture in which the ruling authorities actively sought their eradication. Yet, within a few hundred years, Christianity became the predominate religion in the Western World.

Over the last 50 years, the number of practicing Christians in western countries have steadily decreased, and godless and secular theories have become ever more popular.

Could the methods employed by Christians 2000 years ago, and those practiced by many in Christianity today, be factors in why Christianity flourished then and withers now?

Two thousand years ago, Christians focused exclusively on evangelism and Christian living. In other words, they focused on reaching people with a message that would change their personal lives. Christians lived to bless others, to share, and to minister. They were kind, patient, honest, and good neighbors.

The one thing Christians never did 2000 years ago was seek to legislate their beliefs. In Apostolic times,

we never find Paul seeking to get a certain senator elected to the Roman senate. We never find Peter seeking to get a certain governor appointed in Palestine. We never see James, John, or any of the church leaders, seeking to get new laws passed to mandate Christian values. In fact, it was the enemies of Christianity that sought to legislate their beliefs by passing laws to persecute Christians, yet Christianity grew.

But hundreds of years after the apostles died, when the population had vastly converted to Christianity through the methods of evangelism and Christian living, an astute politician—Constantine—made Christianity political. From that moment until today, Christianity has been infected with imperial human law constructs and methods. And history is clear. After Constantine and the infecting of the church with imposed law and political methods (the idea that God's law functions like human law, and therefore Christians should function like human governments), Christianity sunk down into a system of darkness. The Crusades, the Inquisition, burning people at the stake, and legislating laws to coerce people to practice their faith, according to the mandates of someone else in the position of legal authority, took effect.

And the world went into darkness, still today called the Dark Ages.

Eventually, thinking people began to examine reality and looked to science and nature to find a reasonable understanding of life. Why? Because the church was unreasonable, it refused evidence, and it locked people up (like Galileo) who found, in science and nature, things that disagreed with the official *interpretation* of Scripture.

The Reformation began to reverse the course of unreasonableness. It sought to eliminate distortion and return people to evidence-based rational understanding of God, the world, and life. Martin Luther and the other reformers were effective, because they returned to the methods of the apostles. The reformers evangelized—they presented truth and left people free. The Reformers did not seek to use the state to enforce their beliefs on others. It was the establishment church that used the method of legislation, coercion, and the force of the state to seek to oppose the reformers.

In today's societies, who is winning the culture war—Christianity or secularism? Why? Is Christianity primarily seeking to evangelize with a message that harmonizes with science, nature, and how life really works? A message so evidentiary, so obviously true, that it is persuasive to any reasonable person? A message that actually changes lives for the better? A message that brings genuine healing to hearts, peace to minds, and health to bodies? Is Christianity seen in the world as a religion of love, kindness, compassion, understanding, healing, and goodness? Does Christianity practice the methods of God or the methods of the state, of fallen, sinful, human governments?

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world." Can we expect Christianity to win the culture war by using the methods of fallen, sinful, human governments? Or, as soon as we use such methods, are we essentially no longer Christian—are we of the world?

What God wants is genuine love and trust. Can love and trust be achieved by legislation? Can love and trust be achieved by coercion? Can love and trust be achieved by passing laws that require people to practice religious beliefs they don't believe in?

History documents that when Christianity left the methods of Christ (presenting the truth in love and leaving people free) and began using the methods of sinful governments (passing laws to enforce its beliefs), Christianity became corrupt and the world went into darkness.

It is no different today. If we want to change the world for the better, if we want to see godliness return to our society, if we want a world in which goodness, love, honesty, compassion, and kindness reign supreme, then we must reject the methods of the world and return to the methods of Jesus Christ. We can never win God's cause by using Satan's methods!

The only way to change our communities, cities, states, nations, and the world for good is by using the methods Jesus used—truth presented in love, leaving others free. I invite you to be like Christ in all you do. This is true Christianity!