

Six Dangerous Questions To Transform Your View Of The World by Paul Borthwick (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL: 1996) (47 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

Chapter 1. *What's a Worldview?*

1. Our Worldview Determines Our Outlook

Our geographical knowledge problem flows from what sociologists call our *worldview*. Our worldview determines how we look at ourselves, our world and our roles in the world. If our worldview leads us to believe that we (or our people) occupy the center of the universe, we will usually care little for other countries or cultures.

If, on the other hand, we see ourselves as neighbors in the global village or as God's messengers declaring his glory to the nations (Ps 96:3), then world awareness grows as a natural byproduct of our view of the universe. We look at other people and cultures with respect, compassion and a desire to communicate the gospel to them. [Page 10]

2. Jesus' Agents Of Change And Hope

If we personalize our faith, failing to integrate our life in Christ into life in our world, we may find personal, private comfort, but we will fall short in our Jesus-assigned mission to be "salt" and "light" in the world.

If, on the other hand, we view ourselves as Jesus' agents of change and hope in the world, we discover the motivational foundation for activity in outreach, social service, justice ministry, missions and world evangelization. [Page 11]

3. Three Major Components of The Christian Worldview

Peter Cotterell, former missionary to Ethiopia and now principal of London Bible College, points out that the Christian worldview originates from three major components: our existential awareness of the world (our life experience), our understanding of Scripture and our own self-interest. [Page 11]

4. Our Worldview Must Be Biblical

Sam Wilson and Gordon Aeschliman, in their book *The Hidden Half*, push us a step further on this issue of a biblical worldview:

Anthropologists explain that at our cores is a basic view of reality—a worldview. That worldview determines who we are, what we value, and how we behave.

If our worldview is unChristian, or less-than-biblical, it will inevitably surface in values and actions that contradict the heart of the biblical worldview.

But if my actions stem from a biblical worldview, then it becomes a matter of faithful obedience. I can allow a fad to slip away, but not something that goes as deep as obedience. I have decided to follow Jesus with my whole life, and I understand where he's going. It's no longer a matter of choosing a career or lifestyle—it's a matter of faithfulness.² [Page 13] ² Sam Wilson and Gordon Aeschliman, *The Hidden Half* (Pasadena, Calif.: MARC, n.d.), p. 97

5. A Selfish Worldview Is Limiting and Ineffective

With a narrow, self-serving worldview, we can close our eyes to world realities:

- *we can live selfish lives without regard for the millions of poor or the 1 billion people in our world who go to bed hungry every night;*
- *we can forget about [160] million street children in the world, living in danger in cities like Rio de Janeiro, Calcutta, Manila, New York and Bangkok;*
- *we can pretend that the Western church leads the Christian world—when in reality the modern Christian movement finds its world center in Latin America, Asia and Africa;*
- *we can think that speaking out about our Christian faith is not necessary because “everyone has had the chance to hear about Jesus”—when in reality there are millions in our world who know nothing about the good news of life and forgiveness in Jesus Christ. [Page 14]*

6. We Must Be Globally Minded

The same natural instinct that Jonah displayed is apparent today in the church around the world. In the Fall 1995 issue of *Leadership* magazine, the editors posited that a major trend in the church in the United States is that “church members are more near sighted.” They explained,

In general, Americans are moving from being globally to locally minded. This trend seems counter-intuitive, given all the talk about our world being a global village. But America in general and the church in particular seem to be circling the wagons.

Some examples of this shift in the church: Denominations are having trouble replacing retiring missionaries; prayer movements are focused more on spiritual renewal in America than on world evangelism; giving to foreign missions is declining.³

The problem is not unique in the United States. Around the world, this local-versus-global orientation expresses itself in the daily life of the church. [Pages 15-16] ³*Leadership*, Fall 1995, p. 54

7. Counter-cultural Vs. Isolationists

Responding to this trend toward insulating ourselves from the world, Leith Anderson, a globally aware pastor from the Minneapolis area, challenges the church in the United States and beyond, asking if we are going to mimic the “our-nation-first” sentiment that is growing in the world. Documenting what he calls our “isolationist roots,” he points to trends that turned American interests inward.

