

Chapter 11: Christianizing the Social Spheres

Jesus is Lord of all of life, not just the parts that the frequently misguided modern church has deemed suitable for believers. The renewal of the pro-family movement according to a *missionary model* opens long-closed doors for Christians into the various spheres of social influence and activity. The following are some observations about how to conduct ourselves most effectively in these places.

Christians in Politics

Politics is simply the process of making the rules that we must live under. It's a process common to groups of people of every size and type. Families, social clubs, neighborhood associations and even churches have political systems that determine who's in charge of what, when and where activities will occur, and every other important decision in the life of the organization. The politics of civil government follows the same general process, but on a larger and more complicated scale. We shouldn't be afraid of this process, and indeed must not fail to participate in it, or we will have no say in the rules that govern every aspect of our lives.

About a hundred years ago, a new doctrine arose in Christendom that characterized political involvement as un-biblical. No such doctrine exists in the Bible, yet this belief has been incorporated into the dogma of virtually every Christian denomination. Believers who would practically fight to the death over doctrinal differences (e.g. predestination vs. free will and various versions of end times theology) will somehow find common ground on the idea that Christians must not involve themselves in the "carnal" realm of politics.

This is a new idea in Christianity, historically speaking (a fact which must be true or the church could never have grown past the boundaries of the ancient Middle East). Ironically, it was only the political success of prior Christian generations which allowed such an idea to take hold in the 20th Century. Christians once enjoyed such a level of political influence over America that nearly all of the laws had come to reflect biblical values. Assuming that this was the permanent state of their sociopolitical environment, they lost sight of the fact that it had only been achieved and advanced by the dedicated work of their predecessors.

However, as time went on, the "inertia" of the biblically-based moral climate gradually

diminished like an ocean liner drifting to a stop when the engine is shut off. And, the further we drifted from the power-source (the zeal of socially-minded Christians), the more our cultural and spiritual adversaries were able to take the helm and change the ship's course. Today, the ship is firmly in their control and it is *their* zeal for false gods and perversion that drives it forward -- toward what they fantasize to be a better world, but what in reality is a utopian mirage masking a gaping abyss.

For Christians, continuing to stay out of the political process means the loss of a healthy and stable society, not only for their fellow-citizens, but for their own children and grandchildren. The only solution is for Christians to take the helm back into our own hands again, gently but firmly, and to steer the ship back in a godly direction.

Romans 13

The passage of Scripture most often cited as justification for the doctrine of political non-involvement is Romans 13:1-5 which commands believers to be in subjection to government. But this scripture had a different meaning at the time of Christ than it does today. Then, Christians were subject to a military-backed dictatorship whose policies they had no right or power to change. So, for example, when a Roman soldier exercised his legal right to force you to carry his gear for one mile, your civic obligation was to obey, but your Christian testimony, illustrating your affiliation with a love-based moral kingdom both independent of and superior to the brutal Roman empire, was to volunteer to carry it an extra mile (Matthew 5:41). Americans, however, are blessed to live in a constitutional republic whose form and principles are actually based on that higher kingdom.

Our Constitution, as John Adams wisely observed, is "made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." Since this form of government is designed, in Lincoln's words, to be "of the people, by the people and for the people," it behooves Christians to make sure that God's perspective is the one which continually guides and informs those people. Lincoln expressed this mandate as well: "it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord's side." Our form of government cannot function nor even exist without citizen involvement, nor can it succeed without the involvement of *Christian* citizens. For American Christians, "subjection" means participation, and the import of Romans 13 is to impose an affirmative duty upon Christians to be active in the political realm.

Consider also the relative weight of this directive to be involved in politics. It is not simply, as some churches would have it (in an embarrassed accommodation to the activists in their congregations), an *option* for those Christians who "feel called." It is the *duty* of everyone subject to the second greatest commandment, as it was ranked by Jesus: "Love your neighbor as yourself." How can we pretend to love our neighbors when we hold the power to establish righteousness (and the resulting favor of God) in their land, but instead allow evil to flourish -- resulting in their suffering and bondage? Add to this the familiar exhortations to be *salt and light* in the world, and, the logical implications of the Great Commission, and what we loosely call "civic responsibility" emerges as an essential biblical mandate for the Christian.

