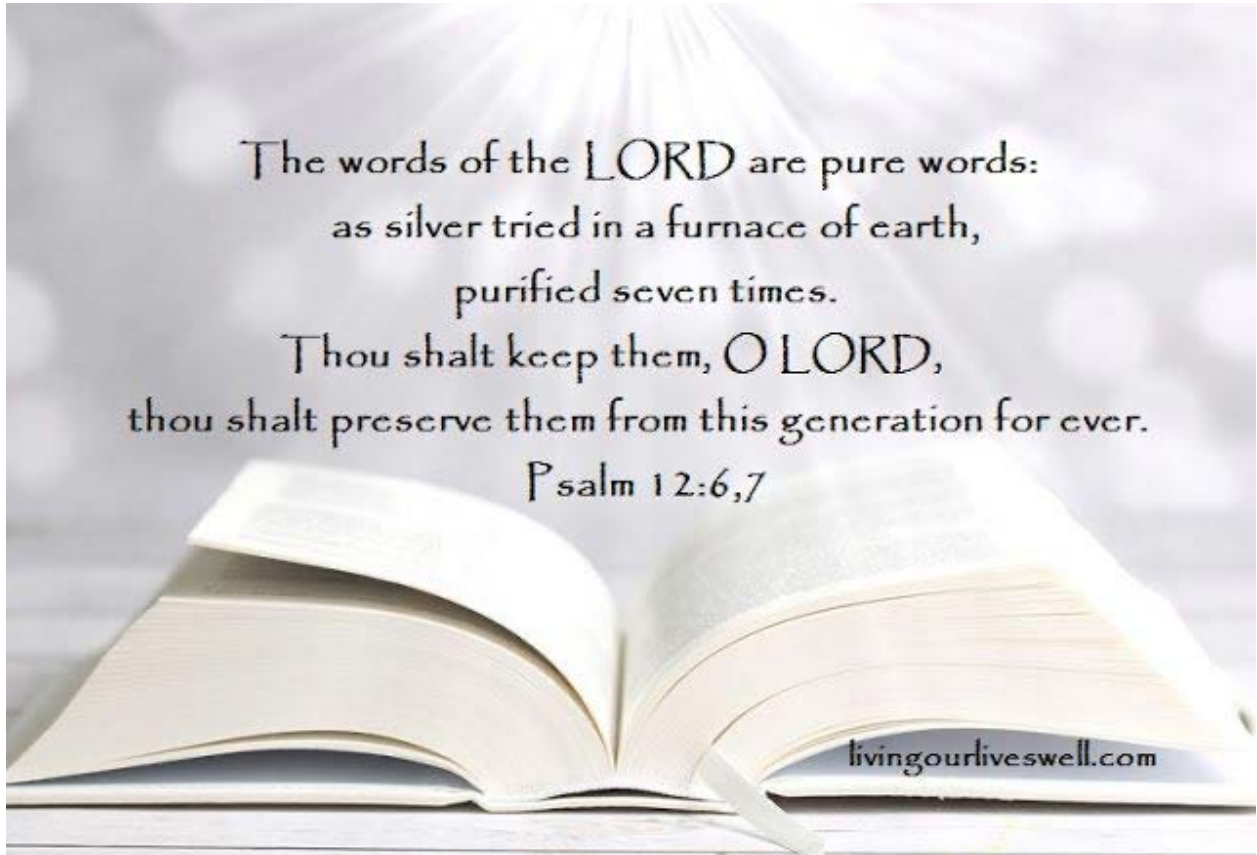


# DECLARE AND DEFEND

LET GOD BE TRUE (8)



We have Good News to share, and we must be ready to do so.

T. M. MOORE

*A ReVision Study from*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

*Declare and Defend*

Declare and Defend  
Let God Be True (8)  
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*Declare and Defend*

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*Declare and Defend*

Welcome to *Declare and Defend*

As Paul reminds us, today is the day of salvation. Now. Not sometime in the future when things improve. Now. We must break out of the spiral of silence that has gripped us and begin to use every available means for letting the truth of God loose among the lies of our wrong-believing age.

Each of us has a role in this, and we must all prepare and encourage one another accordingly. The Gospel of the Kingdom is the best Good News anyone could ever hear. And God is pleased to use us as the messengers of His grace and love in Jesus Christ.

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Thank you.

T. M. Moore  
Principal

## 1 Exposed and Undone?

*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* 2 Corinthians 6.2

*'Tis the season!*

At the risk of seeming to be out of touch with reality, I want to insist that the time has never been riper for Christians to be making their case for the Gospel of the Kingdom.

