

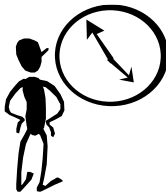
## THE BATTLE CREEK BULLETIN

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### Time of Assembly



#### **Sunday:**

Bible Study 4:00 p.m.  
Worship 5:00 p.m.

#### **Wednesday:**

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

## It's Not Politics

By Irvin Himmel

Moral statements and positions will, necessarily, impact political issues. This is not because morality is inherently political, but because the government has the task of recognizing the difference between good and evil, so moral issues will have to be dealt with ([Rom 13:3-4](#)). This means that, contrary to what is so often stated and argued, morality will be legislated by the government, and it will be legislated from a worldview that either recognizes the significance of God or not. To say that God needs to be kept out of politics, then, is to default to the secularized view of morality; and secularized morality will then be legislated. Why is it that people default to keeping God out of it instead of keeping the secularized views of reality out of it? And why do some Christians seem to be buying into all of this?

We need to see what has happened here. Many have bought into the notions that:

1. God and religion must be kept out of politics, and
2. morality is not something that can be legislated.

In fact, both are false. God is never out of politics, and we are fooling ourselves if we think so, given that God rules in the kingdoms of men. Every worldview says something about God. If a worldview says there is no God, then a notion of God is still a part of the position, and actions will be taken that demonstrate that disbelief. Further, every law is a legislation of morality in one form or another; there is no way around it. The question is, will the legislation come from those whose worldview respects God as the foundation or not?

I don't say all of this in order to argue that Christians need to get more political. I'm arguing that Christians need to say more about God and morality in every area of life. We don't check our God at the door when we enter a political are-

na, and we don't set aside godly morals when we engage the culture. We don't take a moral view of something based on politics, but surely our political views ought to be based on godly morality. The point then is not that we need more political activists. The point is that we need to be more engaged in the moral discussions of our culture and take a stand for what is right, regardless of political fallout. In other words, it's not about being political; it's about standing for what's right in the middle of a crooked and perverse generation.

Even more, we need to hold up the gospel itself to the world. The answer to our problems is not to vote in or out this or that politician. No government in history has been a bastion of godliness, and I don't expect that to change. The answer is always where it has been: in Christ. The problems of this world won't be fixed by a human government, but by the gospel. "The kingdoms of earth pass away one by one, but the kingdom of heaven remains."

So Christians should be concerned with:

1. holding out the gospel to a lost world and
2. standing up for Christ and His morality.

It's not politics. It's just what's right.

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## What Must I Do to Be Saved?

By Steve A. Hamilton

1. There must be a will to do the Lord's will (Jn. 7:17). This takes place primarily after a person learns of God, Christ, and the instructions contained in the Bible.
2. Hear and take God's message to heart (Rom. 10:17). Faith is an essential part of obedience to God. "*But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him*" (Heb. 11:6).
3. Believe in and love the Lord. "*And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.*" *This is the first commandment*" (Mk. 12:30).
4. Count the cost of discipleship. Despite what the world would have people believe, becoming a true Christians requires dedication and loyalty. Jesus said, "*Whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple*" (Lk. 14:27).
5. Confess Christ as your Savior. "*If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*" (Rom. 10:9-10).
6. Repent and be immersed. "*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...*" (Acts 2:38).

## Have Times Changed?

By Austin Hausner

*“For the Son of man came to seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10).*

When we talk with people about Christianity or anything Bible-related we find there are many objections to Christianity. Some of these objections are fairly common. We want to be able to provide a counter-argument to one of the more common ones. This common objection goes something like this: “Times have changed, therefore Christianity is no longer necessary, relevant, or compatible with today’s America.”

The assertion is that because of the numerous and drastic changes our society has experienced in a relatively short time there no longer remains a place left for Christianity. This is the common objection that we want to be able to provide an answer to.

We find that people tend to be quick to justify themselves but are not nearly as eager to explain themselves when put on the spot. Most people can give you a pretty confident one-line answer about why they believe something. They are usually not as skilled at being able to explain the logic behind their conclusion. When we engage people in conversation we are trying to discover the logical fallacies which will help us dismantle their faulty arguments.

Let's consider an analogy. A young patient is admitted to the hospital. This patient is in their thirties and up until being moved to the hospital, they were strong and healthy. But now their health is declining rapidly. The medical professionals understand that this person will not heal on their own. Although the exact illness is uncertain, based on the symptoms they decide to try a particular medication. Based on when the medication was administered they could come to the conclusion that the medicine actually made the patient worse. So they try another medication. Again, the patient's health decreases even further. They try yet one more. Although the body reacts in different ways to each medication the overall result is a continuing decline in the patient's health. At this point giving the right medicine is more critical than it has been previously. If this patient were our family-member we would probably become more open-minded as to what types of treatments or medications we would be willing to experiment with to save our family-member. We won't simply give up. After all, this is a member of our family so we'll try whatever we can to make them better.

