

## What Are You Going To Do About It?

**Charles Whitaker**

**Given 30-Jul-16; Sermon #1334A**

The boy's dare, "Oh, yeah? What are ya gonna do about it?" informs my comments today—and in fact is my title.

In a changing, threatening world, filled with injustice, oppression, and violence towards us and our families, what is our proper response? "What are ya gonna to do about it?" How should we respond to the curtailment of our freedoms, to the stealing of our income by the grasping godless, to the pernicious, incessant attack on our godly values and sober lifestyle, and, most ominously, to the incipient criminalization of our worship?

How should we respond? Like Rover, lying over? Or conversely like a lion, till we are "red in tooth and claw"?

Today, I want to talk about the activism which counts, the course of action we can take—and make a difference.

Let us spend a few minutes meeting the change agents who threaten us. That is what they proudly dub themselves, "Change agents." This list is not at all exhaustive.

**The Feminists:** These people aver that it is perfectly fine to kill an unborn child if the mother wakes up some morning and decides she is inconvenienced by morning sickness. If the child might stand in the way of her career, kill the kid.

**The Environmentalists** (and I will include in this category the climate change people): These folk are kissing cousins to the Feminists, advocating the killing of the unborn in the interests of population control. But, by all means, save the whales! These communitarian tree huggers, in the interests of "saving the planet," would lower our standard of living to that of cave dwellers—as many of us as survived the wars they advocate.

**The Globalists:** Among other things, these are the advocates of sending jobs in manufacturing and technology overseas, leaving Americans to work at McDonald's (and part-time at that), working in the low-paying "service sector," as they term it—all without mentioning the substandard quality of those jobs.

**The Homosexuals:** These are the people who have actually accomplished the redefinition of marriage to include those who go "after strange flesh." Among these are those real winners who want a fifteen-year-old boy who thinks he is a girl to be given the right to shower in the girls' locker room.

Add to this the **genetic engineers** and **the pharmaceutical houses** and other sundry groups—and you have quite a gang of people agitating for change. A hundred years ago, almost everyone would have branded these people as loonies. Yet, by 2016, they are no longer on the fringe, no longer unfunded, no longer closeted. Their ideas have gained traction, their initiatives receiving widespread support—and a hefty line of credit—by the most influential bankers, businessmen, and judges.

These powerful forces for change have become highly effective movers and shakers of our civilization, suppressing the expression of alternative views, sneeringly treating those who articulate traditional beliefs as country-bumpkins. Yes, we have already come to the point that people who hold personal beliefs contrary to those of the change agents are unable to remain in business. More and more, they are denying the right to exercise private conscience in favor of an ugly and perverse communitarianism. Welcome to the brave new world of the change agents.

So, what are ya gonna do 'bout it? We know that fighting back as activists do is not God's way. Activists, by definition, become deeply involved in their causes—physically, psychologically, emotionally, intellectually. Their cause comes to possess them, to be an obsession. Yet, we know God's instruction to us, as recorded in Philippians 3:20, "Our citizenship is in heaven."

We dare not allow ourselves to become enmeshed, emotionally embedded, in the affairs of this world. That is a given; we all know that.

But then, is the opposite of activism—playing dead, lying over like Rover—an acceptable alternative? That seems to be what many people in God’s church have done over the years. As an approach to the notion of total non-involvement, I am going to string a number of scriptures together, all of them from the book of Judges.

**Judges 3:9** When the people of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who delivered them.

**Judges 3:15** But when the children of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for them.

**Judges 4:3** Then the children of Israel cried out to the Lord; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron, and for twenty years he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel.

**Judges 6:6** So Israel was greatly impoverished because of Midian, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord.

**Judges 10:10** And the children of Israel cried out to the Lord, saying, “We have sinned against You, because we have both forsaken our God and have served the Baals!

Three commonalities are striking in these passages:

First, in all cases, the people were under oppression.

Second, in all cases, the people cry out to God for help.

Third, and extremely importantly, God is always careful to point out that the people who called out to Him were His people, Israel.