I know, I know: It seems more like a time for us to be hunkering down and lying low. We're living in a day that looks more like Psalm 12 than Acts 2. Lies abound on every hand; liars mock God and defy His Word; and those who cling to the truth that is in Jesus have no place to shelter save in the Word of God. The wrong-believers are angry and aggressive. Christians are being pot-shot from every angle: We're uneducated, irrelevant, hypocritical, opposed to science, haters of others, and on and on.

Some of those charges, we know, have the ring of truth. And most Christians seem to be getting the point: All this loud objecting and protesting means we'd better tone down our witness for now and concentrate on getting our house in order.

But I want to insist otherwise.

Throughout the course of this study, we have been making the argument which Paul asserted in Romans 3.4: God alone is true. He is true about everything. His truth is unfailing, and only His truth makes sense of our confusing and uncertain world. All who oppose God, who reject Jesus, and who refuse to submit and give thanks to Him have embarked on a lying course of life. They keep thinking they've found the best way to live, but disappointment, disillusionment, and desperation stalk them.

We've said it is the loving thing to do to stand firm in Jesus and call our generation to take a hard look at its wrong beliefs, to see that they do not and cannot make sense, and that, most of all, they cannot account for the fact of Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection.

While it's true we need to shape up our practice of the faith, now is no time for shying away from engagement for the Gospel. Now is the favorable time for Christians to declare and defend the Christian worldview. Now is the day of salvation, and all believers must be diligent in proclaiming the Good News at every opportunity and by every means.

Let wrong believers rage, boast, mock, threaten, and rail on; God is true, and all who do not submit to Him are trapped in lies.

*Why all this fuss?*

I've been thinking a lot of late about all this anti-Christian harrumphing, this wrong-believing *Sturm und Drang*. There have always been wrong-believers, and probably more in the past than today. Why are they suddenly so up in arms? Why so loud and angry? Why all this protesting against a Christian presence which, in the West, anyway, has become weaker and more marginal over the past two decades? Why all this urgent busyness to flout God's Law, throw off His rule, and usher in a substitute morality that pines for the days of Sodom and Gomorrah?

Then it hit me. I recalled the words of Hamlet's mother, the queen, in Act III, Scene II, as she watched the play Hamlet had written to expose her and her new husband's treachery. They had conspired to murder the king, her husband, and here Hamlet was reproducing that foul act, right before her eyes. The queen began to

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squirm as the actor playing her confidently insisted she would remain a widow after her husband's death. Hamlet asks his mother, "Madam, how do you like the play?" To which she whimpers, "The lady protests too much, methinks."

What the queen objected to was that the play threatened to expose her wickedness in marrying the murderer of Hamlet's father, the King, and of thus being part to his treachery. She felt exposed and about to be undone, and so she protested the lines of the queen in Hamlet's play.

#### *Wrong-belief in trouble*

Something like this is happening in the various wrong-believing communities of our day.

Wrong-belief, rather than presenting a unified front against the progress of the Gospel, is fragmenting into tribes motivated by self-interest and devoted to political tactics to get what they want. These various tribes will gobble up fellow wrong-believers if it seems their views or practices are a threat to parochial interests. Name-calling, finger-pointing, accusations, and schemes abound as those who have carved out a narrow spot in the turf of wrong-belief struggle desperately to maintain their gains. The house of wrong-belief is divided; the framework of wrong-belief is crumbling; and the irrationality of wrong-belief is increasingly evident.

At the same time, Christians are popping up everywhere – in the former Soviet Union, all over Africa and Latin America, in China, Korea, and Southeast Asia, even among the nations of the Muslim world. Evidence of spiritual stirrings crops up frequently. We have yet to see what may take root and grow from the recent weeks-long revival among students at Asbury University in Kentucky.

The lie-ensnared world is hungry for truth, but the "truth" they cling to seems only to make them angrier and more defensive. Many are sensing the bankruptcy of the various wrong-believing worldviews that are constructed of lies.

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What's more, certain Christians continue laying a foundation for a comprehensive Christian worldview. They are calling for the application of the Gospel to every area of life, pointing out that true human flourishing comes only when God's Word is obeyed.

Even more, Christians have established themselves firmly as intellectual leaders in a wide range of academic disciplines, and their views are being received by peers and students with great interest and attention. Christian colleges and universities are flourishing while other university enrollments are in decline.

Wrong-believers are angry, defensive, and protesting because their views are being threatened, their folly is being exposed, and their frivolous view of life is in danger of being overrun by the progress of the Kingdom of God. Now is indeed the favorable time to declare and defend the Gospel of the Kingdom, for now – *now* – is the day of salvation!

#### *For reflection or discussion*

1. What is the Gospel of the Kingdom?
2. Why can we be confident that God is true and His Word is truth?
3. Do you agree that now is the day of salvation? Explain.

