



Every Thought Captive!

Guest article from [Give Me That Book](#)

“In their uncompromising determination to proclaim truth, Christians must avoid the intellectual flabbiness of the larger society. They must rally against the prevailing distrust of reason and the exaltation of the irrational. Emotional self-indulgence and irrationalities have always been the enemies of the gospel, and the apostles warned their followers against them.” ... Herbert Schlossberg

2 Corinthians 10:4-5, The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Paul declares that we are in a great battle for truth. The foundational beliefs of the Enemy are rooted deep with the belief systems of our world. And, that system is not passive. It seeks to overwhelm us and our children through deceitful and powerful arguments. If we are to win this battle and demolish its strongholds, we must “take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ.”

God is the Great Mind of the Universe. He has created man in his image. God gave us a mind so that we could think his thoughts after him. In Isaiah 1:18, God says to his people: “Come now, let us reason together.” God has purposed to share his wisdom with his people. “For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding” (Proverbs 2:6). Christians should be the best thinkers on the planet!

Before the Word of God penetrates the heart, it first passes through the head. We are commanded to hear and understand with the mind what the Lord is saying. A quick survey of the New Testament will show how important this is. The first and greatest commandment tells us that we are to love God with all of our mind (Matthew 22:37). In the book of Acts we find six incidents where Paul is found reasoning with Jews and pagans in order to convince them of the truth of the gospel.

In 1 Corinthians 14:20, Paul writes, “Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.” In Paul’s letter to Corinth he repeats this phrase 14 times: “Do you not know?” In Romans 12, it is the renewal of the mind that is the secret to overcoming a militant culture’s attempt to shape us in its mold. To Timothy, his son in the faith, he writes these last words: “Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this” (2 Timothy 2:7). The apostle Peter joins in and admonishes the Church to “prepare your minds for action” (1 Peter 1:13, NASB).

Today, it is common among our secular critics to make light of the intellectual achievements of Christianity. It is implied that it is built on myths and wishes rather than on hard and clear thinking. Professor J. P. Moreland rejects this characterization and cites the history of Christian thinking to back up his objection: He writes,

“...we need to celebrate the absolutely unequalled history of the intellectual life in the Christian Church. If an alternative community of atheists, Buddhists, or anything else can rival the rich cultural and intellectual leadership in church history, let them come forth and demonstrate it. The intellectual life is our heritage as Christian, and it is time to remind ourselves of this.”

I recently read of a time in the 1700’s when it was said that the Church could out think its critics. I don’t think we can say that today. The statistics do show that there are a lot of Christians out there. Mega churches and TV ministries give the impression that Christianity is strong and growing. But where is the Church’s impact upon the thinking of her culture? I think the Gallup Poll of 1980 may help us understand the problem. It stated: “We are having a revival of feelings but not of the knowledge of God. The church today is more guided by feelings than by convictions. We value enthusiasm more than informed commitment.” Does that not describe the Church of today? I think it does.

It is my take that when most churches gather together, thinking is not the priority. Too many church services are built around pleasant experiences rather than serious exposition of God’s Word. Sharing has replaced declaring. Leaders feel pressured to appeal to the “felt needs” of constituents. They can see a world that is addicted to entertainment and feel they must duplicate that environment in order to be relevant and attractive. One pastor evidenced this when he explained his rationale for using drama, skits, media and humor to make an impact. He said, “We are dumbing down the gospel.”

Now, “dumbing down” the gospel may attract unbelievers, but it will never make disciples. It may create mega churches, but it will never impact our communities. It may create pleasant experiences for the members, but it will never transform the beliefs of our culture. It may produce happy feet, but it will never produce transformed minds (Romans 12:1-2). It may provide our youth with Christian rock and roll, but it will never give them rock solid truth that will enable them to demolish the strongholds of the Enemy.

Romans 12:1-2, Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but *be transformed by the renewing of your mind*. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (*Emphasis added*)

I think we have given our kids enough Christian celebrities and sports heroes to emulate. We need to give them more heroes who are Christian scholars. Have you ever seen any church bring to its platform a Christian thinker with the purpose of urging its youth to emulate the speaker’s love for God’s truth and ability to express that truth in the secular marketplace? I have yet to see that.

A group of modern day prophets recently wrote: “The church’s extinction will not come by sword or pillory, but by the quiet death of irrelevance. But let the church step off the reservation, let her penetrate once more the culture of the day and the...face of secularization will change from a benign smile to a savage snarl.”

I, for one, would like to see that snarl if it means that we are penetrating our culture with truth. A church that is irrelevant is a church without salt, good for nothing. We need to wake up to the call of these insightful men. The secular influence is taking its toll not only upon our leaders but upon our youth. If we don’t train our young people to think clearly, rooted and established upon the wisdom found in God’s Word, they will be swept away by the flood of secular forces they face every day in school and media.

Carl Henry is right when he states, “Training the mind is an essential responsibility of the home, the church, and the school. Unless evangelicals prod young people to disciplined thinking, they waste—even undermine—one of Christianity’s most precious resources.”

How will our kids do when the biology teachers insist that science has proven evolution and that we are mere products of time and chance? How will they do when their philosophy professors, with all of their prestigious degrees, use the arguments of Nietzsche or Bertrand Russell to ridicule their “simplistic” faith? How will they do when their comparative religion class insists that all religions are true and any claim to ultimate truth is intolerant and arrogant? How will they do when all of their classmates are engaging in sex and pressuring them to join them? How will they do when they are bombarded by deceitful messages embedded in modern day music set to the movement of alluring bodies and seductive beat? And, when they do go into the world, how will they respond when faced with a hostile, militant culture? Will they be intimidated into silence or swept into unbelief? Or, will they stand like a rock, demolishing “arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God.”

They will stand strong and articulate God’s truth clearly and boldly if the Church will return to making it a priority to teach them God’s truth. Then they will be enabled to “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). May God raise up a generation of Christian thinkers who clearly and boldly proclaim the truth of God’s revelation.

As Harry Blamires said in *The Christian Mind* (p. 40), “The sphere of the intellectual, the sphere of knowledge and understanding, is not a sphere in which the Christian gives ground, or even tolerates vagueness and confusion. There is no charity without clarity and firmness.”