

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Christian Pacifism

by Pastor Marvin R. Barham

**Matthew 5:13** *Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. **Acts 13:47** *For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.**

**As a nation we have not only lost our savor but we have lost sight of our Savior.** Salt gives flavor, kills bacteria, and was required by God for a Holy sacrifice. Light dispels darkness, makes clear a pathway, and was required in the temple when the priest presented a holy sacrifice to God. Without salt and light, there could be no life. Where righteous people refuse to be salt and light, death and darkness doth prevail. **When righteous people are passive, moral perversion permeates the culture.** Proverbs 14:33-34 tells us, **33** *Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding: but that which is in the midst of fools is made known. **34** Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."*

Dr. Ron Moseley states, "The idea that Jesus was a pacifist was due to a complete lack of understanding of the Hebraic mindset of the first century."<sup>1</sup>

If Christian pacifism in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century was due to a lack of understanding Jesus, where does today's Christianity stand in relation to the culture? I would say that **in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century we have surpassed the idea of a pacifist Jesus and embraced Christian pacifism on a corporate cultural scale.** We have created a Jesus that is entertaining, user friendly, non-confrontational and tolerant of sinfulness in relative degree. **Our common goal is simply more people in our righteous pews instead of pews filled with more righteous people.**

With the help of liberal secular progressivism, humanism, socialism, Marxism, feminism, multiculturalism, universalism, relativism, naturalism, **proletariat morality, political correctness and just plain ole Christian apathy to study the Word of God and apply it daily to our lives,** we have dumbed down the power of Truth and made it to no avail against the vile unrighteousness and perversion of our nation's ethical, moral, and social foundations.

Today our nation is so culturally fragmented, Christianity so relatively defined, and Christians so utterly divided that it is no wonder the **"Saviors of the Day"** are socialistic, communistic, materialistic and humanistic ideologies (or shall I say idols). So, **just how great is our God?** Can He save humanity? Can Christianity save humanity? Christ died but once for the sin of men that they might know salvation. One must accept that salvation and redemption, and selflessly be restored to righteousness in the blood of Christ Jesus. For one to know truth one must be shown truth. But how will they know unless we show them. So, **it is not a question of God's ability to save humanity.** The question is, **"Do those who profess to be His know how great He is?"** If so, then why do we not live as such and show others the power of His truth? Why do we cower to untruth in our daily lives?

C.S. Lewis stated, "As Christians we are tempted to make unnecessary concessions to those outside the Faith. **We give in too much...we must show our Christian colors,** if we are to be true to Jesus Christ. We cannot remain silent and concede everything away."<sup>2</sup>

As Christians we are commanded to be salt and light. This means **seeking ways and opportunity in which to preserve righteousness and point out the immorality, unrighteousness, or evils of political or governing powers in every aspect of our society and personal lives.**

Nowhere in Scripture do we find where Jesus ever taught that it was wrong to defend one's faith or that Christians were not to resist evil.<sup>1</sup> In fact, **1 Peter 3:15-16** commands us to defend truth and be a restraint to evil. **"15** *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: **16** Having a good conscience: that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ." And **Romans 12:9** *9* Let love be without dissimulation (to hide under false appearance-Webster). **Abhor** (to regard with extreme repugnance; loathe, hate-Webster) *that which is evil: cleave to that which is good.**

In fact, the Word of God tells us that God will hold us accountable for every word we speak (**Matthew 12:36**) and for that which we should have spoken and did not, as forewarned in **Ezekiel 3:18**, “*When I say **unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.***”

I have heard many Christians say or be baffled by critics who would say, “**Are Christians not supposed to turn the other cheek?**” Meaning to say, sit back and say nothing. “The phrase ‘turn the other cheek’ referred to by Jesus has been misunderstood to support pacifism (**Matthew 5:38-39**). The term ‘*enemy*’ in Hebraic literature as Jesus used it here referred to a brother who had not spoken to you in three days. Jesus’ instruction was not to try to take revenge on an evil doer under no circumstances suggested that believers were to submit, tolerate, or cower to evil or unrighteousness.”<sup>1</sup>

As Christians we are to not be fighters or brawlers. We are to unselfishly love as Christ loved and be willing to lay our lives down for our brother. We are to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. If you are being persecuted, do not seek revenge, be bitter or unforgiving. However, **the anti-Christ spirit has used this against the church to oppress the salt and light by causing Christians to interpret it as, “You should be silent in the face of wickedness and Christian love is to tolerate sinfulness.”** Surely the Word of God does not contradict itself in principle from Ezekiel 3 to Matthew 5. We must understand the Word of God in cultural context then and now in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. **The principles have not changed.** The love of God is gracious and merciful and loves the sinner enough to show him the light and life of a Savior but has no tolerance for foolishness, lawlessness, sinfulness, or godlessness. **Christian pacifism does not bring deliverance and liberty;** it justifies a life of rebellion against God which leads to death and condemnation of one’s soul.

It has never been more apparent than in our culture today, when a few voices speak out, but the majority of the church sits comfortably quiet in their pews on the right while political correctness runs rampant, social injustice is at an all time high, and **the double standard is unequivocally on the left.** Nineteen year olds murder in the mall for fun; child molesters go free because they are too short for prison; homosexuals dress as nuns and conduct orgies in our city streets; victims of violent crime and theft are condemned for trying to protect themselves and their property; eleven year old girls are given free abortion pills at school without parental consent; and **perversion has become a family pastime.**

While watching the news I watched an interview of two young *Victoria’s Secret* models as they explained how men, women, and children of all ages watch their show. “It is very family oriented,” one exclaimed. Do what? Family oriented? **In what world did I wake up in when suddenly the family thing to do is gather the wife and kids around the new 60” LCD High Definition television and watch women, in what I would call less than even undergarments, parade themselves in provocative fashion? The Cleavers would have died of shame.**

I am not endorsing, but I do applaud Mike Huckabee for his profound articulation during the CNN Republican Debate in which he, unlike other candidates on either side, was challenged to defend his belief in God and creationism. Would that more men and women who profess to know and live truth know what they believe, why they believe it, and be able to give a defense in such a manner of resolve, self-control, and passion. More importantly, would that **more professing Christians live that same faith and teach it to their children every moment, at every opportunity, of every day. We not only need a man or woman of solid Biblical, righteous conviction for president, we need them throughout our nation in our churches, market place, educational community, and in our homes.** Christianity never has been and should not be a passive (*lethargic; inert; lacking in energy or will; receptive to outside influence or impressions*) faith and lifestyle. **The passivity of our Christian faith in our personal lives today is reflected in the local and national news of tonight. It is time for the Christians to wake up and rise to the occasion of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.**