*Next steps: Have you mapped out your Personal Mission Field yet? Now's the time do so with our [free download](#). Then start making plans to make your case for the Gospel to all the people you see each week.*

## 2 Now?

*... for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.* Romans 14.17

### *Faulty views of the faith*

Ask the wrong-believers you know what they think of Christianity, and you're likely to get a variety of responses.

Some would say it's good for those who need it. If we can't get along without our God-crutch, then that's fine. Just don't insist that everyone has to limp along like you.

Others might say they think the faith of Christ has become irrelevant in our day. Look around. Churches members are declining. No serious university takes Christianity seriously. Christians don't wield much influence in the public square or any of the professions. Their views just don't matter.

Still others might flare up, get indignant, and start accusing you of trying to cram your religion down their throats. Christianity for them is a source of contention, a threat to their own worldview, and something to be shouted down, if not altogether stamped out.

It's not likely, however, that many will say, concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that it is the key to helping people learn to live together in mutual love and respect, so that everyone can flourish and be at peace, society and culture can be beautified and enriched, and everyone can know true joy and lasting fulfillment.

After all, if they believed that, wouldn't they be Christians already?

### *Whose fault?*

Why are there so many faulty views of Christianity about these days? Whose fault is it that such strawman perceptions dominate in our day? It's not because aggressive wrong-believers have misrepresented the faith or exaggerated its failings. They have better things to do with their time.

Mostly it's because we who hold the faith of Christ have not been clear about what we believe, why we believe it, and why believing in Jesus makes a difference in our lives. And, on top of that, we haven't exactly lived, in a caring, courageous, and consistent manner, the beliefs and convictions we claim to hold dear.

But we are Christians, presumably, because we find that Jesus brings an experience of life, purpose, meaning, joy, and peace that nothing else has managed to provide. We cherish Jesus and what we have in Him, and we can't understand why everyone else doesn't feel the same.

### *The day of salvation*

The apostle Paul declared, "now *is* the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6.2). Now. Not the former days of reformation and revival. Not some coming day when Jesus returns. Now. Today.

But the *fact* of salvation seems to have eluded most people, including a great many of those who profess to possess it. What does it mean to be saved? Saved from what? Saved for what? So it's the day of salvation: just what does that mean?

The Biblical idea of salvation carries the meaning of wholeness, of rediscovering true humanness. It means being set free from the snares and chains of mere lust and foolish self-interest so that we can discern more noble aspirations and pursue more fulfilling and satisfying paths. To be saved is to live in the truth of God

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and to escape the bondage of the lies of wrong belief. It is to be truly, gloriously, and eternally free.

Throughout the course of human history, those who have known the salvation which God grants us through Jesus Christ have been responsible for bringing more in the way of beauty, goodness, and truth to the human experience than any other movement, philosophy, or religion. In every area of culture and society, the presence of the saved has meant liberation for human creativity, genius, and wellbeing. Yes, of course, there have been problems along the way and blips in the road. Christians aren't perfect, as we know.

But where the salvation of God has truly taken root in a person's life, everything begins to change. The life and love of Jesus replace mere self-interest, the peace of eternal rest overcomes all anxiousness and fear, and joy that nothing can shake or steal settles over the soul. In such a condition people and cultures begin to flourish as never before. Together in their flourishing, the followers of Christ bear the fruits of their salvation in culture in ways that delight as they ennoble, and in societies, such that freedom and justice abound for all.

Regardless of what the wrong-believing world may think or hope, now is the day of salvation! The Kingdom of God has come to earth, and righteousness, peace, and joy are expanding all over the world (1 Jn. 2.8).

If you are not experiencing this, it may be that your view of salvation is too small. If being saved means to you only that your sins are forgiven and you're going to heaven when you die, then you don't really understand the full power and scope of what Jesus has accomplished on your behalf. He Who is making all things new is ready to do the same in your life and, through you, into every arena of your life – all your relationships, roles, and responsibilities, all your time and possessions, all your hopes and aspirations.

The Christian hopes for the glory of God (Rom. 5.1, 2), that is, that we might see God at work in and through us to bring honor and glory to His Name in all we are, think, say, and do. Now is the day of such a great salvation – now! Those who are saved understand this, and they strive to realize that glorious salvation more and more each day, living, declaring, and defending by all their words and deeds.

### *For reflection or discussion*

1. What do the people in your Personal Mission Field think about Christianity? Why not ask them?
2. We have a great salvation, greater than we have ever dared to ask or think. What is your approach to laying hold on more of that great salvation?
3. What does it mean for you to hope for the glory of God?