A shift outward occurred after World War II. Anderson observes that after we entered the war, “overnight the popular culture changed from isolationism to militarism. When the war ended in 1945, militarism turned into unprecedented internationalism.” The American church followed suit and sent huge numbers of missionaries; in fact, the United States became the primary sending nation in the modern missionary movement.

After the start of glasnost and detente in 1980, Anderson says, we started shifting inward again. Rising crime at home, government problems and a declining economy started to take priority over helping other nations. Our involvement internationally became based on “American interests” rather than justice or anything close to biblical concerns for righteousness.

Anderson concludes that our culture again has slipped into an isolationist position, and he asks if we will adopt a worldview based on our limited experience and self-interest or the worldview that God advocates for us in the Scriptures:

The question for Christians at the end of the twentieth century is: Will we become counter-cultural? Will we follow the Great Commission of Acts 1:8 [to be Christ’s witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the utmost ends of the earth] more than the cultural trend of the 90’s?⁴ [Pages 17-18]

⁴Leith Anderson, “The Turn Inward,” *Leadership*, Fall 1995, pp. 98-100

8. Ethnocentrism Undermines

Nothing undermines the effective communication of the gospel of Jesus Christ as much as ethnocentrism, which the dictionary defines as “the belief in the superiority of one’s own ethnic group.” I will use the term here more broadly, to refer as well to belief in the superiority of one’s own nation, culture and political system. [Page 22]

9. An Ethnocentric Worldview Hinders Our Effectiveness

The gospel that we proclaim does come with standards that transcend culture (that is, commands that must be obeyed no matter how “culturally acceptable” a behavior or practice has become). Converted liars cannot remain liars; headhunters cannot remain headhunters; the sexually promiscuous must repent and change. At the same time, our desire as followers of Jesus Christ is to promote him, not our cultural or ethnic practices. If our worldview emanates from ethnocentric thinking, our ability to share the love of Christ across cultures and our freedom to participate in the worldwide body of Christ will be hampered. [Page 23]

10. Jesus’ Commission Covers All Cultural Barriers

Our challenge is the world. Jesus commissions his disciples to go to

- Jerusalem, the place of their failure and denial only weeks before
- Judea, the country that rejected Jesus as Messiah
- Samaria, land of ethnic hostilities and historical hatred
- the ends of the earth, far outside their comfort zone, the place of great unknowns

Jesus’ call to be his witnesses covers not only a geographic expansion of distance but also a progression across cultural, ethnic and linguistic barriers. [Page 25]

11. Pioneers for Christ, Not Settlers

The command of Acts 1:8 seems clear—the gospel should be preached to the whole world, starting in Jerusalem and rippling out across geographic and ethnic barriers: to Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth. But seven chapters later the church is still locked into an ethnocentric model. The believers have received the Holy Spirit’s power, and they have witnessed with boldness, but they have stayed in Jerusalem.

That early church did what we all do: they started out as risk-takers and pioneers, and then they got settled. Perhaps they got too comfortable. So God intervenes to launch them out again: “On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria” (Acts 8:1). [Page 26]

12. Availability Leads To A Worldview Shaped by God

Philip’s availability transcended his ethnocentricity. Philip was more concerned about proclaiming the gospel than about his own nationalistic pride or fears. His availability illustrates the powerful way that God will work through a person who allows God to reshape his or her worldview. [Page 27]

Chapter 3. *The Separation of Intellect and Lifestyle*

13. Integrating Our Beliefs Into How We Live Daily

Most of us live with the tension of not having fully integrated our beliefs into the way we live. We say we believe the Ten Commandments, but we lie, use God’s name with irreverence, “kill” people with our angry words (according to Jesus’ interpretation in Matthew 5) and consistently put career or family or success as idols in the place of God.

Peter Cotterell addresses the matter of integrating our faith thus: “To know a truth is to act on that truth, and to fail to act is to demonstrate a failure of knowledge. Truth must be rescued from its arid isolation in propositional theology, and must be transferred to the arena of everyday living.”¹ [Page 31] ¹Peter Cotterell, *Mission and Meaninglessness* (London: S.P.C.K., 1990), p.248

14. Theoretical Worldview Stems from Self-interest

Millions of Christians profess a concern for those they would theoretically designate the “lost,” and the theoretical worldview associated with that concern should lead to their taking steps to reach these lost. That the vast majority take no such steps is because the theoretical worldview is seriously modified by self-interest, producing a praxeologically determinative worldview which would probably not be verbalized by the individual concerned, nor, indeed, acknowledged if it were verbalized by another person? ² ² Ibid.

