

NEWSBYTES

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"Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him." Tozer

Number of Americans Who Hold To A Biblical Worldview Declines Yet Again

New research from George Barna indicates that the percentage of Americans who hold a biblical worldview has declined yet again. Despite this decline, the outcome of the upcoming presidential election could very well be decided by evangelical Christians' level of participation.

FRC's new Senior Research Fellow for Christian Ethics and Biblical Worldview, George Barna, found in his most recent study from the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University that only six percent of Americans hold a biblical worldview (i.e., a view of the world that is informed by Scripture).

According to Barna, a worldview is the "filter through which you look at all experiences and information and decide how you're going to respond." Because worldview consists of a person's most fundamental assumptions and beliefs about truth, it is central to how humans experience the world and interact with one another in society.

As Barna explained, "People do what they believe." The same holds true for how we engage politically.

For example, someone whose worldview believes humanity was created by intelligent design will think about questions related to life and human dignity very differently than someone who believes human beings are the result of random chance or natural selection.

Christians, whose worldview is shaped by Scripture, believe all people -- born and unborn -- are made in God's image and have inherent value and dignity. Therefore, many Christians advocate for pro-life policies in the public square.

This connection between worldview and politics is underscored in Barna's recent study. As he noted, "The 2020 election is not about personalities, parties or even politics. It's an election to determine the dominant worldview in America." Americans with a biblical worldview are currently in the minority, according to Barna's findings.

If candidates guided by unbiblical worldviews are elected, Christians can expect their freedom to live according to their beliefs to come under fire. "The consequence is that what's going on in this election is that we've got a choice between trying to have the freedoms that will allow us to still live in accordance with a biblical worldview or to live in a society where that freedom is taken away from us. Because the option that's being put on the table," Barna explained.

Barna's research is a sobering reminder of the state of the biblical worldview in America. When he began worldview research 25 years ago, 12 percent of Americans held a biblical worldview. Today, that number is six, and the trajectory is not promising. How did this happen?

Well, for starters, conservative Christians have largely underestimated the importance of worldview and how early one's worldview is formed. Barna's research shows, "a person's worldview develops between 15 to 18 months of age and the age of 13."

This means, according to Barna, "Your worldview is almost fully formed by that time during your teens and 20s, we kind of reshape it and we tinker with it, but it's really in place by the time we hit our teen years."

Thus, the work of worldview discipleship is vital for Christians serious about influencing elections and public policy. As Barna explained, "In many ways, if we clean up that worldview issue, everything else is going to fall into place. That's really the key domino on the board."

The key component of changing America's worldview trajectory is discipleship. This knowledge should motivate Christian parents to, in Barna's words, remember that a parent's "primary responsibility is to raise their children to be spiritual champions. It's the local church's job to equip and support the parents in doing that. It's not the church's job to do it, it's the parent's job."

Our prayer is that families across America would take Barna's study to heart and commit to teaching their children a biblical worldview, that the church would stand boldly for truth and support families in their discipleship of the next generation, and that we would all vote this fall for leaders who will preserve and protect the right to live out convictions based on a biblical worldview.

Family Research Council

The Coming Market Crash

Britt Gillette

January 22

As COVID-19 spread across the world in early 2020, economic activity froze. Entire cities in China were put on lockdown, and the lockdowns soon spread to Europe, the United States, and the whole world. With people confined to their homes, many businesses closed. The global economy came to a grinding halt. Global supply chains broke, airlines canceled flights, and an oil glut drove down petroleum prices as supply outstripped demand.

The economic shock of the coronavirus hammered global markets. Bond markets went into freefall, stocks plummeted, and global trade slowed to a near stop. The abrupt impact of COVID-19 on the global economy caused panic around the world, and this panic forced governments and central banks to take unprecedented measures. As a result of trillions of dollars in stimulus, the U.S. stock market and markets around the world reversed course, and they've been on an upward trajectory ever since. Second-quarter U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which measures the economic output of the U.S. economy, was the worst on record at negative 31.4%, but third-quarter GDP was the best ever at 33.4%. Throw in the rollout of several vaccines in November/December 2020, and boundless optimism continues to drive markets higher on the idea the economy will reopen and the pandemic will end.