*Next steps – Preparation: How well do you understand the meaning of salvation? Listen to some music by Johann Sebastian Bach and ask yourself, what did it mean for Bach to be saved? Or read some poetry by Gerard Manley Hopkins, view some paintings by Rembrandt or Vermeer, and ask: What did it mean for these people to be saved? How can you increase in your experience of the great salvation of our Lord?*



### 3 The Gospel of the Kingdom

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...* Romans 1.16

#### *The Kingdom of God*

The wrong-believing worldviews of our wrong-believing age present themselves as strongholds of truth against what they regard as the naïve, unscientific, and hypocritical beliefs of Christians. We who believed are called to take such thinking captive so that it obeys Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 10.3-5). For we know that God is true, and His Kingdom is true, and only the truth of God and His Kingdom can set people free from the lies that so easily distract, deceive, and destroy us.

The Good News for our wrong-believing age is that Jesus has risen from the dead and is ruling over His Kingdom to the ends of the earth and the age.

With the coming of the Kingdom of God, a *new era* has broken into human history. A *new King* is on the throne, and He is advancing a *new economy* – a spiritual economy in which grace fuses with Law, issuing, by the power of God’s Spirit, in widespread, ever-increasing love and truth among men.

A *new agenda* governs the direction of history: King Jesus is building His Church and calling out a people for Himself. That people is constituted as a holy nation, and together they pursue an altogether *new priority* – seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness for all of life. They are infused with *new hope*, the hope of knowing God’s glory and showing His glory to the world.

All this has come about because of the glorious, saving work of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Good News of His Kingdom! His incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension – and the promise of His imminent return – have ushered out the old era, overcome the old tyrant that ruled men’s souls, canceled the old economy of sin and death, replaced the old agenda and priority of mere self-seeking, and set aside the old, unreliable hope in fleeting things and circumstances.

In the Gospel, the one true God is working to overcome all the lies of the sin-bound world.

#### *Good News!*

The Kingdom of God is thus *Good News* – Gospel.

If we could summarize in one word just what that Good News consists of, surely it would be the word, *power*. The Kingdom of God is power, as Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 4.20. Power to dissolve the influence of lies. Power to change hardened hearts. Power to heal and renew broken lives. Power to bring joy and goodness. *And* the active presence and ready availability of that power – the power of God’s Word and Spirit – is Good News for the world because it makes possible a hope for the world and all its creatures.

The Gospel of the Kingdom is the power of God for transformation, a transformation so complete and thorough that it will finally make all things new, even the whole vast cosmos. Those who know this power are changed by the glory of God. Increasingly, their lives begin to refract the living reality of the risen Christ, their King (2 Cor. 3.7-18; Eph. 4.17-24). The fruits and virtues that flow from their lives, like rivers of living water, are precisely those most desired and least in supply in a fallen world (Jn. 7.37-39; Gal. 5.16-23; Ps. 12.1, 2). Together, those who know this power form communities of grace and truth to transform relationships, cultures, and whole societies, as has been demonstrated over and over throughout the course of Church history (Acts 6.1-7; 17.1-9; 19.18-20).

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Despite what the wrong-believing world thinks about the Church, the Gospel of the Kingdom is truly Good News. We who believe it must prepare ourselves to declare and defend that Good News with vigor and grace.

### *The transforming power of the Gospel*

This transforming power of the Gospel of the Kingdom is the experience and testimony of every person who, coming to salvation in Jesus Christ, has taken up the calling to seek this Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit as their guiding orientation in life (1 Thess. 2.12; Matt. 6.33; Rom. 14.17).

Righteousness is abounding love, founded in spiritual knowledge and true discernment, leading to excellence, purity, and justice after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 1.9-11). Righteousness defines the *character* of the Kingdom of God.

Peace is that “beyond understanding” state of mind and heart that nothing can terrify – an all-pervading sense of wellbeing which nothing can shake (Phil. 4.6, 7). Peace is the *context* which unfolds as the Kingdom advances. Those who know the power of the Gospel know peace because they are settled on Christ, hidden in the palm of God’s hand, sheltered by His Word, and filled and protected by His Spirit.

The joy that arises from such peace is the joy of the Lord’s Presence with us and is the *consequence* of the Kingdom. This sense of joy conveys a hope that is lodged in transcendent and unchangeable realities, a hope so infectious that, observed, it leads others to seek a reason for it (1 Pet. 3.15).

Where the power of the Kingdom is at work, which we enter by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the *salvation* of God is working *transformation* so that the *fruit of righteousness, peace, and joy* begin to be increasingly in evidence.

This is the Good News of the day of salvation, the Good News that men and women in every age have delighted to know.

