

How God's people can combat the empty schemes of the wicked

by Ern Baxter

About a year ago, I had a vision during a conference in Sydney, Australia. I saw a mass of people who were happy and rejoicing as they busily pursued their interpersonal activities. They seemed intoxicated with all that was going on.

While this vast group continued its intoxicated enjoyment, an ugly, threatening claw came down and steadily plucked away their freedoms and rights. As I watched in horror, the vision changed and a small group of people came out from the crowd to challenge the talon.

The interpretation of the vision was that the mass of people was the evangelical, charismatic, Pentecostal, born again crowd. Now that's a good crowd. I'm honored to be a part of it. But we are in great danger because we have failed to recognize and oppose the claw of secular humanism—the claw of improper government agencies that are stealing our children, ruining our economy, and violating God's laws governing society. We have been so taken up with holding conferences, having a good time, and blessing one another that we have defaulted on our mandate to challenge the governments of the earth with the lordship of Christ.

The vision was sobering to me. I realize now that our byword has been, "Get them saved, and God will take them to heaven. In the meantime, keep everyone happy." But all the while we have been systematically robbed, raped, and taken advantage of by a loud-mouthed minority that has almost made Christian ethics passe. Today, the laws of God are no longer honored in secular society. Even our judicial system has changed; no longer does it relate to the absolute laws of God as it once did. Now, it relates to public opinion. If enough people are in favor of abortion, unborn babies will be aborted.

Something inside us must arise to challenge the ugly claw of ungodly sadism, of ungodly feminism, of ungodly secular humanism, of ungodly economic practices, of ungodly pornography. We must see ourselves as more than a group of people sitting at a bus stop waiting to go to heaven. We are the world's hope. We are the salt of the earth. We are the light of the world. Our light reflects the essential light of the world, Jesus Christ. But what are we doing about it?

The State of the Nations

Psalm 2 accurately describes the present state of the nations, as well as what we must do. The first two verses give us a divine revelation of the human condition:

Why are the nations in an uproar, and the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed (NAS).

This scripture is not someone's idea of what things are like; this is divine revelation. As Christians we do not have the option to reject this evaluation of the nature of mankind. It is God's evaluation.

The King James Version says, "Why do the heathen rage?" Joseph Parker, a contemporary of Charles Spurgeon, rather quaintly said, "Because they're heathen." The word *rage* means "to seethe," "to be in turmoil," or "to conspire." Ungodly men wickedly conspire and the masses devise empty schemes.

Although God saw this long ago, His people are not alert to it. Somehow we manage to miss the signs that our children are being systematically taken from us. It's already happened in Sweden, where children can report their parents if they so much as raise their voice at

them, and can sue if their parents spank them. Comparable legislation could soon be waiting in the wings in our nation.

Years ago, I did a study on the place of children in God's economy. According to His plan, the only people responsible for children are their parents. The state is not responsible for children. It has no right to take them or in any way to interfere with parenting. Yet when the state tells us what we can or cannot do with our children, we take it lying down. Why? Because the state has become our god, and we're only a step removed from the days of Caesar when people were sent to the lions if they didn't say, "Caesar is lord."