The Realm of Compromise

This is not to deny that there are spiritual dangers in the political realm. We must understand that it is by definition and necessity the realm of compromise.

The dangers are twofold. First, that we will not be grounded firmly enough in faith and doctrine and thus suffer corruption of our morals and ethics. This is the obvious, predictable trap for Christians in political offices and other positions of power.

The other, more subtle trap is that we will be so inflexible and unwavering on whatever we decide is the “most Christian” position on a given issue that we cannot build winning coalitions that can achieve the best possible result in a given set of circumstances. The political realm is made up of many competing interest groups and only those capable of exercising genuine wisdom in the “horse trading” process can ensure that salt and light have their optimal influence.

The key to moral sanity in politics is to define one’s non-negotiable points at the start and remain true to them, while exercising prudence in the remainder of the decisions. According to this logic, we would form alliances with other groups based on the requirement of a common foundational belief in the lordship of Jesus Christ; beyond that requirement, we would simply exercise prudence in our alliances. Similarly, we would choose to support and help elect candidates based on the requirement of a shared respect for the sanctity of life and marriage; beyond that requirement, we would evaluate the candidates’ other positions individually, exercising prudence. Politically active or not, Christians in the community should season their opinions and comments about Christian politicians with grace and reason, acknowledging that, in the realm of compromise, a person cannot be expected to be a “purist” on every issue.

That said, the more successful we are at salting the political realm with authentic Christians, the less they will *need* to compromise because they will have the power to win votes with fewer concessions to the competing interests. Conversely, the less political power we wield in our own right, the more concessions we will need to make to advance our non-negotiable issues. In simple terms, that means that in the early stages of building our political power, we must resist the inclination to condemn our Christian elected officials for votes on “negotiables” that we might not like. This is what the path to power looks like in a democracy; by accepting it we will learn to think in terms of continuously advancing our agenda and our position of influence over time as faithful stewards of a necessary process. We will no longer pick a single issue (usually from a defensive posture), fight for it during one election cycle, and, win or lose, go home and drop out.

CHRISTIANS IN EDUCATION

This section is an example of a plan for Christian involvement in an important arena of sociopolitical power. I will offer four alternate approaches to making the public schools family-friendly. The plan detailed here may be used, in whole or in part, as a working paper for projects undertaken by the Education Team in the model organization described in the Pro-Family Agenda section above.

1. The Community-Based Citizen-Activist Approach

2. The Church-Based Mission-to-the-Schools Approach.
3. The Campus-Based Student-Activist Approach.
4. The School District-Based “Insiders Alliance” Approach.

1. The Community-Based Citizen-Activist Approach

This approach requires the formation of a local parental-rights group in the local school district or larger community. The group may be formed by an existing pro-family organization or any motivated parents but should be an informal ad hoc group with a narrow focus. The parental-rights group will

- 1) monitor and interact with the schools and the school board.
- 2) identify, educate and organize like-minded parents and others.
- 3) convert, neutralize or replace anti-family school board members, teachers and administrators.

Action Checklist

A. Start a Parents’ Rights Group

- 1) You don’t need to incorporate or file any papers if you remain an informal association that doesn’t raise or spend much money. As you grow you can probably find a good pro-family lawyer or CPA to help your organization meet government requirements.
- 2) Limit your agenda to the single issue of making the school family-friendly. This is very important to prevent other issues from splitting your coalition and distracting you from your goal. Make sure that everyone that joins you knows up front that this group has a single purpose.
- 3) Open membership in the group to any pro-family parent or concerned member of the community. Purposefully build a broad-based coalition and to discourage factionalism. Actively recruit from every ethnic and cultural group, using a unifying theme such as “Our Bond is Family.”

B. Assess the State of the Schools

- 1) Determine how/if the subject of homosexuality is being addressed in the district.
 - a. Interview sympathetic teachers/administrators/school board members and students.
 - b. Exercise your rights under relevant education codes, which may allow parents to review all curriculum/teaching materials (depending on your school system).
 - c. Tour the school for visual clues of the “gay” agenda (pink triangles, rainbows, anti-“homophobia” signs/posters) and review the selection of books and materials in the school

library.

