



God's Mission Is a Battle for Hearts and Minds

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The mission of God is a battle for the hearts and minds of billions of people, both inside and outside the Church. All truth is God's truth and we must conform our beliefs, values and thinking to His truth.

They are all around us, as pervasive as the air we breathe. They bombard us relentlessly day and night from every direction seeking to take us captive. The unaware are helpless to avoid their grasp. They are the lies, evil philosophies and poisonous worldviews that seek to tear our hearts and minds away from the God who loves us and sent His Son to die for us. These lies of Satan seek to corrupt a true and biblical understanding of God and how we are to relate to Him.

As seen in the article by Jeff Myers starting on page 19, these false worldviews have invaded our churches and corrupted the hearts and minds of millions of supposedly faithful followers of Jesus. The statistics on page 20 paint a bleak and grim picture of compromise and apostasy. Another survey by George Barna completed several years ago, which I have often quoted, discovered that only 19% of self-proclaimed born-again believers in Jesus actually held to very basic sound doctrine such as the authority of the Bible, the deity of Christ and His substitutionary death on the cross for our sins. That means that 81% do not hold to the most basic doctrines of the Christian faith. It is no wonder we are having so much trouble making progress in reaching the unreached peoples. We haven't even reached the people in our churches yet.

And what happens if we send these people out as mission workers to make disciples? Horrors! We are not talking about trying to attain some perfect goal of 100% adherence to sound doctrine, as we will always have some wayward souls in the Church. But better than 50% is not too much to ask.

The mission of God is a battle for the hearts and minds of billions of people, both inside and outside the Church. All truth is God's truth and we must conform our beliefs, values and thinking to His truth. How we think about God and ourselves affects everything else in the world since our thinking affects our actions. The battles we face in the physical world such as poverty, disease, war, human trafficking, and on and on, are at their roots a battle for the mind. This is why God calls us to renew our minds and take every thought captive to Christ. Bad thinking leads to bad outcomes both personally and globally. All the crises we face in the world are, in reality, a spiritual/worldview crisis. Thus, our job as Jesus followers is to identify the unbiblical beliefs, lies and false worldviews in our own lives and the lives of others and to confront them with the truth of God's word. To say the least, this is a monumental task. On just a personal level, it is a life-long journey to identify the lies we have believed and to replace these lies with the truth of God's Word.

In order to confront and defeat the lies and false worldviews in ourselves

and others, we must understand:

1. How our worldview developed,
2. What are the major worldviews vying for our allegiance, and,
3. How do we go about replacing the lies of the false worldviews with God's truth through effective discipleship? Unless we understand how to disciple people toward lasting biblical change in their lives, then we are in grave danger of simply plastering Christian knowledge on top of a false worldview that is largely unchanged. The effects of this can be disastrous. We can see this in many parts of the world where large majorities of people claim to be Christians but their behavior does not reflect a truly transformed life. The Rwandan genocide in 1994 is but one example of a largely "Christian" country not reflecting Christ-like character.

Renovating Your "House of Knowledge"

The wonderful article by Debbie Wood starting on page 8, gets to the heart of this problem. Based on the latest brain science, she describes how our worldview develops and how our "House of Knowledge" gets

built, block by block. Unfortunately, many of these blocks that make up our worldview are faulty and based on lies. So, as we come to Christ, each of us must do the hard work of renovating our House of Knowledge to replace those faulty blocks with blocks of truth. Situations like the Rwandan genocide take place when the faulty blocks are not replaced and the truth of the gospel is just stored in the attic and ignored. This article gets to the heart of how we change our worldview and disciple others so they are equipped to change their worldview as well.

The implications of this article are massive for the ministry of the Church. The foundational fact of human nature is that truth cannot just be heard as in a sermon. It must be wrestled with and internalized in order to make any difference. Passive listening is not enough. Whenever truth encounters deeply embedded lies in our minds, it creates a type of cognitive dissonance that can produce real physical distress. As the Church, we must provide educational opportunities in small discipleship groups that encourage this “wrestling match” to take place on a regular basis. We all have a bunch of embedded lies that need to be ripped out and replaced with God’s truth. Simply sitting in church and listening to a sermon once a week will not suffice. We are up against a culture with a high-powered media blasting lies at us like a machine gun, 24/7. A once-a-week sermon with passive listeners cannot compete with this. The Church has to adapt or we will get more of the compromise and apostasy that we see in the Church today.

All of this limits what we can do in reaching the unreached peoples.

How can we effectively mobilize the Church to action on behalf of the unreached peoples if 81% of the people in the Church do not even believe the foundational truths of the Bible? A radical change in the way we do church is required if the mission of the Church is to survive the onslaught of false worldviews from the surrounding culture.

Disciple Making Movements Are the Answer

At the heart of every Disciple Making Movement (DMM) is a philosophy of education and transformation that is perfectly suited for how people were created to learn and to replace bad information with the truth. The discipleship process in DMMs is centered upon active involvement, not passive listening as in most churches. Disciples are taught how to study the Scriptures for themselves and to feed themselves spiritually. The focus in DMMs is not on gaining head knowledge, storing more stuff in the attic of their House of Knowledge, but rather on application and obedience to what they are learning from Scripture. The process encourages the resolution of internal conflicts between deeply embedded blocks of lies and the truth of God’s Word. These conflicts are not glossed over, as in most Christian education, but brought out into the open to be confronted and resolved with the help of the Holy Spirit. In DMMs the disciple is taught to listen to the Holy Spirit and to obey what God’s word and the Spirit says. If the disciple has a faulty, unbiblical worldview, then that will come to the surface when confronted with the truths of God’s Word. The kind of statistics we see in Jeff Myers’ article on page 20 are the result of the lack

of an effective discipleship process that encourages people to confront and alter the defective blocks in their worldview. As said before, passive listening is not enough for this essential confrontation process to take place. Each of us must confront the lies in our worldview and replace those lies with the truth. Then we must help others to do the same. The future of God’s mission on Earth will hinge on whether we have the courage to choose a more effective path of discipleship.

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