But is this really what will happen?

The Health of the Global Economy

As we begin 2021, global markets signal a rebound in economic activity. The widely held belief is everything will eventually bounce back to pre-pandemic levels once COVID is vanquished. At least, that's the consensus. Unfortunately, it's not reality. The global economy is in terrible shape, maybe even in terminal condition.

Right now, the global economy is much like someone who just survived a bad car wreck. Immediately afterward, they walk away. They feel and look fine, and they think they've escaped unharmed. They don't yet realize the extent of their injuries and only discover how serious they are hours or days later. This is where we are right now with the global economy.

Government programs have covered up the true extent of the damage, but they can't do so forever. Business bailouts, direct government payments to individuals, and rent and mortgage moratoriums have delayed the pain. Because of them, many people can't see the true extent of the economic damage. But these government band-aids won't prevent the inevitable. The economy won't "spring back" due to pent-up demand. Yes, once the pandemic ends, more people might decide to take cruises or eat out at restaurants. But they won't book two cruises for the same weekend or order 15 meals in a single night to make up for the cruises they would've taken or the meals they would've eaten. Those transactions are lost forever.

In many cases, the economic damage from COVID-19 is permanent. The National Restaurant Association reports more than 110,000 U.S. restaurants permanently closed their doors in 2020. This is compared to 2019 which saw an increase of more than 10,000 restaurants, and the carnage isn't

over yet. Many of the 2020 survivors will go out of business in 2021. More than 15,000 retail store locations closed their doors in 2020 in the United States alone. The list of companies impacted includes iconic brands like Pier 1 Imports, Lord & Taylor, and Neiman Marcus.

Rent and mortgage forbearance has kept many from losing their homes, but what about the landlords and bondholders who haven't been paid? Eventually, someone has to pay for all those who have lived rent and mortgage free in 2020. And what about the commercial real estate industry? With restaurants and retailers not making their lease payments, commercial real estate firms face ruin. With many employees successfully working from home, many commercial real estate leases won't be renewed. This leaves vast amounts of office space vacant in big cities throughout the world. And this is just one example of the coming debt defaults and bankruptcies that will soon ripple throughout the entire global economy.

Right now, the world is drowning in debt – \$277 **trillion** in debt. Much of that will never be paid back. When the defaults and bankruptcies start to take place, they'll cascade throughout the global banking system and create another financial crisis. The only way to avoid a massive deflationary spiral like the Great Depression will be for governments to print and hand out currency to keep people and businesses from going under. But this will create its own crisis – a hyperinflationary crisis. In other words, there's no way out. We're on the brink of a major financial crisis. Government policy can delay it, but any delay is simply the calm before the storm.

The Asset Bubble Collapse

Over the long-term, stock markets cannot outperform the economies they operate in. Yet that's what we've seen since the COVID crisis. Global stock markets are up. Economic growth is down. By almost every measure, U.S. stock markets are **more overvalued than any time in history**.

Warren Buffett's favorite metric for valuation of stocks is to divide the total value of the stock market by the GDP. When the market is fairly valued, this ratio is between 75% and 90%. Right now, the ratio is hovering around 190% – the highest in recorded history. This means the stock market is now in its largest bubble ever. This includes the 1929 bubble which led to a three-year 89% crash and ushered in the Great Depression. It includes the Dot Com Bubble which caused a mania of speculation and irrational exuberance and ultimately ended in a 78% crash of the NASDAQ.

And this isn't confined to U.S. markets either. According to **Siblis Research**, the price-to-earnings ratio of the global stock market is over 27, considerably higher than the 30-year average. Combine these record valuations with an ailing global economy, and you have a recipe for disaster.

A Dangerous Economic Crisis

So, what does all this mean? It means a major economic crisis is on the horizon. It may be the worst global economic crisis ever – worse than the Great Depression. This is cause for concern for more than just financial reasons.