And today – now – is the day for us to be seeking, declaring, and defending this great salvation.

### *For reflection or discussion*

1. The Gospel Jesus declared is the Gospel of the Kingdom. How would you explain this Good News?
2. Why is the coming of the Kingdom of God such Good News?
3. Why is *now* such a good time for declaring and defending the Gospel of the Kingdom?

*Next steps – Preparation: Prepare an outline of a presentation of the Gospel based on the Good News of the Kingdom as outlined in this installment. Read over it and pray through it until you can share it easily.*

## 4 Breaking the Spiral of Silence

*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.*<sup>1</sup> Peter 3.15, 16

### *Making our case*

In our generation most Christians seem to believe that, if a case is to be made for the Kingdom of God and the Christian worldview, the task falls to others more qualified than they.

Declaring and defending the Kingdom, most Christians seem to think, is the work of theologians, apologists, writers, teachers, and, of course, preachers. You need special training for this work and a call from the Lord. And that excludes most of us.

Certainly, all these servants have a role in making the case for the glorious Good News that the Kingdom of God has come. But it would be a mistake to believe that such people are the *only*, or even the *most important* means for making our case for the Christian worldview.

All believers, all who have received the Spirit of God, are empowered and sent like Jesus to bear witness to Him and His eternal reign (Acts 1.8; Jn. 20.21). The first Christians were so exuberantly committed to Jesus and their calling to be His witnesses, that not even threats or persecution could keep them from declaring and defending the Good News (cf. Acts 8.1-4).

Why are we in this generation reluctant to take up this glorious work?

### *Trapped in a spiral of silence*

Three primary means are available to us, by which we may declare and defend the Gospel and work to persuade others of the truth that is in Jesus. These are conversation, publication, and participation. And each of these is within the reach of every believer in one form or another. Thus, every believer needs prayerfully to consider how to make the most of every opportunity for fulfilling our witness, beginning with everyday conversations (Eph. 5.15-17).

The worldviews by which people live are nurtured and lived out in everyday relationships, beginning in homes, neighborhoods, and workplaces. What parents teach their children – priorities, beliefs, and values – will have long-term implications for what they believe and how they live.

Additionally, what we talk about with one another, as we go about our everyday tasks and conduct our relationships, shapes what we believe and how we live.

German sociologist Elizabeth Noëlle-Neumann has pointed out that those who are the most outspoken regarding their views and beliefs are likely to carry the day in democratic societies such as ours. The more people talk about their beliefs and their worldview, the more confident they become in making their case, and the more frequently and fervently they will share their views (*The Spiral of Silence*). As these outspoken champions wax on about their beliefs, a “spiral of silence” begins to engulf those who believe otherwise. In the face of such enthusiastic witness-bearing, others tend to lay low. No one wants to be thought of as holding to a “minority position” on anything; so, rather than speak up in the face of many who are doing so, most will remain silent, even though they disagree with those views.

This is where the Christian community finds itself today, snared in a spiral of silence before blustering but

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empty wrong-believing worldviews. The world is so outspoken about its views, and they come at us from so many angles and with such compelling force, that we just clam up, draw in, and don't dare proffer a contrary view. The silence to which we retreat soon becomes a comfort zone against a loud and lying world, as we leave our witness at church and forfeit the truth of God to the lies of Satan and the world.

Men and brethren, these things ought not be! It is very important that believers in Jesus Christ make the best use of every opportunity to talk about what is good and pleasing to God. And we can do this, because the power of the Spirit will engage us as we do, giving us just what we need to say (Lk. 12.11, 12). We must learn to think through the vast implications of the Kingdom of God, that we may live every aspect of our lives as citizens of the Kingdom which is our true home. We must be always ready to give a reason for the hope that is within us.

### *Taking our place in the conversation*

If believers will not engage daily conversation as witnesses for Jesus – in our homes, places of employment, among our friends, with our neighbors, and with fellow believers – we can expect the media, pop culture, and special interest groups to frame the worldviews by which the rest of us will live. The spirit of the times, rather than the Spirit of God, will shape the environment and culture in which we live, and wrong-belief will continue to deceive and destroy many.

But imagine a world of scores of millions of people, deeply conversant with the Word of God, steeped in the experience of His Kingdom, eager to discuss and able to defend our views at every opportunity, and seeking – like Jesus – those lost people God puts in our path, that some of them might be saved (Lk. 19.10). There is more power for making our case in everyday conversations than we have yet begun to wield!