In each example, God intervened and effectively delivered His people Israel from the hands of the oppressors. We are almost forced to ask, “Are we dealing with a no-brainer here?” We, today, are oppressed, almost to the point of persecution. And, we are the Israel of God today, as Paul tells us in

Galatians 6:16. Crying out to God for deliverance is clearly the activism, by that I mean, of course, the activity, the course of action, that we can take which is effective. It works.

I appreciate that we as the body of Christ make up spiritual and not physical Israel. The days of the judges bear that significant dissimilarity with our situation in the church. I understand that physical or national issues are not our primary concern; God has not called us now to serve as counter-change agents, people commissioned to sabotage the works of evil men at this time.

Today we do not shape world history as we will tomorrow. And, I even recognize that some members of God's true church do intensely cry out to God over matters of national interest, of course.

But, for all that, my question remains, "Why do we in the church today not cry out to God more commonly, more plaintively, and more earnestly about social ills as they impact us and our families?" Well, I think one of the reasons is that we are convinced that "It is what it is." There is a certain dark fatalism lurking behind that modern-day aphorism, like its iconic forebear, "Que sera, sera." After all, we in the church of God hold that this is the end of the age, so, whatever will be, will be. This is how God wants it at this time. It is God's will. This is the way it is supposed to be at the eschaton—the last times. So, we aver, what God calls upon us to do is just grin and bear it.

Please, turn to Matthew 7. How does all that square with Christ's comments in this part of the Sermon on the Mount? I will look at verses 7-8:

**Matthew 7:7-8** "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened."

Christ actually commands that we ask, seek, knock. Further, the implication of verse 8 is that those who fail to ask, seek, or knock will not receive, while those who do will.

Please, turn to Exodus 19. God is saying we have an intercessory role. Like a priest, we are to intercede for others on their behalf.

**Exodus 19:5-6** “If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, you shall be a special treasure to me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests.”

In the Old Covenant, priesthood is conditional—“if you will indeed obey”—and not an accomplished fact. Compare that with this concept’s New Covenant counterpart, Revelation 1:6. There we read that Christ, “has made us a kings and priests.” You will find about the same verbiage in Revelation 5:10, to which we will not turn.

The verb made in both Revelation 1:6 and Revelation 5:10 is first aorist, that is, an accomplished event—a done deal. God has already made us priests. So it is that Peter, writing in I Peter 2:9, tells us we, “are a royal priesthood.” We understand that we have not been fully invested yet, fully empowered.

Please turn over to I John 5. Even now, God has given us a ministry of intercession. That intercessory work has its focus in the church. For that, notice

**I John 5:16** (NLT) If you see a fellow believer sinning in a way that does not lead to death [unpardonable sin], you should pray, and God will give that person life.

God promises He will respond to our intercession for people in the church under certain conditions. That established, please, turn over to I Timothy 2 to see intercession in a slightly different context.

**I Timothy 2:1-3** Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.

Have you prayed for the President today? This week? This year? If our lives—Paul’s remarks do not focus on the people of the world—lack peace and quiet, if our lives are not “quiet and peaceable” who is to blame? We are to pray for these people.

So, I ask again, “Is inactivity in our interface with world events what God wants? What does He want us to do about the difficulties of our time?” Let us get down to brass tacks. Does God want your highly impressionable seven-year-old boy to enter the second grade to be influenced for nigh unto ten months of the year by a sexually perverse teacher? Does He want your 14-year-old daughter to have to shower with some boy at school who is nothing more than a creep, a weirdo? How “quiet and peaceable” is that?

Please, turn over to II Timothy 3:1, dropping down to verse 5. Paul writes:

**II Timothy 3:1** But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come.

**II Timothy 3:5** From such people turn away!

That is a given. Paul continues by listing the prevailing attributes of people in those last days—in these days.

But, how does your son in second grade avoid falling under the influence of a pervert for the biggest part of a year? What action can your 14-year-old daughter take to ensure that she does not have to shower with a very mixed up boy at school? How do you, as parents, avoid circumstances like that from materializing?