In times of chaos and economic instability, dangerous political leaders and demagogues capture the public imagination. Past economic crises led to the rise of Napoleon, the launch of the Bolshevik Revolution, and the consolidation of German state power in the hands of Adolph Hitler. All these events had grave consequences for the entire world, not just the individual nations in question. Why should we believe this time will be any different?

Why This is Relevant to Bible Prophecy

The Bible describes terrible economic conditions in the end times. Revelation 6 tells us an entire day's wages will barely buy enough food to survive (**Revelation 6:5-6**). This describes a world ravaged by hyperinflation, and it's the backdrop against which the Antichrist makes his drive for global conquest (**Revelation 6:3-4**).

Ultimately, the Antichrist will implement a global economic system which requires the people of the world to worship him. The Bible says he will require everyone on earth to receive a mark, and no one will be able to buy or sell without the mark (**Revelation 13:17**). We see the beginnings of this system today. Central banks openly discuss plans to replace national currencies with new cryptocurrencies, giving their governments unprecedented power. With such power, not only will government be able to track everything you buy or sell, it will be able to kick you out of the economic system – just as the Bible says.

What You Should Do

Knowing all this, what should you do? A global economic crisis is coming. How can you best prepare for it?

The most important thing you can do is to build your life on a firm foundation. Jesus says anyone who listens to Him and follows His teachings is wise, like a man who builds his house on solid rock. When the storm comes, his house won't collapse because it's built on solid rock. But anyone who hears His teachings and doesn't obey is like a man who builds his house on shifting sand. When the storm comes, his house will collapse with a mighty crash (**Matthew 7:24-27**).

Be like the man who builds his house on solid rock. Build your life on the unmovable rock – Jesus Christ. If you do, not only will you survive in a global economic crisis, you'll thrive. In fact, with Jesus, you can weather **any** crisis the world brings. Remember, in this world, you will face many trials and sorrows, but take heart, for He has overcome the world (**John 16:33**). The days ahead will be tough for the whole world, but those who trust in Him will not be disappointed (**Romans 10:11**).

Finally, in light of the current and escalating global climate against Christians, I thought you might like this perspective/encouragement/exhortation.....MD

The Warfare is Confessional - Whom Do We Really Fear?



LIGHTHOUSE TRAILS EDITOR

By Bill Randles

And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say. (Luke 12:11-12)

Notice that Jesus says “when they bring you before” not if they bring you before.

Sooner or later, every Christian, on some level, will be called upon to make the good confession. The setting is never a favorable one; it will range from either mildly hostile to absolutely death-dealing hatred, but we are being and will be called upon to make our confession.

We don't have to rehearse our confession. The Holy Spirit will give us what to say when we are called up before various human tribunals. It will just come out of us naturally, this good confession of truth, in the day of our own trial.

This blessed promise of the Holy Spirit's help presupposes that we are in a vigorous spiritual war and that all of us are participants, wittingly or unwittingly.

The Spirit will help us, whether we are brought to account in the synagogue or before a secular judge or in the presence of hostile friends and relatives or perhaps at human resource offices at work. We will know what to say and have the power to say it boldly.

The further assumption of this promise of the Lord Jesus is that the nature of the battle in the spiritual realm is in large part confessional. The Holy Spirit will empower us to confess, to affirm the truth of God even in the face of hostility. God wants a witness—people who will stand up and bear witness to the truth in the day of the Lie.

This is why we, the church, remain in this world which is so hostile to Christ.

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

It so happens that in the day in which we now live, the lie of Satan is the prevailing wisdom, embraced by virtually the entire earth. "[T]he whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19).

Spiritual warfare includes both exposure of error and affirming the truth in the day of the Lie.

But the promise of Luke 12:12, about what to expect when called upon to testify before hostile authorities, also presupposes the faithful witnesses have saturated themselves with biblical truth beforehand. In this brief passage, Jesus is teaching us how to prepare for spiritual warfare.

In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. (Luke 12:1)

First of all, some issues have to be settled in our own hearts—

Jesus would have us beware of the influence, inside of us, of hypocrisy.

What does hypocrisy mean? To practice hypocrisy, one has to pretend to be what one is not, or to pretend not to be what one is. The spiritual warfare we are already engaged in demands that we root out pretense in every form. Away with trying to be anything anymore, whether it be trying to be a "cool Christian," or a "relevant Christian," or to be seen as a "loving and nonjudgmental Christian" in comparison with the rest of the church. Away with all pretense! It is time to make a new commitment

to be genuine. A genuine person is not pretending. He is able to face himself and to be known by others as he really is—nothing more and nothing less.

The only one who is ready for the Holy Spirit to give him the power to make the “good confession” without rehearsal is the one who has already broken off with hypocrisy. He is the one who needs not “rehearse” anything in that hour because he can be himself (a self that is truly reliant on the Lord and is so influenced with the Word of God buried in his heart), which is the most convincing testimony. God will give him wisdom in his speech in that very hour.

After all, Jesus teaches us, hypocrisy is shortsighted, because sooner or later everything is going to be seen for what it truly is.

For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. (Luke 12:2-3)

Next, Jesus would have us decide once and for all, who it is that we truly fear.

And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. (Luke 12:4-5)

The real spiritual warfare demands that we figure out who we are going to ultimately fear. Remember that fear in this sense is not limited to dread, angst, or fright; fear also refers to regard. To which audience do you play? Whom do you fear most, God or man? What can man do to you, beyond death?

The one who settles this issue of fear doesn't need to rehearse what he is going to say when he is called up to make the good confession. He knows who it is that he answers to, fears, and regards. He says God has power to cast body and soul into Hell, whereas all man can do is kill the body.

Though this sounds gruesome, Jesus goes on to assure us that it is all right to fear God, for He is good, righteous, kind, and attentive to us.

Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. (Luke 12:6-7)

We can only fear one master; we cannot have dual fear.

Finally, we have to really know what it means to confess Jesus before men, for the spiritual warfare is confessional.

Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God. (Luke 12:8-9)

What does it mean to confess Christ before men? What does it mean to deny Christ?

A very basic and intuitive understanding of this Scripture would say that if a Christian is captured by atheists or other agents of antichrist and demanded, "Deny Christ or die!" to confess Christ would be to admit you are Christian, even if it costs you your life. We would all hope that in that moment, we would confess Christ and love not our lives even unto death as countless martyrs through the centuries have done.

This is a true and a valid understanding of this verse, but not a complete understanding of it.

Confessing Christ is not limited to merely admitting to being a Christian. To confess Christ is to identify with all that Christ stands for, represents, and has taught.

It is confession and not profession. Confessing Christ presupposes that to do so would be to expose the soul and possibly the body to difficulty and opposition. In our setting here in the West, it is not enough merely to say "I am a Christian"; there is little or no danger in that because the word Christian has undergone radical broadening to the point that it means little or nothing.

Remember that we live in the day of the lie, and each of us will be called upon to confess to the truth in various settings. Confessing Christ means to confess the truth of Christ. Truth, even the truth of Christ and the Gospel, is vast. We must ask ourselves: which truth?

The answer is, whichever truth the spirit of antichrist is currently contesting, distorting, and outright denying.

In the 1500s and earlier, the truth of justification by faith was being denied. Thus, the warfare was carried forward by the reformers who re-emphasized this vital truth, even in the face of persecution by the organized church with its power to burn whom it deemed heretics at the stake.

What truths are being contested today? Confessing Christians today are in a battle of multi-level attacks. Biblical teachings on marriage, sex, gender, and homosexuality are being assaulted in the face of the rapidly changing worldly consensus. From within, confessing Christians are being challenged on essentials of the faith such as the atonement, the deity of Christ, the Trinity, and the validity of the Bible. Christians who do stand for and confess these truths are often ostracized, ridiculed, and marginalized, both in the secular media and much of mainstream Christian leadership. This is the spiritual warfare.

If the Lord would have a people who would confess Christ in the day of the Lie, what is the other side of the war?

Satan would pressure Christians to not only shut our mouths about the teachings of Christ, he would also pressure us with incredible force to confess that which we know in our hearts isn't true at all.