[Luke 5:30-32](#) says *“And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, ‘Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?’ And Jesus answered them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.’ ”*

It's interesting that Jesus uses an analogy involving a doctor to describe spiritual health and illness. Of course, we know that the Pharisees were sinners, just like the people they were grumbling about -- and the apostles, and all of us, and everyone in the

world for that matter. But there's more to it than this. There's a certain degree of awareness of one's own condition to perceive the need for the physician in the first place. When we know we are sick we know we must go to Jesus. If we don't realize we are sick, we don't know that we have a problem in the first place. We would not be ready for the physician because we are unwilling to admit our own errors and faults.

In our analogy, the United States is the sick patient in the hospital. This patient is young because we are a young country compared to many. We were previously healthy and strong but now we have a serious spiritual illness in our country. It will not heal itself on its own. We need the right medicine. We need a physician. We need it more than ever because of how things have become in this land.

I don't believe we will be very effective when talking with people about the changes that have taken place in our country if we flat out deny the changes have happened. Sometimes when we hear people talk about change we might think of a passage in Ecclesiastes which states that there is nothing new under the sun ([Ecclesiastes 1:9](#)). However, we need to understand the context of this verse. Just because the situation in our country is new for us does not mean that it's new for other societies and nations.

Nations go through cycles. All great empires of the past have gone through a similar cycle. The Chinese have been through this cycle several times. The Japanese have been through it, the Romans went through it, and the Babylonians, Persians, and Assyrians. It's interesting that these great empires went through the same cycle at different times and in different places on the Earth. One of the hallmarks of a declining nation is a rapid moral decline. If we think about what happened in Rome, we can understand that their situation is in many ways similar to our own today. One of the defining characteristics of a nation in its twilight years is a generally agreed upon decline in morality. It's interesting that even those who deny God's existence can still perceive the changes in morality that have taken place in our nation.

I think we will be more effective when talking with people about these changes if we fully acknowledge that they exist. If we don't properly understand the passage in Ecclesiastes and deny the changes that have taken place, we might lose any chance we have with someone we're talking to.

This leads us to our counter-argument. When we are told that times have changed we must acknowledge these changes. The counter-argument could go something like this: "You are correct that many changes have happened and it's because of these that Christianity is needed more than it ever was." This is not good enough unless we explain ourselves.

Think about some of the basic tenets of Christianity. In Christianity, we learn what love is, how to love others, the kind of action and heart that is necessary to love as God defines it. We also learn not to think too highly of ourselves and to put others' needs ahead of our own. We learn to watch the way we conduct ourselves so as to not

make anyone stumble. We learn that we need to be lights in the world. We learn about kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.

If the person you are talking with has children you can always appeal on their behalf as well. A question we could pose could be “Wouldn't you want your children learning about these characteristics in school? Wouldn't that make the world a better place?” I know what our kids are learning in school and it's not these things. Not very long ago a question was asked by one of our preachers giving a sermon. He asked, “If everyone would love one another and look out for one another, wouldn't that eliminate many of the problems we have today?” Of course, it would! The problems that it wouldn't eliminate immediately would be eliminated eventually if this was how we thought and if this was how we acted.

The previously mentioned virtues which are only a few that we learn about in Christianity are completely opposite of what we see going on in our nation today. These things are all part of the medicine that we desperately need. We are more divided than we have ever been. We have reached a point of abundance in this nation that other nations are still trying to achieve. Most of these nations are older than us and yet are still striving to achieve what we now have. What have we done with this great abundance? We have squandered our resources. We take everything we have for granted. We have much and we constantly demand more. When we get it, it doesn't make us happy and we want even more. We always want more and it's never enough. Every new thing we try and every new lust we pursue does not give us the happiness that we thought it might. But nonetheless we continue to pursue our own way which is apart from God.

All the things that we do on our own do not make us truly happy and they also drive us further away from God. We don't need any more of man's designs to try to lead us to happiness or the good life. The medicine we have been giving ourselves is making us sicker. The previously mentioned virtues from Christianity could truly solve so many of the problems that we now have. Problems that many people are not even aware of because they are spiritual in nature.

It's because the times have changed that we so greatly need the Lord in our lives and in everyone else's. It's ridiculous to say that there is no place for Christianity when its chief tenants would provide the antidote to our increasing spiritual sickness. I'm afraid that we will suffer the same fate as the Romans unless we act like the example of the people of Nineveh in Jonah's day. The people of Nineveh realized they needed to repent, and they did. They immediately turned away from what they were doing and turned to God. I believe this is the only way that God will have mercy on our nation and will not allow us to suffer the same fate as the previously mentioned empires. The changing times prove that people truly need God. The only medicine that will work for us are the words of life from the great physician, Jesus.