Let us work together to break the spiral of silence, live out our Kingdom calling, and make the case for a Christian worldview. God will provide the opportunities for talking with our children, neighbors, friends, and co-workers, but we must be ready to boast about Jesus and the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

### *For reflection or discussion*

1. Have you mapped out your Personal Mission Field? This is the arena to which Jesus sends you each day and where opportunities for breaking the spiral of silence abound. Watch [this brief video](#), download the worksheet, and get started being a more effective witness today.
2. What keeps us from being more outspoken about the Gospel? How can you overcome these obstacles?
3. How should you pray about the challenge of being a witness for Christ?

*Next steps – Conversation: Here's a conversation starter to use in engaging the people in your Personal Mission Field this week. Try it out with two or three folks, including some of your Christian friends: "If I had some really good news to share with you, do you think you'd be willing to hear it?"*

## 5 Write It Out

*“Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’” Deuteronomy 4:6*

*Then the LORD answered me and said:*

*“Write the vision*

*And make it plain on tablets,*

*That he may run who reads it.” Habakkuk 2.2*

*A wide door or opportunity*

The day of salvation has come! *Now* is the favorable time for making known the Good News of God’s Kingdom and the righteousness, peace, and joy it brings to everyone who enters it. Atheism, materialism, postmodernism – all these wrong-believing worldviews are exhausted, and have nothing left to offer a disillusioned world. God calls all those who believe in Jesus Christ to take up the challenge of breaking the “spiral of silence” and making the case for the Christian worldview.

God alone is true, and our calling is to herald His truth to those who are trapped in the lies of wrong belief.

As we have seen, this must begin in our everyday conversations at home, in the community, at work, and wherever we gather with others. We must not allow ourselves to become trapped in the spiral of silence, but must be always ready to share Jesus and give a reason for the hope that is within us to everyone we can.

A second means by which we must make our case for the Kingdom is by publishing the Christian worldview through every available means. Habakkuk had to carve the message into stone tablets. Publishing the Good News of Jesus is much easier for us today.

This does not require that we all become authors of best-selling books. That’s simply not going to happen. But never has such a wide door of opportunity been available to affect the thinking of so many people by sharing the *written* word (1 Cor. 16:8, 9). Through local media, the Internet, and social networking, we may expect to influence many for the Kingdom of God whom we will never be able to talk with face to face. We must be determined to make the most of the publishing opportunities available to us day by day.

*No shortage of media*

Here is a second area where every Christian can play an active role in making the case for the Christian worldview. In our day there is no shortage of media through which we can employ the written word to challenge wrong-believing mindsets and propose our Christian alternative. Local newspapers still receive occasional op/ed pieces as well as letters to the editor. Even national journals of opinion will publish letters that are concise, considerate, and well-written. There is plenty of help to be found on the Internet concerning how to craft an effective op/ed piece or letter to the editor.

By engaging local papers and other journals and periodicals, we can help to make the case for a Christian worldview, if only with those who screen such missives.

You can also share good books with people, even offering to read and discuss them together. Many good and accessible books are available that can help people consider the truth of Jesus in fresh and helpful ways. They’re not likely to buy them, but they just might read one if you give it to them and read it with them.

But by far the greatest medium through which believers can make the case for the Kingdom of God is the

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Internet. Websites abound where Kingdom citizens can comment on contemporary issues, moral concerns, matters of belief, and ethics. Opportunities can be easily found for becoming involved in blogging conversations in which we may set forth our Scriptural views. Even text-messaging can be a resource for making the Good News known. Our daughter, Kristy, sends out regular Bible studies she has prepared for family and friends via texting.

Moreover, many websites exist in which questions of public policy and similar concerns are given thoughtful consideration by Christian thinkers. Articles from these websites relating to public policy matters can be downloaded and copied or simply linked and emailed to friends. We should always make sure to follow-up on any emailed articles, or articles copied and distributed, with a view to engaging in conversation over the issue examined.

Believers should not be reluctant to post their own thoughts about Jesus and His Kingdom—on their own websites, through email, or for discussion in small groups—and thus to encourage conversation that can affect what people believe and how they live. Not long ago a pastor posted an excerpt from one of our teaching letters to his social media account, and encouraged his “friends” to check out the website for our ministry. Over the space of two hours more than 1,000 people came to our website, and most of them subscribed to one or more of our teaching letters.

Don’t underestimate the influence you can have through various forms of personal publishing to help people find their way out of the lies of wrong-belief into the truth that is in Jesus.

*It’s up to us*

Now is the day of salvation!

No one is going to publish our Christian worldview for us. We are appointed as ambassadors of the Kingdom of God, and, whatever our calling in life, we must represent the interests and agenda of God’s eternal realm, beginning with the Gospel but extending into every aspect of life.

By publishing our thoughts in papers and journals, email, blogging, social networking media, sharing and reading books and other publications, linking to articles and websites, many opportunities are available making our case on behalf of the Kingdom of God.