In point of fact, you do not, not in any carnal sense. You cannot. We are essentially disenfranchised, and, I assure you, we are becoming more and more powerless every day. That is the reality of the matter. We are fighting Goliath who scorns God with his every breath.

God can slay the giant. But, as we saw in Judges, He did not help Israel until His people cried out to Him. That is what Christ instructs us to do: ask, seek, knock.

Indeed, it may be fair to at least ask, “Are we in this pickle today because we in God’s church, who have God’s ear, slumbered and slept and did not cry out to God for His protection?” Mr. Armstrong pointed out the nefarious work of the change agents generations ago; some of you had grandparents who heard his message. We saw it coming with more clarity than anyone else in the world. We warned others about it. But did we take action, earnestly praying to God for protection for our families and for the church at large?

Let us revisit Judges. We are just going to pick out this one verse without going into context: God is speaking ironically—sarcastically—to Israel.

**Judges 10:14** “Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in your time of distress.”

The people of this world may call themselves Christians, but they most often pray to a false god, one of their own creation. They actually pray to Satan, not to God. God does not hear those prayers for rain, peace, or protection. To see that, please, turn to Zechariah 7. Some people had come to the prophet asking, “Is it profitable for us to keep the summer fasts?”

**Zechariah 7:9-13** Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Execute true justice, show mercy and compassion everyone to his brother. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart against his brother.” But they refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear. Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Thus great wrath came from the Lord of hosts. Therefore it happened, that just as He proclaimed and they would not hear, so they called out and I would not listen,” says the Lord.

It is important to note that God here does not stress the sins of Sabbath-breaking or of idolatry. He cites social sins, like the sins perpetrated by the change agents of today against defenseless individuals. In Zechariah’s day, when the people called out, God did not hear because they, like those in modern America, would not listen to Him.

But, as Christ points out in Matthew 7, God does respond to the petitions of His people. Our prayers make a difference. Our activism counts. God looks for us to pray for deliverance from the change agents. And ultimately, He responds to our prayers as we come confidently to His throne of grace “in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

How does God respond?

If we prayed for a downright end to the oppression, would He set the change agents down, decapitate them, just as David did Goliath? Or, just as Haman was hanged in Esther’s day? Well, He certainly has the power to do that, and in the book of Judges there is account after account of His having done just that. Yes, God definitely could reverse the seemingly unstoppable “gains” (I use that term ironically) of today’s godless change agents.

I am not saying that He would do so at this point, only that He could. What is important is this: For our part, we must never remain quiet, saying, “It is what it is,” with the underlying thought that God does not want to put down the change agents now. We had better not decide what God wants to do. He has not appointed us to be His counselors. He could completely turn things around. And, you know what, He just might surprise us; He has done that kind of thing before.

Thirty years ago, did any of us think God would blow apart the Worldwide Church of God? That is what He did. He surprises us.

That said, totally putting down the change agents may very well not be His purpose now. Still, there are other ways God can protect His people from those change agents. In the case of Joseph and Mary, God did not immediately slay Herod in order to protect Christ, but allowed his oppression to go unchecked for some time, his killing of infant boys. He provided for Christ and His parents to escape to Egypt for a while. You can read the story beginning at Matthew 2:13. God may provide relief through opportunities to escape a particular threat. I mean things like opportunities for jobs in another city with a better school system. God provides a way of escape—I Corinthians 10:13.

In terms of the examples I mentioned above, you see, God might simply ensure that that sexually deviant teacher assigned to your son's classroom by a mindless computer is suddenly transferred to another school. These things often happen in ways that are unbeknownst to us. But they do not happen by accident, neither.

So, what should be the thrust of our prayers regarding the social changes which endanger our families and the church?

First, pray, as Paul said, for all the leaders in high positions, that we can live godly lives. In terms of the examples I cited, we may not want to wait until the day junior enters the second grade. We need to think things through, think ahead, praying for God's intervention as early as possible. Security experts refer to "situational awareness—training your family, and yourself—to notice collections of unsavory people in the mall, and then actively seeking to avoid such assemblies.