Chapter 4. *Dangerous Question #1 Who is Jesus?*

15. Missionary-minded Church

From the first post-resurrection appearances of Jesus the Christian Church has been of its essence a missionary Church. ... There was salvation in Jesus and nowhere else. There was no salvation to be found in the plethora of religions on offer around the Mediterranean basin. Gods constructed by human hands were no gods at all. The Christians were confident that in Christ God had not merely spoken to all humanity: he had himself come among them with the ultimate authoritative response to the human condition.⁶ [Page 42] ⁶ Peter Cotterell, *Mission and Meaninglessness*, p. 263

16. Only One Way Of Salvation

The witness of Scripture is that salvation is found nowhere else. Therefore people outside of Christ's saving power have no hope of salvation. The harshness of this must dig deep into our souls—people (even the sincere, the religious, the moral) are lost without Jesus—as we wrestle with the question “Who is Jesus?”

Robertson McQuilkin tangles with this tough conclusion in *The Great Omission*:

We may not be able to prove from Scripture with absolute certainty that no soul since Pentecost has ever been saved by extraordinary means without the knowledge of Christ. But neither can we prove from Scripture that a single soul has been so saved. If there is an alternative [to Jesus], God has not told us of it. If God in His revelation felt it mandatory not to proffer such a hope, how much more should we refrain from theorizing ... So long as the truth revealed to us identifies only one way of escape, this is what we must live by and proclaim.⁷

In short, if there's another way of salvation outside of Jesus Christ, God has not told us what it is. [Pages 42-43] ⁷ McQuilken, *Great Omission*, pp. 50-51

17. We Are His Ambassadors

If there are other ways to God or other "mediators," we have no reason to develop a vision for the world. If there are many ways to God or many ways to obtain salvation, we have no reason to bother with missions at all. (And Jesus would have had no reason to come to earth.) But if Jesus is the only way, we are his ambassadors, pleading with the world to be reconciled to God (see 2 Cor 5). [Page 45]

18. Jesus' Love for Us

“We know love by this, that he [Jesus] laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another” (1 Jn 3:16 NRSV)

Adoniram Judson, the great missionary pioneer to Burma (now Myanmar), illustrated this responsive love when he wrote to his future father-in-law asking for Nancy (also known as Ann) Hazeltine's hand in marriage:

I have now to ask, whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next Spring, to see her no more in this world; whether you can consent to her departure, and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life; whether you can consent to the dangers of the ocean; to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India; to every kind of want & distress; to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps even a violent death.

Two things to note so far: First, Adoniram does not seem to be too skilled in diplomacy as he tries to convince Mr. Hazeltine that he is the right man for Nancy; he definitely does not try to impress his future father-in-law with his ability to care for Nancy. Second, every one of Adoniram's bleak predictions came true for Nancy.

Now Adoniram shifts his appeal. What provides the rationale for the sacrifice? Jesus' love for us.

Can you consent to all this, for the sake of him who left his heavenly throne, and died for her and for you; for the sake of the perishing, immortal souls; for the sake of Zion, and the glory of God? Can you consent to all this, in hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with the crown of righteousness, brightened with the acclamations of praise which shall redound to her Savior from the heathens saved, through her means, from eternal woe and despair?⁹ [Page 47] ⁹. Quoted in Courtney Anderson, *To the Golden Shore* (Valley Forge, Penn.: Judson Press, 1987), p.83

19. Call of The Present and Future

As citizens of the kingdom of Christ, we look for ways to do our part in declaring the unique Christ to the world.

Speaking to this issue as a representative of a country that has been oppressed by colonial rule wrongly blended with Christianity, Ajith Fernando of Sri Lanka separates the errors of the past from the call of the present and the future. Missions endeavors of the past, he notes, "were wrong about Western superiority but not about the supremacy of the Gospel, which incidentally did not originate in the West."¹⁰ [Page 47-48] ¹⁰. Ajith Fernando, *The Supremacy of Christ* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1995) p. 103

20. God – More Than a “Moral Teacher”

A Hindu man once asked E. Stanley Jones, “What has Christianity to offer that our religion has not?”