Out of Control

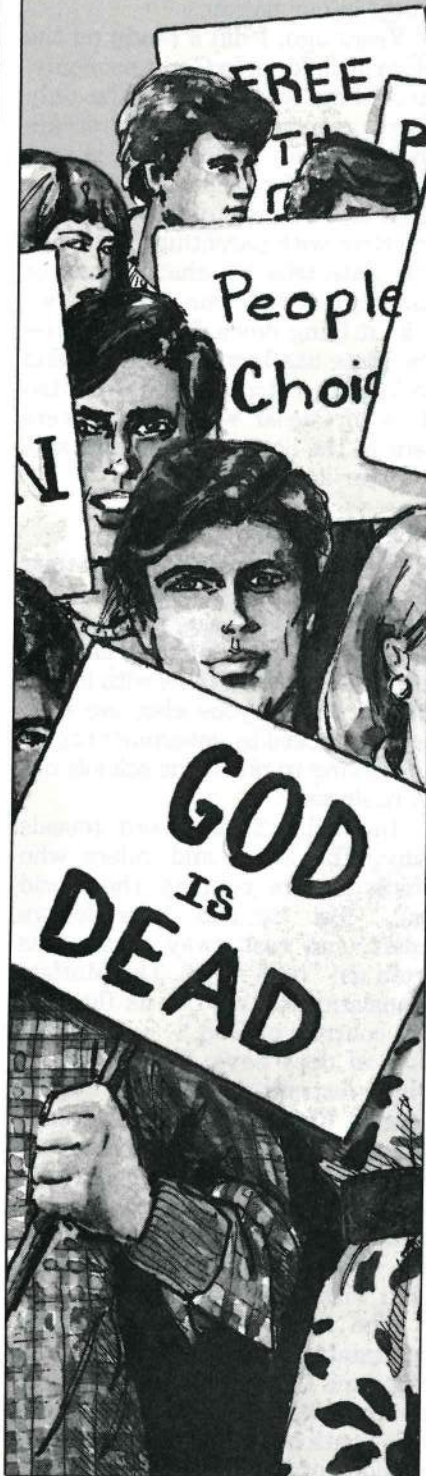
Why are parents who teach their children at home, which is their God-given right, being intimidated? Why, when many of their children are passing state exams with higher marks than anyone else, are they being attacked by government agencies trying to put home schools out of business?

In Psalm 2, the Lord reveals why. The kings and rulers who think they're running the world say, "Let us tear their fetters apart, and cast away their cords from us!" (v. 3 NAS). The Moffatt translation says, "Let us fling off the controls of God."

God does have controls, or divine restraints, but the world doesn't like restraints. The world, for example, is polygamous at heart; it doesn't like monogamy. So unregenerate people glory in their multiple marriages, and many who are living together have not bothered with marriage at all.

The world doesn't want God's restraints on sex. In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion, and now hanging over the head of this nation are the corpses of millions of babies—some who died

We're in great danger because we've failed to oppose the claw of humanism.



by abortion and others who weren't supposed to survive but did and were put to death after the abortion.

Godless people also don't want divine restraints on their economy. If we operated our personal budgets the way our government does its own, we would be in jail. Our government thinks nothing of flooding the market with worthless money so that what's already in circulation is immediately devalued. Those in government get away with such practices because they think they're above the law. God, however, is jealous over weights and measures. He will have something to say about it.

God's restraints on justice have been discarded as well. I have heard that for murder, convicts spend about five years in prison; armed robbery, two; and rape, two. God has mandated that judges should wield the sword of justice, but because the state has forbidden it, they can only give out lesser, innocuous penalties. People who have murdered once, twice, and three times walk the streets, free to commit more crimes.

God says, "Why do the heathen rage and why do people do these stupid things? People don't want My restraints. They'd rather die prematurely from AIDS or venereal disease, or go down the tube of economic disaster, or watch their children smolder on the coals of Moloch than submit to My laws."

The Need for Unity

As the people of God, we are responsible for much of what is going on. We've sat around, saying, "Praise the Lord! Jesus is coming!" But I'm not sure that Jesus is coming as quickly as some of us think. He is waiting for us to get off our back porches and do what He told us to do—to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world to challenge that claw.

It is heartening to see that a few Christians are being stirred up out of the mass of joyful people, and at great personal sacrifice are banding themselves together in a concerted attack. But it will take more than these few. We can effect change only if we will operate out of a unity comparable to that of the Father

and the Son. If all the Christians in any major city were to come together in some kind of unanimous demonstration, we'd be amazed at what would happen. The Church, however, is so fractured and torn up that it can't get together to make any kind of impression.

In Jesus' high priestly prayer, He enunciated the final form of evangelism:

"...that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me" (Jn. 17:21 NAS).

The unity of God's people is the only thing that is going to touch the world. We will never touch the world if we are fussing, fighting, or fuming. God is going to have to work a miracle, even if it is through judgment, to force us together to see that we need one another to bear the final witness to a godless age.

In the early days of the charismatic movement in New Zealand, a group of Charismatics decided to march up the main thoroughfare of Auckland to a government building. The Salvation Army got in on it with its band, and it was a tremendous supernatural march. Provocateurs and subversives tried to upset the parade, but it was as if angels pinned them against the walls so that they couldn't move. They had to stand there and watch the parade go by. Finally, when the marchers arrived at the government building, even the government people were impressed by it and said, "What do you want?"