As far as is possible, we need to think ahead, identifying possibly difficult situations that we or our children may come to face, and pray for deliverance as soon as we recognize those "situations."

That level of prescience or foresight is not always possible, I know. Still, for all that, God has blessed us with the ministry's commentaries to make us cognizant of upcoming "situations." Heads up! We should look alive, think.

Second, we should pray for the insight to recognize that way of escape He has provided. It may not be obvious.

Third, and probably more important still, we need to pray for the faith to take that path of escape.

Fourth, we should pray that God will figuratively open our eyes, enabling us to see the "horses and chariots of fire all around" us. You can read all about that at II Kings 6.

But, for now, please, turn to Psalm 50. I will wind down by briefly looking at Asaph's comments about the power of God to deliver His people, and His commitment to do so.

**Psalm 50:1-13** The Mighty One, God the Lord, has spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun to its going down. [That is, from the east to the west. He is everywhere powerful.] Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God will shine forth. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people [God is committed to and able to take the part of His people.]: “Gather My saints to Me, those who made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.” Let the heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is Judge! Selah. [God directly addresses us, those who are faithful. We need to give this some real thought.] “Hear, O My people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against you; I am God, your God! I will not rebuke you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings, which are continually before Me. I will not take a bull from your house, nor goats from your folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains, and all wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and its fullness. Will I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?”

We will not turn to these passages in Hebrews for lack of time. Hebrews 10:4 notifies us that the blood of bulls and goats does not purge sin. I John 1:7 tells us Christ’s blood does. We know that God is not looking for us to offer animal sacrifices.

In Psalm 50, God is speaking to His faithful, to New Covenant people, people who do not need to seek purification by animal sacrifice. Hebrews 9:13 tells us that animal sacrifices were effective for purifying the flesh, making it ritually clean, something that the people under the Old Covenant had to do to maintain any type of relationship with God at all—even a distant one.

Now, here in verse 14, God indicates what He wants His New Covenant people to do:

**Psalm 50:14-15** “Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High. Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.”

That is what God wants. That is a big part of our job as priests now—to remain thankful and ever-ready to call on Him for help. That includes calling out to Him on behalf of others in the church.

Let us skip down to the concluding verse 23, where Asaph indicates the contrast between the person who forgets God and the person who worships God in Spirit and in truth.

**Psalm 50:23** “Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; and to him who orders his conduct aright I will show the salvation of God.”

Our God is able to deliver. One way or the other, according to His will, He will deliver. Rather than complain about liberties lost, rather than bemoan the passing of old days, let us thank God that He remains enthroned as Sustainer, Provider, and Savior, in fact the undisputed Ruler of His creation—which includes us. Let us cry out to Him specifically for relief, for deliverance from the many powerful change agents whose worldview is Satan’s worldview.

You understand that these individuals—the spiritual children of Satan—share their father’s view of the world. They, like him, envision a world without God.

Let us close, then, at Ezekiel 20, where God speaks to apostate Israel, the Israel of today, the Israel of the change agents.

**Ezekiel 20:32-33** “What you have in mind shall never be, when you say, ‘We will be like the Gentiles, like the families in other countries, serving worship wood and stone.’ “As I live,” declares the Lord God, “surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you.”

God thunders: What the change agents ultimately have in mind, a totally godless earth, is never going to happen. God will not permit it. Thank God that He is preserving a people for Himself, a remnant, a royal priesthood.

Daniel 11:32 speaks of those people, describing those who in the last days will do “great exploits.” A number of translations render that phrase, as “fight back.” Let us “fight back,” but do so in the way God wants us to fight back.

I will end paraphrasing the English missionary William Carey: We can expect great things from God if we attempt great things for God.

Let us boldly—audaciously, relentlessly—cry out, asking Him to deliver us all from the godless, according to His will. That is an activism that counts, effective works. That is what we should do about it.