

Christians: Troublers or Troubleshooters?

Winston Churchill was the no-nonsense prime minister of England during the Second World War. He insisted that “those who fail to learn from history are doomed to relive it.” Whether it’s learning hard life lessons in high school, a careless word or two that causes extreme fallout in a job or relationship, or even a world war, history can be our greatest teacher.

For example, history informs us that our Founding Fathers rebelled against England to secure the freedom to worship God. Not freedom *from* worship, but the freedom to worship.

Fast forward to the modern era, where the courts have pushed God away and ruled Him out of public life, insisting on “separation of church and state.” But the “separation clause” was to keep the government out of church business, not to silence the church from weighing in on government policies. Today, the separation of church and state is real. But because our society thrives on talking about and conflating issues without truly understanding the history, its origins or what can be learned from past issues, most people do not have any idea what removing God from our lives truly means.

I’m afraid our nation is on a trajectory like the nation of Israel. Today’s United States does not trust in God. As Larry Norman, one of the pioneers of Christian rock, once wrote, “Your money says, ‘In God We Trust,’ but it’s against the law to pray in school.”

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At one time, the United States was the king of the jungle,

respected for its strength and moral muscle. We stood for protecting human freedoms and pushing against nations that oppressed others. We were the lion that everyone respected and nobody challenged. But now the lion is sick. The roar has been reduced to a whimper! Now the other animals of the forest, sensing our weakness, see it as an opportunity to challenge that lion. We've lost our will to bite back, even for righteous reasons.

With this weakened morality have come changing values. The biblical Christian who believes the Bible is true was once considered the apotheosis (highest point) of honor in American culture. Now that same person is public enemy No. 1. Christians are maligned as inflexible, narrow-minded, bigoted and intolerant. Just as King Ahab regarded the prophet Elijah as the "troubler of Israel" (1 Kings 18:17), Christians are seen as the troublers of America. We are the ones, they insist, who are the roadblock to homosexual and transgender freedom.

But they've mistaken the disease for the cure! The gospel isn't an impediment; it's the cure. The Good News about Jesus Christ is the only thing that will change a person's life. And only when you change a person's heart will you have the opportunity to change a community, a state and even a country. This is why when Ahab accused Elijah of being the problem in Israel, he retorted, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have." Do not be ashamed of the gospel, and do not hold back. We are the cure. We have the cure.

Someone once said "Never preach to be understood. Preach so that it's impossible to be misunderstood." That's the best way to live the Christian life in a morally and spiritually dark world. Be clear. Be bold. Be firm. Be so vibrant that no one misunderstands. Faith, belief in God and sharing that message with the world isn't the problem. It's the treatment!

So many Christians are nervous about standing firm in their

faith. They're afraid of the blowback they might receive if they shout it from the mountaintops. One day, when they're with one group of Christian friends, they lean toward God. But on another day, when they're with a more hostile crowd, they lean toward them. Tossed by the winds of opinion and popularity, they vacillate rather than stand firm.

At some point in life, everyone must decide which side of history to be on. As we learn from our past, we are poised to have a better future. Do not let history repeat itself for evil. Like Churchill, and like Elijah the prophet, insist on living and speaking for truth.

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