

John MacArthur: “I Couldn’t Care Less About the Culture War”



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The following is from a two-minute video clip “Should Christians be Focused on ‘Taking Back the Culture’?” by Pastor John MacArthur (see my video response below):

<https://youtu.be/c-EUHYnDHFQ>

I really couldn’t care less about the culture war. I wouldn’t give ten seconds to worrying. What are you talking about? Two temporal opposing moral philosophies?

What is culture? Henry Van Til described culture as “religion externalized.” If you want to know where a person’s allegiance is, look at his culture. A person’s culture is the externalization of what he believes. It tells you who his god is and what he’s committed to.

George Grant describes it as follows:

Culture is simply a worldview made evident. It is basic beliefs worked out into habits of life. It is theology translated into sociology. Culture is a very practical expression of the common faith of a community or a people or a nation. ...

What a person thinks, what he believes, what shapes his ultimate concerns, and what he holds to be true in his heart—in short, his faith or lack of it—has a direct effect on his material well-being, behavior, and outlook; on his sense of what is good, true, and beautiful; on his priorities, values, and principles. After all, “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he” [Prov. 23:7].... The Christian faith changes people. Therefore, the Christian faith changes culture.

Culture is an inescapable concept. There is no way to ignore it or escape it. You are either changing the culture or being changed by it.

What about the culture war? The war began in the Garden. After the Fall, we hear God saying,

And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel (Gen. 3:15).

There are two competing worldviews with two ways of salvation and two philosophies of life that affect everything. God created the world and said it was “very good” (Gen. 1:31). Even after the Fall, the world is good (1 Tim 4:4). God designed it to be cultivated. Because of the Fall, there will be those who will war against a biblical culture. The Bible is the story of that war.

The title of the MacArthur video is “Should Christians be Focused on ‘Taking Back the Culture’?” If by focused he means only concerned about the externals of cultural development without the gospel, then I would answer no. There are times, however, when a person, special interest groups, or a government and its courts attack God’s people and biblical morality. Defending against such attacks is what Christians war against. The Apostle Paul writes:

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places* (Eph. 6:12).

Notice that he does not say that we **don't struggle**. We do struggle. There is no indication that we should be passive in this struggle. These dark ideologies manifest themselves in real-world ways.

The Apostle Paul didn't stand idly by when he and his companions were mistreated by the Romans:

And the jailer reported these words to Paul, *saying*, "The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Therefore come out now and go in peace." But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out." The policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. They were afraid when they heard that they were Romans, and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city. They went out of the prison and entered *the house of Lydia*, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed (Acts 16:36-40).

That's why organizations like Alliance Defending Freedom were raised up.