2) Gather documentation for any problems you find: collect relevant materials of all types and from any available source, making back-up copies.

C. Identify the Key Players in the School District

1) Make a list with a profile of each school board member, the principal and the superintendent. What are their ideological leanings; specifically regarding marriage, family and sexuality? How can they be reached by concerned citizens? If they are advocates of the “gay” agenda, is this because they are self-declared homosexuals? (Don’t be afraid to identify open “gays” or lesbians as such if they are truly out in the open about it or if you have documentation from a public source. Revealing the undue influence of a special-interest faction in public affairs is not an invasion of privacy, but an important public service).

2) Have members of your parents’ rights committee meet with school board members and other key persons individually in order to develop their profiles. Find out what they really think about the promotion of homosexuality in the schools. Many people are secretly on our side but follow the “politically correct” path because they think they will have no support or be attacked if they voice their true feelings. Some officials are truly ignorant of the “gay” agenda and may respond favorably to educational materials.

3) In any school where homosexuality is openly promoted, identify the individuals who are most responsible for the promotion, question them and create a record of their involvement and stated positions.

4) Always prefer written communication (emails or letters) over conversation when gathering information and don’t forget the value of presenting a news-gatherer in getting people to talk. A reporter for your community newspaper/newsletter or an interviewer with a video camera recording a documentary for a cable station will probably get much more information than a parent or committee of parents.

D. Educate and Organize the Community.

1) Copy and distribute to parents available pro-family literature and documentation of “gay” propaganda or incidents/situations from your local schools.

2) Circulate a petition. Draft your own language and craft it so that it will attract maximum support from pro-family people.

3) Use the petition to identify pro-family supporters in the community. Circulate it first among those you reasonably expect to support it, such as at churches and local pro-family groups. Create a database of names and contact information from the petition forms, so that you can contact these

people later for help with pro-family issues.

4) Build membership and support for your group by holding regular meetings and inviting all of those whom you have identified in the petition drive as allies. Bring in speakers from the local community with a story to tell or information about the schools. Maintain your database of supporters and keep in communication with them.

E. Transform the School District through Strength and Service

1) Establish a plan of action with short-term, mid-term and long-term goals. One of the short-term goals might be to make an initial show of strength at the school board. Send a contingent of articulate parents into a meeting after you have gathered a respectable number of signatures on your petition. Schedule a time to present it to the school board. Send notice to all of the signers. Then show up in a group and have the representatives of your group present the petition to the board. Ask for the board to schedule a time when it will vote on the action requested in the petition.

2) If you have identified one or more sympathetic school board members, coordinate your strategy with them. If the school has already taken sides with the “gay” movement, the school board members will probably not want to cooperate with you. That’s OK. If they were on your side you probably wouldn’t have a problem in the district. Your goal is not necessarily to win quickly, it is (a) to identify the anti-family board members so you know who needs to be replaced, and (b) to identify and organize all the pro-family people in your district (this will take a long time).

4) Circulate the petition throughout the larger community. Keep the petition circulating so that you identify as many allies in the community as possible.

5) Continue to hold regular meetings.

7) Identify candidates to replace anti-family members of the school board and support their candidacies (as individuals, not through your group unless you form a political action committee with the help of an experienced attorney or CPA).

2. The Church-Based Mission-to-the-Schools Approach

This approach requires the formation of a Booster Club of parents, grandparents and other church members whose purpose is to promote local schools as an essential mission field of the church, by

1) sponsoring, supporting and equipping Christian and/or pro-family student clubs in the schools.

2) changing the emphasis of the church youth group from “fun and games” to missionary training,

including apologetics, critical thinking, debate, and issues analysis (not an end to fun, but a shift in focus that will help kids discover their own importance as agents of Christ in the world).

3) honoring the achievements of youth missionaries in the church body.

4) educating the congregation about the homosexual agenda in the schools.

Action Checklist

A. Start a Booster Club

1) Form a church committee whose purpose will be to focus the church on the mission field of the schools. The goals of the club are

- a. to help the church to respond to the needs/opportunities for service in local schools
- b. to help the church recognize the largely untapped potential of the church youth as domestic missionaries and to help institute a missionary training program to prepare youths to address realistically the conditions in the schools and in the lives of their peers

2) Gather your documentation about the problem in the schools and some of the resources contained in this book, and present them to the church leadership.

