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Worldview in Action

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.
--Matthew 5:16

On May 26, President Bush granted a White House interview to eight Christian journalists interested in the role his faith plays in the course of his duties as Commander-in-Chief. Mr. Bush spoke of his concerns for our soldiers and the people of Iraq, his opposition to abortion, and his commitment to a constitutional amendment defining marriage as between a man and a woman. When asked how he expresses his Christian faith, Bush said, "I have a fantastic opportunity to let the light shine." He told his interviewers that "The job of the president is to help cultures change."¹

Several days before that interview, as it happens, I had discussed the scripture above with teens at a *Summit Ministries* gathering, asking them to explain how they let their "light" shine before others so that God is glorified. I enjoyed the thoughtful responses—most dealing with the "fruits of the Spirit." Typically, my young friends concluded their "light" was in the ON position when they used kind words or held their peace in the face of unpleasantness, or allowed an older person to cut in line ahead of them at the store.

Our adult host, however, knew where I was headed and shared a wonderful story that segued perfectly into my lesson plan. So does a recent article by *Prison Fellowship* founder, Chuck Colson. Writing for *BreakPoint*, Chuck says:

"Not long ago I received a letter from a long-time supporter of Prison Fellowship. He told me he was frankly alarmed over some of the cultural battles he'd seen me leap into.

"You do a fantastic job leading prisoners to Christ and helping their kids," he wrote. "But when you tackle issues like abortion and same sex 'marriage,' you are diluting your efforts. Stick to what you are doing well," he warned me, "or PF will suffer."

I can understand his confusion. When I was released from prison, I decided to get out of politics and work among inmates. Yet, here I am, speaking out on Capitol Hill and the White House about abortion, cloning, and same-sex 'marriage.' How did I get to this seemingly paradoxical point—preaching to politicians and prisoners alike?

The answer goes back twenty-five years, right after we had started Prison Fellowship, when I was visiting what was then one of the worst prisons in America: Walla Walla Penitentiary in Washington state—overcrowded, filthy, and out of control.

The prisoners had been released from a four-month lockdown only the day before I arrived, and riot police were standing by.

I spoke to 150 men about Prison Fellowship and the Gospel. The reaction was stony silence. I later learned, however, that after my message the inmates called off a riot in which they planned to murder guards and take me hostage. Instead, they decided they could trust us and sought our help in resolving their grievances."

“Soon after, I was invited to the state capital to discuss prison conditions. In the end, desperately needed reforms were made. That experience propelled us into forming Justice Fellowship, the wing of Prison Fellowship that advocates criminal justice reform.

About the same time we recognized that there is a correlation between society’s moral breakdown and the exploding prison population. Researchers looked at one inner-city neighborhood, for example, and found that 90 percent of children from broken homes committed serious crimes, while only 6 percent of kids from intact families do so. The crime-fighting solution: Advocate policies to promote strong marriages and make divorce more difficult.

This understanding of crime’s moral roots led me to start this program, “BreakPoint,” and write a book about worldview with Nancy Pearcey, How Now Shall We Live? It was read by lawmakers who now invite me and members of the Wilberforce Forum to Capitol Hill. We have just finished an eight-week worldview lecture series for up to fifty congressmen.

My point is that I didn’t start out trying to get back into politics. But in tending to my razor-wired mission field I couldn’t ignore the conditions causing the explosion in the prison population.

That is why I have become convinced that meshing prison ministry with worldview teaching is God’s providential plan for this ministry. People can see the work we do in the prisons; they see how the Gospel transforms lives and then they are ready to listen to what we tell them about God’s plan for living in this world.

I think that all Christians need to do this. We need to take our faith out of the pews and into the trenches, and in the process, we need to defend the truth—that is, how God sees all of life, from the workplace, to laws, to politics, to popular culture.

My hope and prayer is that every Christian in every church will become a worldview thinker—and then boldly rise up to defend Christian truth in the marketplace of ideas.”²

Like Chuck Colson, President Bush understands that his “light” is of value if it is used to illuminate his good works. *Works*, is translated from the Greek word *ěrgōn*—as in ergo (to work)—or toil as an effort or occupation; an act, deed, doing, labor.

Over Memorial Day weekend, nearly a thousand citizen delegates gathered in Bellevue to “work out” principles and policies for Washington State Republicans to present to voters this election season. Many of the delegates were men and women of God with a heartfelt desire to “salt” the Republican Party Platform with biblical principles.

While the finished product is certainly not a religious document, it does strongly reflect a Christian worldview on important family issues, including: protection for innocent life from conception to natural death, support for traditional marriage—the union of one man and one woman, and a declaration that America was established as one nation under God.

Mr. Bush says his job as President is to help shape the culture. But as servants of the LORD, isn’t that our job as well?

Rick Forcier

¹ Olasky, Marvin, “Still Standing,” *WORLD*, June 5, 2004, pg. 20

² Colson, Chuck, “From Prisons to Politics—Where Worldview Takes Us,” *BreakPoint*, May 12, 2004, www.breakpoint.org