Where believers are not present in those settings, the spiral of silence rules. So let us determine that here, too, we will challenge the prevailing worldviews and make our case for the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

*For reflection or discussion*

1. How many different publishing outlets are available to you today?
2. What is one compelling message about Jesus and His Kingdom you’d like to share with someone today?
3. Which of the many media available to you will you use to get that word out?

*Next steps – Demonstration: Try to make daily sharing via email, texting, or sharing written resources part of your daily work in your Personal Mission Field.*

## 6 Get Involved

*Then Moses said to the LORD, “O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.” Exodus 4.10*

*Three means*

Worldviews are shaped and advanced in everyday conversations and through the views and opinions published in the various media of the day, especially the Internet. Our Christian worldview is grounded in the truth that is in Jesus. Thus, whatever we do, in all our relationships, roles, and responsibilities, we should expect something like or about or pointing to Jesus to be present. The more involved we are with the people in our Personal Mission Field, the more they should be aware of our hope in Jesus. And the more opportunities we'll have to talk about Him.

Believers know how to talk, and practically every one of us is involved with the Internet in some ways. We should be making the most of these opportunities, as the Lord leads, to make our case for the reality of the Kingdom of God and to argue the merits of its blessings as a worldview to be preferred over the failed secularism of our day. We should be insisting, winsomely and patiently, that God alone is true and anything that stands opposed to Him is a lie.

If we can talk and write, we can declare our faith and take steps to defend it against fools, detractors, and naysayers. And if we don't, who will?

A third opportunity for shaping the worldviews of others can be seized by participating in those arenas where people's views are being shaped. We may feel reluctant, like Moses, to take up a work of teaching, to start a reading group, or to become involved in a class at a university. But as Moses was made to understand that God's will for His people could not be realized without his involvement in the public policy arena, so we must come to see that God is calling us to participate where we can in those settings where worldviews are debated and people are considering how they ought to live.

*Yes, you!*

Opportunities exist throughout your community to participate in reading or discussion groups. Check your local library or bookstore. Ask around at church. If Christians could become more active and outspoken—with gentleness and respect, of course—in every such setting, how many minds might be opened for the Kingdom of God?

Ask your pastor or a church leader about ways you can become involved as a teacher or discussion leader at church. So much of what passes for Christian education today is focused too narrowly, with too small a vision of the great salvation we have in the Lord. The Church needs leaders and teachers who understand the Kingdom of God and are living the Christian worldview as fully as possible. If you need training, ask for it. Few pastors will turn away those who are eager to serve.

It's not too much to expect that some of us, at least, might participate more actively in the work of politics and government. Whole ministries exist to help Christians be responsible in everything from knowing how to analyze issues, making good voting decisions, praying for and staying in touch with government officials, and sharing sound Biblical political views with others. That governments frequently stray from the framework of goodness God intends will surprise no one. It certainly did not surprise Moses. As citizens, we are already involved in political activity. As Christians, we must be prepared to enter this arena, as the Lord leads and calls, and to work for policies consistent with the Kingdom interests of the Lord. Moses did not feel qualified for such work; yet God provides the qualifications His people need when He calls them to any task.

## *Declare and Defend*

### *Begin and continue in prayer*

Involvement in the political arena, as in all these arenas of participation, begins with prayer and is sustained by prayer, for all participants in the process.

Prayer must be the basis for all our efforts to make our case for Christ and His Kingdom. Believers must pray daily for the coming of the Kingdom (Matt. 6.10). We should seek the righteousness, peace, and joy of the Kingdom in all we do all the time. We should also join together, uniting our voices in prayer and crying out to God for revival, renewal, and awakening in the world. Abraham Kuyper wrote concerning prayer, “Movements in history...which do not spring from this deepest source are always partial and transient, and only those historical acts which arose from the lowest depths of man’s personal existence embrace the whole of life and possess the required permanence.”

Every day, let us take up the work of conversation, publication, and participation in ways appropriate to our callings, so that we declare and defend the Gospel, set forth the reality of the Kingdom, and demonstrate the desirability of the Christian worldview. Commit your work to prayer and stay at it every day, making the most of every opportunity to make your case for the Kingdom!

### *For reflection*

1. What opportunities are available to you for participation in declaring and defending the Good News of Jesus and His Kingdom?
2. Can you see some way today that you can use all three of these powerful tools—conversation, publication, and participation—to bring the grace of God to others?
3. How can you encourage other believers to take up the work of declaring and defending the truth of God?

