

Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview

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Are we aware of the spirit of our times? We live in a post-Christian and apostate age. The younger generation is growing up in a world conditioned by the secular mass media. The economic meltdown, the rise of crime and unemployment coincide with the growing moral malaise in our culture. Scientific reason is now the sole arbiter of truth. Truth claims that cannot be verified scientifically are relegated to the lesser spheres of private values and preferences. Science, politics, economics, and so forth are part of the public and factual domain of life. The Gospel is banished from the public square. Consequently, it no longer functions as a directing power in social and cultural life. But if we conform to the spirit of our times then "we have in fact abandoned the gospel revealed in Scripture."

The rapid resurgence of Islam threatens the cultural foundations of our society. It is deeply critical of the West and is therefore looking for solutions in its own traditions. It presents a prophetic challenge to Christians to recover the full dimensions of their faith. But how many evangelicals can articulate the Gospel with any coherence? Too many have failed to pass on to our young people sound Biblical teaching to help them survive the secular and Islamic onslaught. Everything has to be fun. As I see it, the millions of dollars spent on youth ministries, Christian music, publishing, and media have produced a culture of young people who know next to nothing about their own faith except how they feel about it.

Living at the Crossroads is a thoughtful book that draws on the rich tradition of Reformed thought. It gives the reader renewed hope in the power of the Gospel. The authors stress the need for a Christian worldview, but it is valuable only insofar as it enables us to understand more faithfully the gospel that stands at the centre of the Biblical story, and live more fully in that story. It is for this reason that this study of a Christian worldview follows their former book, *The Drama of Scripture*. They found in their teaching that a course on worldview is far more effective when it follows a course on the story of the Bible. The authors describe worldview as an underlying set of beliefs about the world that serves to shape all our subsequent thinking. They rightly observe that "Thinking Christianly" is a vital part of expressing a Christian worldview. They point out that it must be deeply connected to our life in Christ. They also show why North American evangelicalism is losing ground by neglecting the broad scope of the Gospel. It tends to view the cross of Christ in a very individualistic and personalistic way. As if the whole drama of salvation culminates in the words, "For me; for me." It is certainly true that Jesus' death is for us, but this is a too narrow version of the truth. We must not lose sight of the fact that in the crucifixion God defeats the powers that enslave cultural and social as well as individual life. To confess "Jesus is Lord" is to identify Jesus with the God of the Old Testament story: Jesus is Creator and Sustainer of the world, Ruler of history, and Redeemer and Judge of all things. If we confess only "Jesus is my personal Saviour" and neglect "Jesus is Creator, Ruler, Redeemer, and Judge," then we have an emaciated worldview. A Biblical worldview is about getting right who Jesus is.

Salvation is more than saving souls. God's redemptive work begins at the dawn of human history, and we have not reached sunset yet. God's saving work is about reclaiming his lost creation, putting it back to the way it was meant to be. It is comprehensive. All of human life and all of nonhuman creation are the objects of God's restorative work. He intends to reclaim nothing less than the whole world as his kingdom. Simply put, salvation is the restoration of

the whole of God's good creation. The Gospel as recorded in Scripture is as broad as creation. Since the gospel is about God's rule over all of creation, all nations, and all of human life, the mission of Jesus' followers is as wide as creation itself. They have been commissioned to witness to the gospel in all of public life – business, economics, scholarship, politics, family, criminal justice, art, media – and every corner of human experience. The authors state that their deepest concern in this book is to give expression to the gospel of the kingdom and the cultural mission of the church that follows from this. They challenge the church to resist the spirit of our age. They state that we cannot allow the demands of our neighbour for free choice – whether in sexual orientation, or abortion, or pornography, or consumerism – to determine the agenda of Christians today. Before any other consideration, we are called to be faithful to God. But faithfulness to the Gospel can be very costly. Suffering is the result of a missionary encounter with the idolatrous powers of our culture. If we as the church want to be faithful to the Gospel, we will find ourselves faced with a choice: either accommodate ourselves as a minority community and modify the comprehensive claims of the Gospel or remain faithful and experience some degree of conflict and suffering. Ours is a mission under the cross. This should also be made clear to our young people who want to profess their faith. The good news may call forth opposition, conflict, and rejection. But the church announces a victory that remains hidden until the final day when the Lord returns in glory.

. Johan D. Tangelder