SECTION TWO:

THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

Introduction to Section Two

As difficult as it might be for some of us to accept, America has become a *post-*Judeo-Christian society. Our culture and most of the people around us are no longer guided by Biblical presuppositions.

This means, for those of us who still share "traditional values," that our vision for the future should look very different from that of our humanist neighbors. But what *is* our vision for the future? The alarming fact is that we haven't really articulated one.

This is understandable given that American culture was dominated by our own value system from its beginnings until very recently. We have simply taken for granted that our values would always prevail. Operating from this assumption, we would naturally think in terms of preserving the status quo rather than envisioning a better future for our society. We have thus come to identify ourselves by what we oppose in the agenda of our adversaries and to accept by default every other social change that they introduce. It is a recipe for certain failure.

The Problem of "Conservatism"

Someone once said that conservatism and liberalism are just two speeds on the same gearbox: conservatism is the slow speed, while liberalism is the fast speed — society continues in the same direction in either gear.

The problem of conservatism is that its goal is to "conserve" and to preserve the status quo. That is a laudable goal when society is strong and healthy, but not when it has become weak and sickly. In contrast, the goal of liberalism (in theory) is to improve society through progressive change. Never mind that the actual changes brought by liberals have in many cases wrought terrible harm to our society, the point is that liberals succeed because they follow a pro-active vision for the future in a way that conservatives do not.

What do we conservatives do? We "draw lines in the sand" when confronted with each new anti-family initiative, and fight to stop the change that is envisioned by the liberals. Usually we win the first few times, but liberals (because of their pro-active vision) are very persistent. Eventually we

always lose, step backward a few paces, and draw a new line in the sand.

In between battles, we go home, seeing our duty as limited to "putting out fires," as it were, rather than fire prevention. This is the fatal flaw of conservatism. It never takes new ground; at best, it holds what it has. Occasionally conservatives reclaim some of the ground that they have lost, but never the whole amount, and never for very long.

In the area of protecting the institution of the family, we have seen this sad retreat continue, year after year, for more than half a century.

The Supreme Court is an institution which glaringly displays the weakness of conservatism. When the liberal Warren Court held sway, its hallmark was "judicial activism." Many of the worst anti-family policy decisions were handed down during this period, decisions which reflected not the weight of legal and historical precedent, but the whims of the justices themselves. In more recent years when the court became more conservative, the justices, instead of overturning the bad laws of their predecessors, began to view these cases as settled law. Their conservatism worked to "conserve" judicial conclusions that they themselves would never have entertained.

We see the same phenomenon in other cultural institutions as well, including the church, which tends to accept and adopt each new anti-family cultural change, only more slowly than the rest of society.

Adherents to the "gay" ethic have a vision for a future in which sexual license reigns and Judeo-Christian values are entirely discredited and rejected. As history shows, their vision is a utopian fantasy: such an ethic cannot sustain an orderly society. Yet, because they have a common vision, they are unified in a way that we are not, and it is therefore their agenda — destructive as it is — that guides the course of social change in America. They prevail, not because they are right, but because they have a plan!

The solution to our problem is to reorient our pro-family movement to embrace a pro-active vision and a plan for positive change.

Fortunately, while it is true that pro-family conservatives haven't yet articulated a comprehensive pro-active vision, we can readily piece one together from the various priorities and projects within the pro-family movement. Simply stated, our vision is to produce a nation of genuinely family-friendly communities. This is the larger goal within which all of our more focused pursuits fall.

But what does the model family-friendly community look like? Having always taken Judeo-Christian society for granted, we never before had to consider the question. Now we must.

If our vision were to become reality we know that we would see the institution of marriage restored to primacy, parental rights reinvigorated, and a renewed emphasis (in public planning) on considering how every law and policy might affect the family. The business community would design its marketing with families in mind, not catering, as it does now, to destructive forms of self-indulgence and hedonism.

The arts and the entertainment industry would seek to uplift and refine culture rather than to coarsen and degrade it. The government would, whenever possible, defer to the faith community in finding active solutions to moral and social problems. Divorce, fornication, adultery, abortion, homosexuality, sexual diseases, drug and alcohol addiction, mental illness and criminal behavior would all be greatly reduced. Chastity, modesty, fidelity, temperance, helpfulness, generosity, selflessness and compassion would all be greatly increased.

