

Why I Disagree With Bishop T.D. Jakes' View

T.D. Jakes recently caused a stir when he made ambiguous statements regarding the relationship between the black church and the LGBT community and his evolving views on the subject. In this interview he seemed to craft his answers ambiguously enough to be able to relate to those camped on opposite ideological sides of the issue.

T.D. has since made his position clearer regarding his position on what he meant by “evolving views” as well as his stance on same-sex marriage. He said: “I simply meant that my method is evolving—not my message,” he said. “I was shocked to read that this was manipulated in a subsequent article to say I endorsed same-sex marriage! My position on the subject has been steadfast and rooted in Scripture. For the record, I do not endorse same-sex marriage, but I respect the rights that this country affords those that disagree with me.”

However, the focus of this article is his views related to biblical ethics and society.

While I agree with his statement “Jesus never changed the world through public policy but by personal transformation,” I do not agree with his view related to the ultimate calling of believers to influence culture. Nor do I agree with his views related to the separation of church and state.

Along these lines he said, “We no longer look for public policy to reflect biblical ethics.”

He also said “the church bought into the lie that America is a Christian nation,” and “we need a neutralized government that protects our right to disagree with one another and agree with one another.”

The fact is, the USA is no longer a Christian nation. But that is different from saying it should not be a Christianized nation and/or that it was never originally founded upon Christian principles.

The writings demonstrating America's Christian history are so numerous I will not attempt to debate that in this article. Suffice it to say that the wording of the Declaration of Independence showed a Christian worldview, the U.S. Constitution was replete with principles from Scripture, and all the original state constitutions based their civic laws as well as their public school education on the teaching of Scripture.

Furthermore there was at least one Supreme Court justice who declared that America is a Christian nation.

However, my focus is not on American history but on having the proper biblical understanding of the church's responsibility to reflect biblical ethics in culture.

To start, the Cultural Commission was the first covenant God made with human kind and was found in Genesis 1:26-28. In this instance, God commanded His people to bring His rule to all of the created order, which ultimately would include all systems, which support civilization including politics, law and economics.

Jesus reiterated this command in Matthew 28:19 when He told the church to "disciple nations," which seems to be the New Testament equivalent to the original cultural commission already mentioned. Jesus also called believers to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth in Matthew 5:13-16, which shows that faith is to permeate every aspect of culture, indeed, the entire world!

Jesus did not abrogate the law but came to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17). The Ten Commandments were not just a moral code for individuals, but were primarily given as a framework to guide

public policy for a nation (Ex. 20).

Even Paul says in 1 Timothy 1:9-10 that the Law was not made for righteous men, hence, making a case for the Ten Commandments to be used in Civil Society as a standard to convict and restrain sin and lawlessness.

Since, the Ten Commandments were all quoted directly and indirectly numerous times in the Gospels and epistles, this reveals they were also used as a standard of ethics within the church.

Jakes believes it is possible to have “neutrality” in regards to the ethos of a nation and its government. However, neutrality is impossible because every human government is based on some religious, ideological and philosophical foundation. Either it is man centered or God centered.

The biblical view regarding the proper framework for all nations is found in Isaiah 2:1-4, in which all nations are said to come to Mount Zion to learn the Law of God. This is God’s view of true societal transformation and His standard of ethics. It has never changed.

This does not mean that one church or denomination should rule over a nation. Scripture does not teach that a particular religious institution should set up a theocracy and force conversions and biblical compliance.

Although I believe Scripture teaches the separation of church and state, it does not teach the separation of God and state. In Scripture there are five distinct human jurisdictions—personal, family, business, civic and church—hence each expression of human government is separate and distinct.

Throughout human and biblical history, God’s kingdom has been set against the kingdom and pride of men. From the Tower of Babel, to the judgments against the Pharaoh in Egypt, to the

judgment and subsequent conversion of Nebuchadnezzar (which resulted in a shift in Babylonian law) to the crucifixion of Jesus, God's Word never separates faith from policy and politics. There is no neutrality!

Political leaders who do not represent God's law/Word are illegitimate in the eyes of God and will ultimately be judged for their rebellious autonomy.

When biblical faith affects multitudes of individuals it should eventually influence the culture of a community, city and nation. Of course, the primary goal of Jesus was not at first public policy. Jesus knew that human hearts had to be changed first. Indeed, only transformed individuals can transform a society.

However, the fact that Jesus's main theme in His teaching was the kingdom of God implied that one primary goal He had was the eventual application of His Law to the nations, because every kingdom has its own view of politics, economics and policy.

In closing, in a Democratic Republic, every individual and ideology has a chance to shift culture and remake it according to his or her own image and ideas.

Only those with the best ideas and or are the most committed to lead will become the gatekeepers of culture. Consequently, Christians who do not believe Scripture should influence public policy and ethics abandon culture and leave it to the secularists to govern. Progressive, secular humanists will not rest until every vestige of Christianity is eradicated from the public square and their freedom of religion is taken away. Said secularists do not believe in political and philosophical neutrality but indominion—the very thing they accuse some believers of.

I believe the application of the Ten Commandments in any culture will ultimately result in human flourishing among the

saved and the unsaved. This should not take place by forced conversions, political coercion or manipulation but by heaven-sent revivals that lead to societal reformations that bring biblically reflective systemic change.

Discipling a nation does not mean all men will believe in Jesus, it simply means that the Christian ethos and worldview becomes the ethos of a society. This is the only hope the world has for lasting peace and prosperity. When Christians abandon public policy they believe the world has another hope and or that Jesus is not the light of the world—merely the light of the church.

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