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Religion: Institution Or Revolution?

By Chris McElroy

In writing any article about religion you run the risk of people not agreeing with you or the risk of offending people. Does that mean we should not write about religion? Absolutely not.

Should we worry that people might be offended? No. We should not go out of our way to offend people, but as long as you write your true beliefs, then you are doing what is in your heart and should share that with others.

For many churches, Christianity and religion have become institutions. Power, politics, money, and other worldly things have become the focus of these institutions.

Many people who read this article will find what I have to say uncomfortable. Jesus never promised that you or I would be made comfortable in this life and in this article I don't promise to make you feel comfortable either.

Jesus calls the church to reach out to the community, to the poor, the sick, and to those who do not know Christ. Jesus promised that He would provide for our needs as long as we use what he provides to do His will and to bring Him glory. He taught us to believe him for this promise and to act as knowing that He will fulfill that promise.

Instead, these days many churches focus on survival. They plan their budgets to make sure they bank enough money for a rainy day, hire business managers and treat the church as if it is a business entity rather than a church whose mission it is to do GOD's work.

Politics is one area that many churches and religious institutions have focused much of their attention. They lobby politicians, get involved in campaigns, and donate money that does not belong to them to politicians who promise much but deliver very little.

Does not belong to them? What do I mean by that? Tithes do not belong to the church they belong to GOD. Tithes are to be used for GOD's purposes. Nowhere in the bible can I find where helping politicians get elected is a proper use for money tithed to GOD.

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Jesus did not lobby the Pharisees and the Roman government for laws that force people to follow His way. Jesus taught people right from wrong, then gave them a choice of whether or not they would follow Him. Through the bible, Jesus still teaches us right from wrong and offers us that same choice.

It is our job as Christians and as church leaders to teach GOD's word to others and let them know that Jesus has offered them that choice. We cannot rely on governments to pass laws to do our job for us. Saying that we need to lobby for those laws to be passed to force people to do what is moral is saying we as Christians and the church cannot or will not do the job GOD intends for us to do.

Most people have an image of Jesus Christ as meek and mild, a healer of the sick, a helper to the poor, and our Lord and Savior who loves us. Jesus is all of those things, but Jesus was and is also a revolutionary!

Jesus stood up to those in power in both religion and in government. Jesus challenged them. Jesus told them they had no right to oppress His people. Jesus went out and consorted with the poor, the sick, prostitutes, tax collectors, and other sinners. He ministered to the unbelievers. He did not spend all His time at the sanctuary preaching to believers.

Rather than churches becoming institutions they should be leading revolutions. Rather than just surviving and preserving traditions and rules, they should be throwing all of GOD's money forward to help those in need and to reach those who do not know Christ as their Savior.

Rather than worrying about building new roofs, buying stained glass windows, and buying new carpet and pews, we should be worrying about breaking down walls and calling unbelievers to join us.

Church is not just a place where believers gather to worship, it is also a place where believers gather to teach unbelievers about Christ.

So many Christians today think all they need to do is attend church, pray, and do good things, then wait for Jesus to return. Jesus charged us with much more than that. Jesus charged us to change those around us, to change communities, to change the world. He charged us with teaching his word and to bring more people to him so they can have everlasting life.

Cowards hide and wait to be rescued and GOD despises cowards more than any others. Become the revolutionary that Jesus called you to be. Allow Him to use you to achieve His purpose rather than praying that He will help you achieve yours. It is not about you.

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<http://www.mosaicmiami.org>

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<http://mosaicmiami.blogspot.com>

to learn more about Mosaic.

Religion And Your Health

By Elizabeth Newberry

Did you know a person may or may not support a medical practice or advancement based on his or her religion? It's true, and to a degree it's not at all shocking. Many Christians and Catholics alike oppose abortions because they feel an abortion murders a child and therefore goes against God and his Word, i.e., the Bible. The abortion debate has been going on for years, so that's no surprise; however, whether or not a particular medical practice is supported by a particular religion goes beyond just abortion. It stretches out to other medical procedures covered by health insurance, as well as health insurance itself.

Practices covered by health insurance such as birth control and other forms of contraception and the withdrawal of a life support system, i.e., "pulling the plug," are sometimes supported or not supported based solely on a person's religion.

Many health insurance policies cover birth control and other forms of contraception, and many women take advantage of this coverage because they aren't interested in becoming mothers; however, contraception is frowned upon by some religions. For example, many Catholics do not use any form of birth control because they feel it goes against the Catholic religion; yet, there are actually Catholics out there who support birth control, despite the Pope's, and the religion's itself, disapproval and assertion that it goes against the Catholic religion.

Similar to abortion, many people feel that shutting off a vegetative person's life support system is the same as committing murder, and is therefore immoral and goes against their religion. At the same time, the cost to keep a person who is in a vegetative state on life support is extremely high, and many health insurance policies won't pay for it for very long, if at all.

When it comes to certain kinds of medical coverage provided by, or not provided by, health insurance, many people list religion as a deciding factor.

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