

- 1) go into all nations
- 2) make disciples
- 3) baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- 4) teach them to observe all things He commanded

The promised result then of complying with these instructions?? —

“...lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

Consider what is currently happening in most churches today in relation to these marching orders. Many Churches are *very* dedicated to doing good deeds that assist the *physical* needs of those around them while either ignoring or being *required* to abide by government restrictions that specifically restrict them from meeting the *spiritual* needs of those whom they assist. Priorities are becoming more than a little confused. Dysfunction is becoming prevalent because the behavior pattern being practiced is undermining the very core for which the Church exists. Chaos will soon be the rule without God’s blessing. The Devil is allowed to run about the world unchecked and our government as well as those who are unfamiliar with God’s Word are making it easier for him to carry out his work because of restrictions on Christians that prohibit them from preaching the Gospel to those who *need* to hear it when they would otherwise have an opportunity to do so.

Had the church continued to effectively focus on the responsibility given to them in Matthew 28 — the responsibility of sharing the Gospel with the lost — we might be in a much different place today. It is true that we may not be able to change the city, state or country. We cannot actually change a single person, but we *can* do as we are instructed in Matthew 28. Not a single instruction given by God indicates we can *force* anyone to accept what Scripture teaches. However — if by the help of God — we are able to reach just one person a year for 20 years — that’s 20 people. If every person reached then reached one additional person per year, that’s even more people. If each of those then committed to reaching out and were able to reach 1 person per year and this pattern continues and we consider this growth over the course of 20 years, that would be 1,048,576 people. The point of course, is — that a commitment by just one Christian to reach just one person a year *could* very easily have impact on a city, state, nation and even the world? Just one person committing to study the Bible and adhere to its teaching, *could* change the world. Does that mean evil could be eradicated? No — not until God calls an end to the world, but we will be busy at doing what God has instructed us to do in His Word. The notion that we are helpless to correct the dysfunctional direction our society seems to be going, will no longer prevail. We just need to follow God’s Word and keep priorities from being so confounded by the Devil that we are no longer proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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DILIGENCE

“We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.” — Hebrews 6:11

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Dysfunction Correction

Troubles have always been a part of life. So it is not new to our culture that there are problems. However when you consider some of the things currently facing our nation, we can readily see that the problems of this day and age are moving in a direction that seems to be irreconcilable as well as irreversible.

Consider for a moment a situation currently facing this great Nation in which we live. Just over a month ago, we celebrated the Fourth of July — or Independence Day, as it is often called. The holiday is of course a time set aside to celebrate the freedom of our Nation and focus on patriotism and love of our country. But let’s think about this for a moment. Doesn’t it seem a bit odd to — on one hand — be *celebrating* the independence and freedom we gained as a Nation on that July 4th of 1776 — while on the other hand taking a realistic look at how so many of our freedoms are coming under attack.

Many of the freedoms we have come to enjoy are changing in ways that cause those of the Christian faith to be silenced. Two obvious particular instances are in regard to Christian beliefs concerning homosexuality itself as well as the efforts being made to change the definition of marriage to include same sex couples. Christians are no longer as free as we *once* were to express Biblical beliefs concerning these two subjects without the risk of retaliation. It is now considered discriminatory and politically incorrect to express ones Christian beliefs about these subjects. In times past, it was completely acceptable to nearly *all* of society to set moral boundaries that were in line with and based on the Scriptures — but that is no longer the case. If recent history is a reliable indicator, we have seen the collapse of this Nation’s willingness to accept *Scripture* as the guide to establishing moral standards. At the same time we have been witnessing the *decline* of a willingness to use *Scripture* as a guide for moral behavior, we are seeing an *increase* in the efforts being made to accept Sharia Law as an alternative for changing the laws that have been set in place by our government over the past 200+ years — laws that had mostly been influenced by the Scriptures. But — in recent times, the Bible is being regularly ridiculed as an out of date historical document of no relevance to our current time and culture.