He replied, “Jesus Christ.”¹¹

C.S. Lewis’s famous “trilemma” hits us between the eyes with the worldview choice we face. In response to the statement “I can accept Jesus as a great moral teacher but not his claim to be God,” Lewis wrote:

That is one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things that Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great moral teacher. He has not left that option open to us. He did not intend to.¹²
[Pages 48-49]

¹¹. Ibid. p.262 ¹². C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York, Macmillan, 1972), p. 56

Chapter 5. *Dangerous Question #2 Do I Believe in Heaven?*

21. Keep the Eternal Perspective

Even dedicated potential missionaries struggle to keep a long-term view of heaven and the eternal. Bernie May, former U.S.A. director of Wycliffe Bible Translators, lists the four major reasons that Wycliffe applicants drop out:

1. They don’t want to leave family and friends.
2. Finances—they don’t want to raise funds, nor are they willing to live in the insecurity of low income.
3. Concerns for health and safety—for themselves and their families.
4. They don’t want to accept the low standard of living they associate with missionary work.’

Do you find these reasons shocking? I did. Members of Wycliffe Bible Translators rank among the world’s most dedicated missionaries, yet even those who had signed up as WBT career missionaries found it tough to keep eternal perspective when they faced the sacrifices Jesus said would be normative for his disciples. [Page 55]

22. Eternal Values Determine Earthly Views

George Hunter identifies secular people (including those of us who call ourselves Christians but are in reality secular in our values) as those who are “looking for life before death”— that is, fulfillment now.³

When we are poor, we sing, “This world is not my home; I’m just a-passin’ through,” but after we become affluent and comfortable, we sing, “This is my Father’s world.’ [Page 56] ³George G. Hunter III, *How to Reach Secular People* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992) p. 45

23. You Never Know When!

British evangelist Steve Chalkie relates a humorous story about his friend Roy Castle, a Christian leader who was dying of cancer. At the end of a press conference, Roy was feeling terrible, bent over in pain. A reporter sought him out and, after getting Roy’s attention, asked, “Roy, how would you feel if you knew you had three months to live?”

He replied slowly, “If I knew that, I’d be the happiest man in this room because I’d be the only one in this room who knows that. The rest of you don’t even know if you’ll make it to teatime! ⁴[Page 57] ⁴Steve Chalke, lecture presented at Brainstormers Conference, Blackpool, England, November 11, 1995

24. Earthly Sacrifices for Eternal Glory

The first European missionaries to Africa believed in heaven. When they packed for their mission, legend tells us, they carried their worldly possessions in coffins, because a coffin was seen as essential equipment. They expected that once they left their temporal homes they would never return.

Legends like this are told about missionary pioneers like George Grenfell and Alexander MacKay. Grenfell’s first wife died after only one year in Africa. He later remarried, and four of the children of this marriage succumbed to the diseases and fevers of Africa. He opened work on the Congo River, where three of the first four missionaries died in the first year of service. The work of his mission station led to many conversions, but they came at a great sacrifice.

MacKay’s story has a similar ring. Called to pioneer work in Uganda, he accurately predicted that some of his initial team of eight would die. After the first year, five had died; after the second, MacKay was the only one left. MacKay was instrumental in bringing the gospel to the Baganda people of Uganda, but this ministry cost him dearly:

sickness, deaths of other coworkers, violent attempts on his life, and his eventual death at age forty of malaria. They came at a great sacrifice.

Some estimate that as many as 60 percent of the pioneer missionaries to Africa died within the first two years of ministry. So why would they go? They believed that Jesus Christ should be proclaimed, and they believed in heaven! [Pages 59-60]

25. A Foreigner for Jesus

A missionary mother in Eastern Europe, experiencing a way of life she would never have chosen for herself, reflected this eternal perspective when she said, “I’m not a foreigner because I chose Romania; I’m a foreigner because I chose Jesus. [Page 61]

26. What Will You Die For?

Philip Yancey summarized the motivational power of the eternal in a *Christianity Today* column:

For years, all the New Testament talk about eternal rewards embarrassed me. Now, however, I see eternal rewards as the ultimate form of delayed gratification.