Adopting a pro-active vision changes the entire complexion of the "culture war." We no

longer approach each issue as a separate battle, but as part of a much larger conflict with many specific goals. Our strategies, tactics and allocations of resources are weighed according to the requirements of the larger conflict. Our workers and warriors do not automatically leave the field and go home at the end of each skirmish, believing that their part is done; they stay on and simply reposition themselves for the next campaign. Our leaders and activists gain the emotional and intellectual benefit of a long-range view of the cultural war, and the advantage of being able to think and plan several moves ahead.

The "evangelists" and motivators among us have an exciting picture of the future that they can use to recruit new activists and to persuade others to our cause, while our strategists and organizers have tangible movement-wide goals by which to coordinate and synchronize the many, varied projects of independent groups. Every pro-family person has the opportunity to make lifestyle, career and consumer choices in conformity with the larger pro-family vision, rather than feeling like an insignificant dissenter, alone in the secular-humanist system.

These are all positive results of adopting a pro-active vision, but the best result is the actual transformation of a community. That will take some work.

Wise as Serpents, Harmless as Doves

As we shift from studying the homosexual agenda to fashioning a Christian response to it, we must make a basic change in our perspective. Our task in the first section was to understand our cultural and spiritual opponent, the "gay" movement, by looking at its history, goals and activities through "Christian glasses." We needed to ground ourselves firmly in the truth of God to have confidence that our opposition to homosexuality is both Biblical and well reasoned. We therefore focused heavily on Scripture and discussed every issue in a thoroughly Christian context.

In this section, however, we must learn how to promote the Christian, pro-family agenda in our society, which means we must advocate Biblical ideas to non-believers, so we must learn how to speak in their language. We are certainly not ashamed of our Christian message, for the gospel of Christ is "salvation to all who believe, for the Jew first and also the Greek" (Romans 1:16). However, most Americans (including many nominal Christians) have been conditioned to disregard scriptural authority. We must therefore establish personal credibility with them before they will listen to our Bible quotes. Fortunately, God's truth about family and sexuality is very logical and easy to teach in "secular" language -- especially for the "Jew."

In the Apostle Paul's letters, the labels "Jew" and "Greek" are used metaphorically to denote intellectual/spiritual types. He states in 1 Corinthians 1:23 for example that "we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." Since Jews (then and now) share many of the same presuppositions as Christians (e.g. the existence of God, His creation of the world, our duty to obey Him) the idea of Christ as *the* messiah is only a stumbling block. But to the "Greeks," the original evolutionists whose presuppositions were far different than those of Christians and Jews, the idea of *any* messiah was foolishness. Applying the metaphor in our context, "Jews" are those who can recognize design in nature, and "Greeks" are those who can't. It all comes down to how we see the world.

Our task then, in a sense, is to help "Greeks" become "Jews" (i.e. to help secular humanists

and other wrong-thinking pagans to recognize the design in creation). Thus it is very helpful that the most "Jewish-minded" Greek of all was Aristotle, the ancient philosopher who laid the intellectual foundation for what would later be called Natural Law. This preeminent secular thinker, whose whole philosophy rested on the premise of a natural order, is our bridge to the "Greeks" of the modern world.

This is the same approach as the Intelligent Design movement takes in the scientific community to avoid theological arguments about creation vs. evolution as it seeks to restore respect for true science. Once again Aristotle is an essential ally, because his observations about the natural order underlie what we now call the scientific method.

This section then, emphasizes how to advocate Biblical ideas in non-religious terms, starting with the foundational presuppositions of the Christian world view.

Some Christians may oppose the idea of making secular arguments, on the grounds that such an approach is not sufficiently "evangelistic." However, the fact is that the truth of God is revealed in creation (Romans 1:18-19), and if we can help people recognize it, they will be a giant step closer to accepting Jesus (by and through Whom all things were made -- John 1:2-3). And in the meantime, if they begin to live in conformity with their design, their lives and our whole society will be improved.