3) Meet as a committee with the pastor or leadership of the church to get approval to start a Booster Club in the church.

4) Solicit involvement with the club from parents, students, teachers, school board members and other concerned members of the congregation.

5) Hold a regular meeting, at least monthly. Build relationships among the pro-family students and teachers and others involved with the school system.

B. Educate the Church About the Mission Field of the Schools

1) Host an information table well stocked with documentation of the problems. Promote the Booster Club as the answer to the problems.

2) Ask the pastor to give an occasional sermon on domestic missions and stress the schools as an example of a domestic sub-culture in need of Christian intervention. Provide him with sermon illustrations.

3). Ask teens from the youth ministry (and teachers, board members, etc) to give a report to the congregation on the state of the public schools.

C. Integrate a Missionary Training Program into the Youth Ministry

1) Have a meeting with the pastor, youth pastor and teen leaders within the youth ministry to discuss ways to better prepare youths to champion God's truth in schools and to meet the needs of their public school peers. Your goal is to introduce character and intellect-building exercises in at least four areas:

- i. Basic Christian apologetics.
- ii. Logic and critical thinking.
- iii. Communication/debate.
- iv. Issues analysis.

2). Make achievement of these skills attractive and entertaining. Successful methods include:

- i. having speakers such as lawyers, teachers, and other specialists.
- ii. splitting the group into opposing sides for issues debates.
- iii. the "Hot Seat" method of teaching kids how to think on their feet by putting one youth on the "Hot Seat" as the only proponent of a Christian value/belief and having all the rest take the opposing position (Teens 4 Life uses this method very effectively to train its members on the abortion issue).

3) Set a goal to form a Christian or pro-family student club in each high school represented in the congregation, led by the members of the youth group. Design your initial program to make starting these clubs a goal of the training. Discourage formation of clubs before the teens are prepared.

D. Sponsor and Support Student Clubs at School

1) Provide assistance and resources to help students form pro-family or Christian clubs at their schools. Be prepared to supply any material needs that may be required, such as financial help, tracts, etc..

2) Give recognition and honor to the youth as they achieve important milestones along the way to becoming missionaries to the schools, especially when they reach that critical juncture when they prepare to formally take their missionary ideals into the public schools.

3) Provide prayer backing and moral and/or legal support as needed. Schools may not voluntarily cooperate to allow students exercise of their constitutional religious and free speech rights. Be prepared to rally key members of your church to attend school board meetings and/or meet with principals and superintendents. (See Youth Advisory Project information in the resource section of Chapter 3 about free legal advice and assistance for pro-family public school students.)

E. Work to Transform the Local Schools to be Family-Friendly

- 1) Start a school-oriented prayer group and keep members up-to-date on current needs.
- 2) Promote involvement of church members as school volunteers, mentors to youths, participants in the PTA or PTO, and members of the school board.
- 3) Institute a Religious Release Time education program in your local schools. The law requires schools to release children for religious instruction.
- 4) Support Bible curriculum in the schools. It's fully legal to teach the Bible as literature and history.

3. The Campus-Based Student-Activist Approach

This approach requires an activist-minded Christian or pro-family club to be formed on the campus. The student club will promote the pro-family perspective in the student peer culture by

- 1) establishing a visible presence in the school which serves as a rallying point for all pro-family students.
- 2) articulating and advocating the pro-family position on social issues.
- 3) distributing pro-family resources and hosting events for pro-family speakers.

Action Checklist

A. Form a Christian or Pro-Family Club on Campus. Under the Equal Access Act of 1984, schools may not prohibit students from forming such clubs if any other student clubs exist on campus.

1). Decide whether to form a Christian Club or a non-religious pro-family club. A Christian Club is more likely to have support from local churches and will do more to bring Christ into the schools but it will draw from a narrower group of students in the school (Evangelicals and Catholics). It will also be limited by the Establishment Clause of the Constitution, which prohibits schools from advancing or inhibiting religion. Activities of the Christian Club will therefore be protected only to the extent that the students' free speech rights are protected and neither the school nor the teachers will be able to officially endorse the club's activities. In contrast, a secular pro-family club can attract a broader coalition of students who agree on philosophical rather than theological grounds and can be officially endorsed by teachers and schools.

b. If a Christian club already exists at your school, chances are it is used more as a sanctuary for Christian students than a vehicle for transforming the school. You must decide whether to work to reshape the Christian club or start a more activist-oriented pro-family club.

c. The following are some ideas for impacting your school.