They said, "Uh..."

Unity requires more than just banding together for a parade. What's the use of having authority and power if we don't know what to do with it? We have to come together and pray and plan until we can effectively attack the claw of secularism.

What Is God's Response?

The Christians' response to the ungodly activities of our society should be to band together and stand against them. But what is God's response? Psalm 2 tell us

that while the people devise vain things and cast off His restraints, "He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them" (v. 4 NAS). God laughs! That seems like a rather strange response, but several times the Bible says God laughs at the wicked (see Psalms 37 and 59).

But laughter is only His first response. Verse 5 says, "Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury" (NAS). God's laughter turns to anger. How long did He suffer Sodom and Gomorrah? How long did He suffer Babylon? How long did He suffer the civilizations that have come and gone, scarcely leaving a trace of having been here? How long will He suffer us?

I firmly believe that God is saying, "All right, America, if you want to legalize abortion, if you want to legalize removing children from their families, if you want to legalize economic dishonesty, then you're going to have to pay the penalty."

It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God. I am terribly fearful that we may be living on the verge of death. I'm afraid that God's last chuckle has probably been made. I fear for western civilization. I fear for America. How long can we continue to pile up lawlessness?

The Bible tells us that when the world does evil, God's anger will be expressed in some terrifying form. Before I was saved, I knew something of the terror of the Lord. So did Job: "Then Thou dost frighten me with dreams and terrify me by visions" (Job 7:14 NAS). God terrified Nebuchadnezzar in a dream. He terrified Pharaoh in a dream. And He will terrify the nations.

But if God is going to judge the nations—and I believe He must—He will first purify the "sons of Levi." Judgment will begin in the house of God. We've become altogether too lax about many things: our appetites, our entertainment, and what we permit our eyes to see, our ears to hear, and our mouths to speak. As a result, we've lost the moral dynamic that enables us to address the world. The world looks at us in disgust, because we have nothing to say to it. We can't even put our own house in order.

Paying the Price

First, God laughs, but then His laughter changes to anger. I don't know where He is in that process, but in Psalm 2:6, He gives us the bottom line when He says, "But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain" (NAS). He has set His King upon His holy hill of Zion. Jesus Christ is securely established upon His throne, and He governs the earth.

The Son speaks in response to His Father in verses 7-9:

"I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, 'Thou art My Son, today have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt scatter them like earthenware'" (NAS).

A decree is an unalterable decision of God to do something. Some of His decrees are not revealed, but this one is. The Father has said to Jesus, "You're My Son and I'm going to give You the heathen as Your inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth as Your possession. I'm going to give You the world. Before it's all over, Son, You're going to have the world. You're going to shatter the wicked. You're going to establish the righteous, and the glory of the Lord is going to cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea."

Taking It to the Nations

Verse 10 is the altar call, which He addresses to the kings of the earth: "Now therefore, O kings..." (NAS). We have so demeaned our own gospel that we feel it is only for the people down on skid row. We don't understand that God's intention is that all men come to the knowledge of the truth, and that they are going to come from the top as well as the bottom. When we get a king, we get a nation.

About five years ago, I was in a council of men—a fairly sizable group—when one of my colleagues said quite solemnly and seriously, "Gentlemen, we need to consider how we should address the leaders of nations concerning the lordship

God laughs at
the wicked.
But laughter is
only His first
response.



