

Slaying the Goliath of America

Following 14 years of harsh imprisonment for his faith, Richard Wurmbrand was asked why we don't have to deal with communism here in America. Much like the Lord Jesus often responded to curious inquirers, he was not direct in his answer, but spoke to the root of America's issues.

"You don't have communism here, but you have something far worse. You have materialism."

The witness of even other religions makes this indictment very unsettling.

As an example, radical Islamic leaders do not consider the church or the gospel as the greatest enemy to the spread of their religion. Christians are not the primary target of their Jihadist warfare ideology. Western worldliness is their most formidable foe. After all, they do refer to America as the great Satan with Europe a close second. But the unsettling thing is that Muslim clergy believe America is a Christian nation, and they see nothing in the church that distinguishes us from the world.

These Muslim clergy cite our exportation of godlessness, immorality, pornography, perversion, our gross preoccupation with entertainment, worldly fashion, fleshly indulgences as proof of our materialistic lifestyle and worldliness. Although we know Islam is a false religion and we are all appalled at the unthinkable, murderous and heinous acts of terror its adherents commit in the name of their god, we must realize that their feelings of American Christianity are equally justifiable as our moral outrage of the rotten fruit of their religion.

When the religious Muslim world looks at our brand of

Christianity, it sees a worthless religion that does not make a profound and marked difference in the lives of those who profess it. They hear our profession of Jesus and see our worldly lifestyles compared to theirs and conclude that their faith is superior to ours. Yet we know that their faith engenders bondage instead of liberty, death and destruction instead of life and peace, and fear and guilt rather than true fellowship with the living God. But how do we get past their view of our hypocrisy? Does it not concern you that their view of commitment to God and morality is more of a reflection of the Scriptures than ours is?

If they saw a greater allegiance to Jesus among Western believers they might consider otherwise, but as a whole, they are not seeing it. They refute all worldliness, but we embrace it. They even oppose other Muslims in their own camp who are worldly. In spite of all that is wrong with Islam, shouldn't it disturb us that their allegiance to a *lie* is greater than our allegiance to the *truth*? Isn't it chilling and afflicting to our souls that they die for their beliefs, but we in America can't even live for ours?

More Heart-Searching Questions

Could it be that many American Christians have been greatly deceived and entrapped by the materialism/worldliness in our nation? Could it be that worldliness has infiltrated into the church to such a degree that it has rendered our witness to the world ineffective? Could it be that the materialistic environment many of us have been raised in has dulled our senses to its real influence over our lives? Have we been lured away from what is eternal and spiritual and given ourselves to the temporal and fleshly? Do we realize that there are tens of millions of professing Christians in our nation who make zero impact on the various spheres of their influence? Who never testify of their faith? Who don't even practice their faith? Have we ever given thoughtful consideration that the lifestyle of millions – not thousands –

but millions of professing believers in America is contrary to the Scriptures and commands of Jesus Christ and indistinguishable from the rest of society?

Let's face it: Our foundation is faulty; therefore, our house cannot stand. We need such a purging in the church today that calls itself by Christ's name. We have become professional hearers. We don't really believe the Bible and what Jesus said. Consider some of the first words Jesus spoke to the multitudes who sought to follow Him. His witness and that of the other apostles speaks clearly and emphatically against all worldliness, complacency, and compromise. Yet we continue on living contrary to what they said.

"If anyone will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matt. 16:24-26).

If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple ... So likewise, any of you who does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple (Luke 14:26, 33).

Christianity is a whole-hearted commitment to follow Christ. Many of us have forgotten that. We cannot live in the flesh and please God, but instead, we are to put to death the deeds of the body, bring it under subjection and crucify the flesh.

"For if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if through the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Rom. 8:13).

"But I bring and keep my body under subjection, lest when

preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:27).

"Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts" (Gal. 5:24).

For the most part, except for a consecrated remnant, we are a materialistic and worldly church because we don't heed or understand the message of the cross. A few years ago, I heard a media consultant say that the reason for the lack of substance and weighty messages on Christian television today is because it doesn't draw viewers. The average viewer only has an appetite to hear messages that tell them how wonderful they are, and how rich, happy, and blessed they can become. The bottom line with most television ministries is ratings and funds. How sad and tragic it will be for them when they give account to God at the judgment!

We must recover the true message and ministry of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, especially here in the West. Ministers must return to the altar and crucify works of the flesh. We don't need a new message, a new manifestation, a new program, another conference to tell us how to grow our churches and ministries. All we need to do is return to the old-fashioned gospel and obey the commands of it. God has given us an abundance of His empowering grace to obey all of His commands.

If enough of us do that it will change the nation.

Wanted: Many Davids with five smooth stones who will slay this giant in their lives.

Bert Farias has written a tetralogy of books that speak to this topic: The Real Salvation, The Real Gospel, The Real Jesus and The Real Spirit of Revival.