- Invite pro-family speakers to official school events.
- Host an event in the name of your club such as a debate, speech or movie.
- Have a literature table at school and community events.
- Submit articles or letters to the school newspaper.
- Distribute literature.
- Wear club T-shirts with thought-provoking images or messages
- Introduce pro-family resolutions to the school board.

4. The School District-Based “Insiders Alliance” Approach

This approach requires the development and maintenance of an informal network of pro-family teachers, administrators and school board members. It may be self-administered or administered by the parents’ rights group, the booster club or any existing pro-family organization with the capacity to create and manage the database and facilitate communication among the allies. It may be a single state-wide alliance, multiple local alliances or some combination of the two.

The Insiders Alliance will advance the pro-family perspective on social issues as a legitimate and preferable alternative to anti-family secular humanism by

- 1) protecting and supporting the pro-family student clubs and their right to advocate the pro-family value system on campus
- 2) serving as faculty advisors to student clubs (if any members are teachers)
- 3) monitoring and opposing efforts by their anti-family counterparts to further subvert parental authority and children’s morals
- 3) channeling documentation of anti-family activism/abuses to parents’ rights groups and/or booster clubs
- 4) advocating a religious-based pro-family philosophy within the very narrow limits allowed under current interpretation of the Establishment Clause
- 5) advocating a non-religious teleological pro-family philosophy which is not subject to such restrictions

Action Checklist

A. Form an Intra-District Pro-Family Discussion Group.

1) Take leadership in the effort to form an insider alliance of school employees and board members from the various schools in your district. Insiders in the public school system are often intimidated by the atmosphere of political correctness in schools today. The most valuable service that you can perform for your pro-family allies within the school system is to prove to them that they are not alone. If you are an insider, line up some support for forming a group privately before announcing that your group is forming. If you are a local pro-family leader who is not himself or herself an insider, try to identify some key allies within the system and plan your strategy together.

2) Begin the process of identifying allies by hosting a schools-oriented social event after hours at the school or in a religiously neutral community facility. Show a film or have a speaker. Make the topic of discussion something that will draw people on our side but not unnecessarily polarize the insider community. One suggestion is to have a pro-family attorney give a talk on religious rights on the public school campus.

3) Build a data-base of supporters and facilitate communication between them. Identify a church contact person in local churches who will distribute flyers to the school employees in their congregation, inviting them to the discussion group/speakers meetings.

B. Form a Pro-family or Christian Employees Association

1) Once you have sufficient strength in numbers, follow the lead of other interest groups that have advanced their goals and values by forming an official employees association. Begin to compete for resources that may be available for such groups and for influence over school policy. These resources may include

- a. employee communications resources: bulletin boards, newsletters, mailing lists
- b. funding
- c. seats on committees

2) Assign members of your group to the task of producing a strategy for gaining influence in the public employees' unions to which your supporters belong.

C. Set a Goal to Transform Your School District

1) Being pro-active is essential. We should not adopt the attitude of being dissenters in somebody else's system. Our values are beneficial to the lives of the children and young adults in our care, while our adversaries' values destroy their lives and health.

2) It is not enough to stand up against the bad, or even to promote what is good. We must compete

for influence in the school system with the goal of restoring a family-friendly climate for schoolchildren.

D. Protect and Guide Pro-Family Students

1) Christian/pro-family students are often even more intimidated by “political correctness” than are teachers. Let students know your classroom or department is a safe place to express opinions which run counter to the liberal establishment views. Don’t allow other students to intimidate pro-family students without intervening in defense of free speech (or the unpopular truth of the matter).

2) Encourage like-minded teachers to make themselves available to be faculty advisors for student clubs.

3) Bring in special speakers who have a pro-family perspective. These may even be teachers from other schools who are part of your alliance.