Why do missionary relief workers volunteer for hellish places like Somalia, Rwanda, and the Sudan? I have interviewed these workers, and among other motives they mention the prospect of reward. They hope to hear someday, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”

A vision of heaven gives us motivation for great and sacrificial courage. The great pioneer against racism in the United States, Martin Luther King Jr., said, “No one really knows why they’re alive until they know what they’d die for.” We need a vision for our life that supersedes our desires for self-preservation. [Page 62] ⁶ Philip Yancey, “Why Not Now?” *Christianity Today*, February 5, 1996, p. 112

27. Eternal Focus with a Servant Mind

When Paul reminded the Philippians of Jesus' sacrifice, he appealed to an expectation of heaven:

- imitate Jesus (Phil 2:5),
- who let go of his heavenly rights (v. 6)
- and became not only a human, but a servant (v. 7),
- and not just a servant, but a crucified servant (v. 8);
- remember too God’s ultimate exaltation of Jesus (vv. 9-11), so that you too can persevere. [Page 64]

28. Keeping Hell in Mind

Ajith Fernando of Sri Lanka has written *Crucial Questions About Hell* in an attempt to address this oversight. He shows how Jesus spoke and taught more about hell than about heaven, yet few of us give much study or thought to the subject. Fernando observes, “If one generation neglects the doctrine of hell, the next generation will reject it.”¹ [Page 67] ¹Ajith Fernando, *Crucial Questions About Hell* (Eastbourne, U.K.,: Kingsway, 1991), p. 169

29. Even Relatives Can Go To Hell

Peter Cotterell addressed the interplay of subjective experience with the doctrine of hell when he wrote, “The Christian may be supposed to believe in hell but concern for unconverted relatives may mean a rejection of that particular doctrine.”² [Page 69] ² Peter Cotterell, *Mission and Meaninglessness* (London: S.P.C.K., 1995), p. 112

30. There Is A Hell

An article by Norman Geisler proved helpful as I explored the question: “Everything You Wanted to Know About Hell but Were Afraid to Ask.”³ Geisler identifies the core biblical teachings on hell, highlighting seven statements which I summarize here.

a. Jesus taught the existence of hell. Jesus warned about “the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Mt 10:28). He told a story of a rich man in hell (Lk 16:19-31), advised temporary sacrifices in this life in order to avoid the destination of “hell, where the fire never goes out” (Mk 9:43-44). and predicted that those who had not acted in mercy would be cursed and assigned to “the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mt 25:41).

b. The Bible teaches that there is a hell. To affirm the range of biblical teaching on hell and judgment, Geisler quotes from Hebrews, 2 Thessalonians and finally Revelation 20:13-15: “Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

c. God’s love demands a hell. Geisler’s article points out the fallacy of the argument that a loving God could not send a person to hell and explains rather that “a God of love cannot force people to love Him.” God does not coerce. Geisler concludes, “Those who do not wish to love God must be allowed not to love Him. Those who do

not wish to be with Him must be allowed to be separated from Him. Hell is this eternal separation from God.” In a sense my eighty-year-old relative could make his choice because God loved him enough to give him freedom.

d. Human dignity demands a hell. Following on his love, God gives us free choice. God respects our dignity and refuses to force us into a relationship with him against our will.

e. God’s justice demands a hell. The psalmist observes that the wicked sometimes prosper in this life but God, in his justice, brings the wicked to condemnation: “Then I understood their final destiny” (Ps 73:17). Ultimate judgment comes because God’s holiness requires that sin be punished.

f. God’s sovereignty demands a hell. “Unless there is a hell, there is no final victory over evil,” Geisler argues. If God is sovereign, there must be a final triumph over evil. The condemnation of Satan and the wicked to hell is that ultimate conquest of sin

g. The cross of Christ implies hell. Finally Geisler asks, “Why the Cross unless there is a hell? If there is no hell to shun, then the Cross is a sham. Christ’s death is robbed of its eternal significance unless there is an eternal separation from God from which people need to be delivered.” [Pages 69-70]

31. God Is Merciful AND Just

Fernando cites A. W. Tozer’s observation that “the vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate to the consciences of millions.” Fernando then goes on, “When they come under conviction and think that they should take the costly step of repentance, something inside them says, ‘Don’t worry, it’s not going to be that bad.’”⁵ We convince ourselves that God’s mercy exists but his judgment and holiness do not. [Page 71]