A look at the current landscape reveals numerous schools are — in an increasingly open manner — providing instruction that is in *direct opposition* to Bible based

morality. The current landscape also reveals that our legislators are passing laws that place restrictions on Christians' ability to speak openly without risk of censorship. We also see that Churches are being politicized as the government solicits those in the pulpit to endorse "social justice programs." Strangely, they are the very same people that insist there must be separation of church and state. In the workplace — most large corporations are "blackmailing" their employees. Employees must either agree to a worldly agenda (e.g. accepting "alternative" lifestyles as "normal") or risk being reprimanded or even dismissed for promoting hate speech and intolerance in the workplace. Many companies *require* — as a necessity of employment *with* them — that each employee *sign* that they have read — *and accept* — the *company's* policy concerning certain speech and actions that are prohibited in that particular workplace. While some of the items included in the policy are quite innocuous, others strike at the very heart of many things that Christians can not Scripturally accept. It has become completely unacceptable for Christians to *express any* viewpoints in the workplace concerning matters of their faith. This landscape leaves no doubt we are moving quickly in an extremely anti-Christian direction. How are Christians reacting? They observe and become concerned, worried, frustrated and alarmed — and have no idea what else to do.

So the question then becomes — what *do* we do now that it is apparent that our country is going in a direction that God's Word clearly opposes. The first thing we must realize is that this direction has been coming for a *long* time. It hasn't happened overnight. However now that it has progressed to a point of being considered nearly irreversible — many Christians finally — seem to be waking up to the seriousness of this Biblically dysfunctional society.

Let's consider this subject however, from a bit of a different viewpoint before going on. Oddly enough there is a parallel that has been — and continues to be going on *within* the Body of Christ. The place in which so many congregations find themselves today did not happen quickly — or overnight — but came about over a *long* period time. Many Churches are experiencing a decline in attendance and have therefore began practicing a watered-down version of the Gospel in hopes of attracting more members. Christians have very much enjoyed the freedom they have in Christ but have unfortunately failed to understand that freedom is never free. It took the death of Christ on the cross to provide us with the freedom to have the *opportunity* to operate without the burden of sin. Freedom *always* has a cost that must be paid — whether its freedom in our Nation or freedom from the burden of sin.

Many Christians see our current social atmosphere simply as a time we are going through and it will swing back the other direction in due time. The big question arises when we consider the fact that fewer and fewer Christians are engaged in any *serious* study of the Bible. This means there is less and less learning about what the Bible teaches concerning this life as well as the next. When there is very

little knowledge of the standards expected by God, those standards become more and more unclear and therefore become indefensible — and a direction contrary to God's direction then continues on unchecked. An ungodly direction can not be corrected if there is not enough knowledge to understand *why it is* a wrong direction — *or* — enough knowledge to mount a defense *against* it.

We need not look to closely to see that Churches across the country are busy doing *many* good works. While this is obviously a good thing, it also provides a perfect lead in to the government's proposed partnership with Churches to promote "social justice programs." So while the many deeds are certainly good — most have very little, if anything at all, to do with the command Christ recorded in Matthew 28:19 and 20. There is a growing obsession to do all forms of good things for mankind — which is of course, not necessarily bad — *except* when — as those deeds are done, *great effort is made* to not offend anyone by suggesting that they should allow us to share the Gospel with them. The effort to *intentionally avoid* any mention of the Gospel allows the recipient of the good deed the opportunity to receive the *physical* benefit of the deed but does *not* allow Christians to carry out the *God given mission* to share the Gospel. This problem is in fact intensified when there is *any government money* involved in the carrying out of the good deeds. In the case of programs such as a food banks, clothing centers, etc., that include the use of *any* government funds at *all*, Christians are *specifically prohibited* from sharing the Gospel. Failure to abide by that restriction will cause the loss of government funding assistance for the program. Does this then, leave any doubt that partnering with the government will do nothing more than secularize churches more aggressively and prohibit the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

If we return now, to where this article started, it is easy to conclude that there is little that we can do to remedy the slide of the morals in our own cities — let alone in our Nation. We tend to accept to a great degree that except for voting and perhaps some involvement in politics, there may be very little we can do to correct the situation. So — perhaps it might be wise for us to direct our efforts toward something that we *can* do.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:19-20 KJV)

If Christians were as cognizant of the *spiritual* needs of people — i.e., the need for salvation — as they are of their *physical* needs, we would more eagerly accept the instructions given by Christ to "go ye therefore". Not only that — but we would do exactly as He instructed when he gave those marching orders. Let's consider the details of His instructions and break them down into specific doable actions: