

## Felt Needs and Down-To-Earth Problems

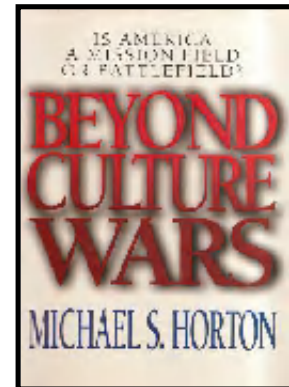
### *BEYOND CULTURE WARS* BY MICHAEL S. HORTON

The “feel-good” or “health, wealth and happiness” gospel may be what Michael is talking about in this chapter. Let’s find out....

The tendency may be for the church to “run immediately to the ‘practical’ or the ‘relevant’, as if God was irrelevant.” This tendency may be affiliated with the “feel-good” gospel that believes the church’s “primary purpose...is to meet the ‘felt-needs....” A reminder of God’s providence may be the remedy for such thinking and beliefs; for if we believe that God is supreme, shouldn’t we believe that God is in control of both the righteous and the unrighteous; shouldn’t we believe that God is involved in the smallest and seemingly most trivial of things?

Mr. Horton continues:

By ignoring the biblical doctrine of providence, which comforts us in the knowledge that God is active in and in control over the ordinary as much as the remarkable, we have unwittingly encouraged a tendency to deny the supernatural.



Michael makes mention of some who preach and teach that miracles are within their grasp or control; that is, that they perform a sundry of supernatural events on what conforms to their judgment. If a person is ill, the illness can be healed instantly by prayer or by rebuking the illness, etc. Michael notes that **God may use our prayers, but there is absolutely no causal necessity involved.**

In his view of this idea (of naming it and claiming it) is the absence of God’s providence; that is, that occurrences of all sizes and shapes happen by God’s providence or allowance. For some, the tendency to seek out the spectacular or sensational may blind them to the fact that God is in control of all things from the mundane to the unseen or noticed. Do everyday things involve God? Yes, the smallest of things involve God....

Moving on, the church has also engaged in the politics of the day; varying degrees of participation to the most earnest of needs for the family and education (such as home schooling) to the most extreme of “taking back America”. Michael notes that the media has had a *field day* with this evangelical surge that, not surprisingly, comes in the form of a smear campaign that runs the risk to “give the secularists some cause for cynicism concerning our allegedly ‘spiritual’ cause.” In the larger context of such degrees of politics is the risk that the church “loses its integrity and public witness.”

H. Kirk Rainer

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The choice and conflict of ideology and theology is introduced as Michael advises:

Instead of fighting ideology with ideology, the evangelicals must return to theology.

The contrast of ideology and theology may be seen in Michael's comments:

The state exists to restrain evil and defend justice, not to make people less evil and more just. Nevertheless, restraining the damage that our evil hearts can accomplish is not small or insignificant task.

A fundamental difference lies in the time expanse; theology is for eternity and ideology is for the temporal. He continues":

The Gospel is not the answer to everything. It is not the solution to the welfare crisis, to environmental decay, to health care.

### **So can morality be legislated?**

In a striking comment with application to the above question, Mr. Horton provides this insight to morality:

The crisis in America is not political or even moral at its root. The problem is that people have so suppressed their natural knowledge of God that such things (things seemingly immoral or unnatural) have become natural (Romans Chapter 1 and 2)