⁵Fernando, *Crucial Questions About Hell*, p. 134

32. Focus On The Endlessness of Hell Vs. The Imagery

Cotterell summarizes the awfulness of hell ... “The real horror of the concept of hell is that of its endlessness.”⁷ He then goes on to urge caution in the way we deal with the biblical pictures: “That the doctrine of an eternal hell is there in Scripture is beyond dispute. That the imagery is just that, imagery, is similarly beyond dispute. What it is that corresponds to that imagery we simply do not know.”⁸ [page 77] ⁷ Cotterell, *Mission and Meaninglessness*, p. 73 ⁸ Ibid., p. 74

33. Our View of Spiritual Realms Should Be Biblically Based

Here again the Bible must establish the basis for our convictions. In conversations with fellow Christians I find that many beliefs about demons, spiritual warfare, territorial spirits or Satan are based on anecdotal experiences (their own or somebody else's) or from the pages of *This Present Darkness* or another Frank Peretti novel. The notion of the "levels" of hell, for example, comes not from biblical teaching but from Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Whatever we believe about the spiritual world, the demonic or the angelic should find its basis in the Bible. [Page 78]

34. Opposing Satan through Spiritual Battle

Satan, who disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14), needs to be opposed through spiritual battle, which includes prayer, faith, truth, the gospel message and the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (see Eph 6:10-18). Only as we engage in that battle can we help to turn people from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to the power of God (Acts 26:18). [Page 78]

35. Spend a Night in Hell and You'll Get the Point

Ajith Fernando presents telling examples of how an understanding of people's lostness without Christ motivated some of the great heroes of Christian history:

The seventeenth century preacher, Samuel Rutherford, once told a person, "I would lay my dearest joys in the gap between you and eternal destruction." Hudson Taylor said, "I would have never thought of going to China had I not believed that the Chinese were lost and needed Christ." D. L. Moody told an audience in London, "If I believed there was no hell, I am sure I would be off tomorrow for America." He said he would gladly give up going from town to town spending day and night "urging men to escape the damnation of hell." William Booth said he would wish that his Salvation Army workers might spend "one night in hell" in order to see the urgency of their evangelistic task.⁹

A vision of hell and a seriousness about impending judgment obviously motivated some of the great leaders in church history. What impact will it have on us? [Page 80]

⁹Fernando, *Crucial Questions About Hell*, p. 150.

Chapter 7 *Dangerous Question #4 Does Christianity Matter?*

36. Religion Must Remain Relevant

Reflecting on the European situation, Peter Cotterell illustrates the decline of Christian faith over the twentieth century because the church failed to adequately address the

world wars: “There was a widespread abandoning of religion after the First World War and continuing through and beyond the Second, and it was abandoned because it was seen as being irrelevant and unbelievable.”¹ Western European Christianity still suffers the repercussions of this perceived irrelevance. [Page 87] ¹Peter Cotterell, *Mission and Meaninglessness* (London: S.P.C.K., 1995), p.173

37. Understanding Our Times And How To Respond Biblically

Real-world faith pursues involvement with the world. We express our faith in the way we live our daily lives. We apply biblical stories and the principles they teach to the moral and ethical dilemmas of our day. The complex issues and problems in our world call for Christians who live like the Old Testament men of Issachar, understanding our times and knowing how the church should respond (1 Chron 12:32) [Page 88]

38. Primary Course = Proclaiming the Gospel

Luis Palau writes, “Proclamation of the gospel was Paul’s primary course of action to confront and change a pagan society” [Page 89]

39. Transforming Society The Biblical Way – To The Cross, One At A Time

Here is Palau again:

Our doubt shows up in our priorities, in our agenda to change society. There’s little enthusiasm for evangelism. Political action, yes. Public protest, yes. Open and vigorous soul-winning, no. We are no longer using the gospel as a tool to change America. Very few churches—even Bible-believing, evangelical churches—are seeing souls saved. We’re not concentrating on converting people.... The biblical way to transform society is to lead people to Jesus Christ and disciple them, one at a time.⁴ [Page 89] ⁴ Luis Palau, “*Only the Gospel Can Change America*,” *Discipleship Journal*, no. 86 (1995): 41.

