

Daniel 2:20-21

Social/Cultural Arena

Perhaps the best way to understand our responsibilities in the social/cultural arena is to look to Jesus for our example.

Jesus lived in one of history's most corrupt societies. But He perfectly maintained His Father's perspective on social and political matters, even though He lived in a society that was every bit as pagan and corrupt as today's culture. Cruel tyrants and dictators ruled throughout the region, and the institution of slavery was firmly entrenched. Legal and economic oppression of the Jews by Rome was rampant, dwarfing anything we experience today. But even in the face of such tyranny, Jesus never issued a call for political changes, even by peaceful means.

He never attempted to "capture the culture" for biblical morality. He did not come to earth to be a political or social reformer. Rather, He came to establish a new spiritual order. He came not to make the old order moral through social and governmental reform, but to make new creatures (His people) holy through the saving power of the gospel and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.

He knew what many today fail to grasp: governments and institutions are made up of people. When people's hearts are changed by Christ, godly governments and institutions will follow. If the hearts of the people are corrupt, getting them together in groups only multiplies the corruption. What we need is not better government, but better men and women in government.

So what is a Christian to do? Can Christians shun all political and social efforts to affect the culture? Certainly, if our consciences convict us to do so and as long as our motivation is pure and not an effort to appear holier than those who do choose to be involved. Pride is too often the by-product of completely withdrawing from the culture.

We are to be in the world, but not of it, and part of being in the world is modeling Christ-likeness for the world and Christian love toward one another.

Can we picket, campaign, and lobby our elected leaders on issues of concern to us? Certainly, as long as we keep the ultimate goal in mind "to win people to Christ."

However, we must remember that even the most gracious efforts to "clean up the culture" will not protect or expand the cause of Christ.

Ours is a spiritual battle against worldly ideologies and dogmas that are arrayed against God, and we achieve victory over them only with the weapon of Scripture (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

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