

Something to Pray About

February 2012 – Cindy Sears

These men who have turned the world upside down have come here too...

Acts 17:6b

Closing the Sacred/Secular Gap

Many people are trying to tell us that Christians need to get more governmental power—to march in protests, to elect Christians politicians to office, to write letters to our representatives, to harass those we disagree with when they march...and so on.

Yes, we need to be active politically. We cannot just sit on our hands and expect the government to govern well or judiciously—and certainly, not biblically—in the present environment without our input. But, government—of any kind—is NOT the answer to our problems, either socially, economically, or morally.

Read the Bible. How did the first Christians turn the world upside down? Did they organize protest marches against unfair laws or taxes? Did they support and campaign for specific people to gain government offices? Did they malign and protest anyone who was in office because of what they did with the power they had? Did they try to raise armies against or attempt to undermine the authorities with spies and malicious acts? Did they vandalize idol-making workshops or physically attack prostitutes at pagan shrines? No, they did not.

What did the first people of the Way do to subvert the governments of their day—the Roman Empire and the Jewish religious system? First, they did not accept the good news about Christ, meet to “worship” once a week, and then go back to living just like everyone else. Instead, they became a “peculiar” people. They worshiped daily and they changed outwardly, as well as, inwardly. They acted out their faith—giving to those in need, sharing all they had, witnessing to their faith verbally—and non-verbally, by being very different from those who were not believers.

Do you know that according to the pollster George Barna:

- Born-again Christians in America have a higher rate of divorce than nonbelievers? (27% vs. 23%, respectively)
- That the self-proclaimed fundamentalists Christian divorce rate is 30%?
- That 4 of 6 states with the highest rate of divorce fall in the Bible belt?

According to Barna’s research, many non-believers say that they see “no difference” in the way professing Christians live and the way they live.

How can we turn the world upside down when the unbelievers can’t tell us apart from themselves? What good does it do to read and study the Bible, go to church and hear good preaching and teaching—if we don’t ACT on what we hear?

The followers of Christ changed the world by changing themselves—or letting God change them. As the love of Christ filled them up, they poured it out on those around them. Christians began the first orphanages to save abandoned infants (a form of abortion) and children; and they adopted the children,

too. They also died rather than kneel before the Emperor and call him, Lord. Christian businessmen lost opportunities to make money by not going to orgies at pagan shrines—where many business deals were made. They gave up the number one form of entertainment in the Roman world, too—gladiator combat and other coliseum events. Do you ever turn off the TV or refuse to read a book because of what is being promoted in it that is against God’s written law?

This country was built on Christian principles because the men who organized it lived out their beliefs outside of the church, as well as, inside the church. There was no gap between the secular and the sacred. That’s what God wants from all His children—that they live as if all that they do is sacred—done in the sight of God and for His glory.

Let’s close the gap. Let us live for the Lord wherever we are, whatever we are doing. Let us become a “peculiar” people again—and turn the world upside down from the inside out.

(Recently read and highly recommended: *What’s So Amazing About Grace* by Philip Yancey; *Simply Jesus: A New Vision of Who He Was, What He Did, and Why It Matters* by N. T. Wright.)