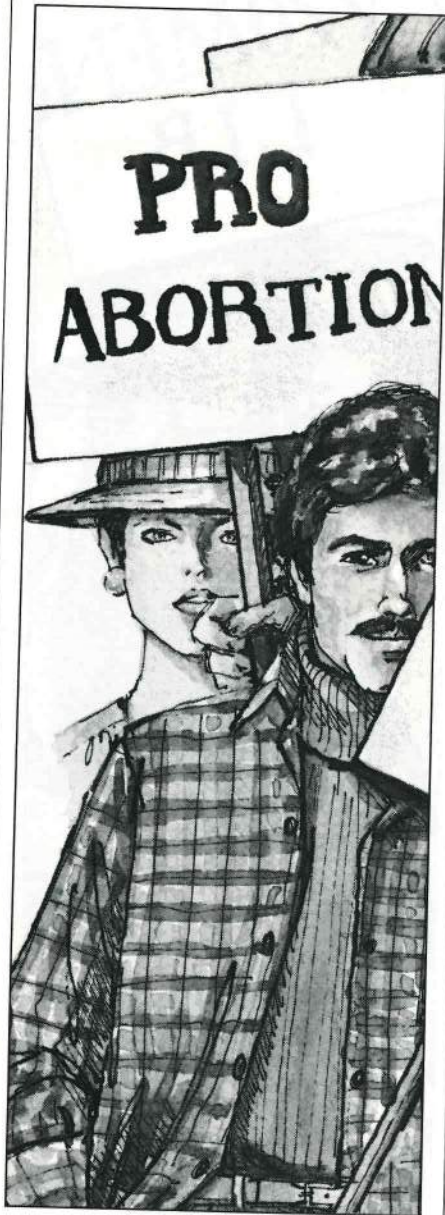
of Christ.”

A nervous titter went through the group. After a moment I said, “Isn’t that an interesting response to what our brother has just said? I’d like to go on record as saying that this ought not to be received with a nervous laugh, but with some very serious strategy as to how we *can* address kings!”

We all need to challenge the leaders of the nations with the lordship of Christ. Some may say, “Baxter, do you know who you’re talking to? We’re a bunch of ‘ordinary Joes.’”

No, we’re not! We are the elect! We are the sons of God! We are the heirs of God—joint heirs with Jesus Christ!

We can’t let the devil bewitch us



into thinking we’re no one! Every born again, Spirit-filled believer in this world has got more divine authority in his little finger than the most powerful, degenerate congressman in Washington. We are not going to affect governments by a lot of legislation and flashy business. We rule from our knees. Paul says:

I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:1-4 NAS).

Taking a Stand

I can still see that prophetic company in my vision coming up out of that jubilant, celebrating mass to challenge the claw: “Thus far, and no farther! You have robbed us of our last freedom. Back up, you devil, to the hell you came from!

“Supreme Court, reverse the decision on abortion! Supreme Court, reverse your decisions on education! Reverse the rotten laws that violate the government of God!”

Of course, the ungodly hate every man who dares to speak out against the government’s violation of the moral laws of God. But Psalm 2 gives us a divine revelation of the nature of history. Right now, we are at a point in time in America when God’s laughter is going to stop, and His hand is going to come down. We’re going to feel the brunt of His rod—the anger of God—unless we repent as a nation.

I get so sick of mawkish, flabby, subjective, wishy-washy, weepy Christianity. It’s gutless, aimless, and innocuous. We need John Knoxes. We need John Wesleys.

It has been reported that when the French Revolution broke out and ravished France, they fished out of the sewers of Paris alone fifty thousand fetuses that had been thrown down the sewers of that great city. When that ungodly revolution threatened to leap the nar-

row channel and inflict its demonic powers on little England, God raised up a man by the name of John Wesley, who followed in the steps of George Whitefield. Profane historians grudgingly admit that John Wesley kept the French Revolution on the other side of the channel and changed the life of Great Britain for the next one hundred years.

A Time to Pray

I appeal to every reader to pray for your city, to pray for your government, and to get involved with God in smashing the nations with a rod of iron. We are Zion’s staff. The scepter of the Lord goes out of Zion. We’re the scepter. We’re the ones King Jesus is going to use to turn the tide.

Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him! (Ps. 2:12 NAS).

Although I may paint a fairly dark and foreboding picture, I am personally an eschatological optimist. I believe that Jesus Christ is Lord. I believe that the lordship of Jesus Christ will win historically because it has already won at Calvary. When Jesus destroyed principalities, when He openly made a show of them, when He triumphed over them on His cross, when He rose from the dead and took His place at the right hand of God to reign supreme until His enemies are made His footstool—when that occurred two thousand years ago, the issues were all settled. We are permitted to be a part of the historical process. God through His Son is challenging us to do our part to bring the nations to their knees. □



Ern Baxter, a long-time leader in the charismatic renewal, is a member of the Integrity Communications Board of Directors. He and his wife, Ruth, are based in El Cajon, California, and are engaged in a traveling ministry.