40. In The World towards Greater Engagement

We have moved, in George Hunter’s words, from being “fishers of men” to being “keepers of the aquarium.”⁵ We shy away from engagement. We move out of our cities, pull our children out of public school systems, build our own Christian universities. Then we move even further away from engagement by developing Christian music (and criticizing those who attempt “crossover” into the secular market), Christian radio stations and Christian stores—all implicitly designed to keep us away from the negative aspects of our culture. [Page 90] ⁵Hunter, *How to Reach Secular People*, p. 112

41. Staying the Course to Strengthen and Equip

Christian media, music and institutions often start as tools for the better equipping of the people of God, but such disengagement implies a move toward privatized faith and irrelevant Christianity if we forget the goal—to strengthen the saints so that they may be sent back out into the world as salt and light, or, in Paul’s terms, as those who transmit the “aroma of Christ” (2 Cor 2:15) to our world. [Pages 90-91]

42. Engagement and Love Is Fundamental as a Christian in This World

Bob Lupton, a Christian worker in urban Atlanta, writes about how we become “unneighborly neighbors.”

Do strong loyalties to church necessitate disengagement from those who live next door? If so, I have a misconception of the role of the Christian in this world. I have understood the historic mission of the Church to be a proactive force, armed with vulnerable love, infiltrating every strata of society, transforming fallen people and systems through the power of the Spirit. It is tempting to allow the local church body to become our enclave of like-minded friends that provides a protective haven from the daily bombardment of destructive values. Yet engagement—not withdrawal—has always been the operative word of the Church militant. And love of one’s neighbor remains its fundamental tactic.⁶ [Page 91] ⁶ Bob Lupton, *Urban Perspectives* newsletter, June 1994.

43. Building Hope In A Hopeless World

Lesslie Newbigin, in *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, writes, “The distinguishing mark of [the Christian] community will be hope.” In a world suffocating in hopelessness, meaninglessness and despair, our mission is to build hope and a sense of positive anticipation. We present Jesus as hope because, quoting Newbigin again, this hope “is the oxygen of the soul.”⁸ [Page 93] ⁸ Leslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Erdmans, 1989), p 101

Chapter 8 *Dangerous Question #5 Do I believe that God Wants to Use My Life?*

44. Risk = Faith

A quotation attributed to Hudson Taylor, the pioneer missionary into China, says it best: “Unless there is an element of risk in our exploits for God, there is no need for faith.” [Page 107]

Chapter 9 *Dangerous Question #6 Whose Agenda Will I Live by?*

45. Our Faith and Obedience Defines Our Love for God

Howard A. Snyder cites as the number-one element for building a biblical kingdom worldview “unconditional faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to his commands and to the moral law of God as revealed in Scripture.” Instructing readers on what he calls “the Great Commission life-style,” Robert Coleman writes, “Obedience to Christ is the final test of our love.”² [Page 113] ² Robert Coleman, *The Great Commission Life-Style* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Revel, 1992), p.34

46. Submission Replaces Retirement

A [] conversation with a sixty-eight-year-old Christian brother illustrated to me what it means to live under the lordship of Christ. Rather than discussing his retirement plans (a normal topic for sixty-eight-year-olds), he described how God had led him to minister in an enormous Third World city. I asked him if he had ever considered retiring.

“Well,” he said, “I suppose I could retire, but I’m not really sure that the model of retirement I see in the United States is a biblical model.” Rather than pursuing a way of life that our culture considers normal, he made submitting himself to the Lord his first priority. [Page 117]

Chapter 10 *How’s Your Worldview?*

47. The WORLD

Peter Kuzmic of Croatia offers this challenge:

We are challenged today by a modernized recasting of Tertullian’s question: What has Boston to do with Bosnia?...

Why should we concern ourselves with the human tragedies of Bosnia, Somalia, and Bangladesh? Why should the holocaust taking place in Rwanda touch our lives when it is obvious that the sovereign Lord has placed us so as to be secure from those dangers and other winds of adversity? Should we worry about restoring democracy to Haiti, ask questions about human rights in China, or be concerned with the plight of human emigrants?

Why should we burden ourselves with the burdens of the world and allow [ourselves] to be disturbed by statistics of war, disease, and poverty? Why should the turmoil of the world disrupt the tranquility of our hearts and surrounding?

May I suggest that there is only one compelling reason—For God so loved the world.”²
[Page 125] ²Peter Kuzmic, installation sermon at Gordon-Conwell Theological
Seminary, September 9, 1994