E. Take Leadership in Your School

1) Educate your peers about the “gay” agenda and its influence in the schools.

2) Expose anti-family activities and personnel. Collect all documentation that comes into your hands that reveals anti-family activities in your district and the identities of the persons responsible. See that this information gets into the hands of responsible pro-family allies for use in educating the community about any problems occurring in your district.

F. Be Bold but Prudent

1) Protect yourself and your allies from retaliation. Our adversaries are some of the most vindictive people on the planet. Don’t panic. Be prepared. Keep copies of all your documentation and all communications between yourself and the school and hostile parties. Don’t allow any negative item to go into your personnel file unchallenged.

2) Use your insider-alliance allies as a support team. Provide complimentary letters to each other. Be prepared to join together as a group to approach third parties who are being influenced by opposing activists.

CHRISTIANS IN BUSINESS

This segment contains an outline for a proposed plan to build a base of financial strength to fund and advance the pro-family agenda. The plan detailed here may be used, in whole or in part, as

a working paper for projects undertaken by the Business Team in the model organization described in the Pro-Family Agenda section above.

Strategic Business Plan

The goal here is to fund ministry through commerce in the secular marketplace. The means is a for-profit corporation whose board of directors is made up of pastors and Christian businessmen, whose stockholders are Kingdom-minded believers, and whose employees (subject to the limits of anti-discrimination laws) are fellow believers.

Such a corporation could own any number of mutually beneficial profit-making businesses. Companies which could serve the public yet be most beneficial to the churches might include a rental equipment company (sound and stage equipment, convention supplies, tools, scaffolding, vehicles, etc), a printing company or office equipment company.

Companies most beneficial to the church members and stockholders might include food, furniture, automobile or clothing companies which could provide discounts to stockholders and church members but sell at normal retail prices to the public. Although having the form of a corporate business, these companies could follow some practices used by cooperatives and membership-based buying groups..

Businesses most strategically-placed for shaping the culture include news media companies (newspapers, radio stations, television stations), advertising companies, banking and finance companies.

Such a ministry-dedicated corporation would operate according to biblical principles. It would avoid debt except for major capital purchases with inherent resale value such as real estate and high-end tools and equipment. It would pay a tithe of all of its profits to ministry, perhaps creating a pool of funds to be donated by vote of the board, stockholders, employees or a combination of the three. It would use transparent accounting and bookkeeping systems, accessible to every shareholder. It would uphold the highest standards of integrity in workplace ethics and dealings with the public. It would share its success with the employees through profit-sharing, stock awards or other programs.

Implementation would require the assistance of a specialist in the laws of business formation and securities to form the corporation and conduct a stock-sales campaign in the churches to raise initial capital. This might include the creation of a team to make presentations in churches, followed by private, confidential appointments with individual prospective shareholders. The initial capital would be used to hire an executive director and to create or purchase the first business(es). The first purchase might be a commercial building to serve both as a headquarters and as a source of income through leasing.

The corporation could promote and/or sponsor a discipleship program in the participating churches to develop a pool of potential employees for the businesses, teaching them biblical work ethics and the principles of work relationships and Christian service in the workplace, the importance of good stewardship of money and talents, and conflict resolution through Christian mediation in a climate of mutual respect.

It will be important to keep commercial work separate from church work. It would not be

appropriate, for example, to impose a sacrificial model on Christian employees. “A workman is worthy of his hire” (Luke 10:7) and should expect to be compensated for service in a business setting that might be given freely in a church setting. We should also establish clear biblical guidelines for openness and accountability among board members and stockholders to counter the inevitable temptations of greed, pride and envy.

Most importantly, church members should not be seen as the primary market for the businesses (except perhaps at the beginning). This corporation should be a vehicle for earning money from the world and putting it to work expanding the Kingdom of God.

Finally, Christians should demand of ourselves the standards of excellence necessary to successfully compete in the secular marketplace. Christian work product cannot be sub-standard because it is marketed to Christians who are expected to accept it out of loyalty to fellow believers. This is bad business and must be avoided. Instead we should aim to provide a superior public image, product, workplace and quality of worker. The pursuit of excellence by Christians in their work in the world is an important way of shining our light before men in a way that gives glory to God.