*Next steps – Demonstration: Where will you go today? How can you bring the Kingdom more fully and visibly into each place you go? How can you prepare the way for declaring and defending the Gospel in those places?*



## 7 Seek the Kingdom

*“But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”* Matthew 6.33

### *The defining priority*

God is true. All who deny God, reject His Word, scorn His salvation, and prefer to follow their own path in life are living the lie with which Satan tempted Eve to reject God’s Word: “You will not surely die.”

God is true. His Son Jesus Christ is the truth Who sets us free to live in the righteousness, peace, and joy of the Holy Spirit. The Kingdom of God—that realm of influence where Jesus exerts Himself in and through His people—is the arena within which the truth of God flourishes for freedom and eternal life. And all who know Jesus Christ and believe in Him for eternal life have been translated into that Kingdom, where the truth of God sets us free from the lies of sin, wrong-belief, despair, and death.

Seeking the Kingdom of God must be the defining priority for all who know the truth that is in Jesus Christ. The Kingdom of God is Jesus Christ, breaking into human experience, by His Word and Spirit, through His Church, for the purpose of filling all things with Himself (Eph. 4.8-10). It is a spiritual domain, which King Jesus is advancing by His Word and Spirit, in and through the people of God, by and for the glory of God. Where the Kingdom of God is increasing, the goodness of the Lord is evident in a wide variety of ways.

The progress of the Kingdom has been visible in different places and times depending on the extent to which God’s people have been faithful in their calling to follow Christ and seek His Kingdom as their defining priority. In our day, in our country, among the followers of Jesus Christ, the presence of the Kingdom is increasingly marginalized, as churches proclaim a weak and truncated gospel of “near Christianity” rather than the [Gospel of the Kingdom of God](#), the Gospel proclaimed by Jesus and the apostles.

Meanwhile, Satan, the father of lies, never ceases working to arrest the progress of the Kingdom by promoting the lie that God is not true, we are our own masters, and life is nothing more than what we make of it.

### *What we seek*

What we seek, and what we call others to join us in seeking, is the progress of the Kingdom unto increasing revival, renewal, and awakening in our generation and beyond. This we do in our own lives, among the people we know, with the resources and opportunities God provides, in all the roles and responsibilities we fulfill each day. For each of us, our lives are a grace field where God intends to spread His goodness and make His glory known (2 Cor. 4.15; 1 Cor. 10.31; Hab. 2.14). As the Kingdom of God increases in and through us, the goodness of the Lord comes to light in the land of the living, and people begin to see in Jesus a more viable alternative than what they are living.

Where Jesus is advancing His Kingdom, individual believers experience the grace and truth of God leading to *daily revival* of soul and body for growth in the Lord, faithfulness in obeying Him, the daily manifestation of His glory in all their everyday activities, and ready proclamation of His truth.

In homes and churches where men and women experience daily revival, families become forges of holiness, selflessness, charity, responsibility, industry, creativity, and civility. Such families, and others like them, impact their churches for *renewal* in every aspect of ecclesiastical life and ministry. Renewed churches find their worship services increasingly enriched by the sense of God’s Presence and power. They take seriously the mandate to make disciples, and work by every means to equip and stimulate church members for revival and for lives of mission.

## *Declare and Defend*

As King Jesus advances His reign through and from revived individuals and renewed churches, it begins to impact every aspect of life in community, culture, and society. The potential for turning the world upside-down for righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit begins to be very real. As this occurs it will be evident to all that our Kingdom-seeking has begun to bring about *awakening* in the world.

The prophets Isaiah and Micah saw that in the last days—the days in which we live—the people of God would carry His Word into every area of life, where people would see the hope that is in them, hear the Good News of God’s Kingdom, and stream up to His Church to learn more about Him (cf. Is. 2.1-4; Mic. 4.1-5). The glorious light of the truth would expose the darkness of lies, and multitudes would come to repentance and a desire to know the Lord.

Knowing that God is true, and that He is sovereign over all things, our desire must be to seek and advance His rule of truth into all the niches, nooks, and crannies of our lives and times, in the confident belief that, as we do, people who are trapped in lies will see the light of truth and begin to seek the Lord.

### *The overarching mandate*

It is thus the highest calling and overarching mandate of the citizens of the Kingdom of God to pray for and seek the coming and progress of that Kingdom in every area of our lives, in all our relationships, roles, and responsibilities. We have no higher priority and no more important calling. Jesus has given us His Kingdom, and though we must pursue through many trials and difficulties, we are assured that its increase is inevitable until the day that He returns to bring us wholly and eternally into His everlasting realm (Dan. 7.18-25; Acts 14.21, 22; Is. 9.6, 7).

Today is the favorable time! Now is the day of salvation! Seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness in everything you do! Speak the truth in love! Bear witness to Jesus! Make disciples! These are our marching orders!

Let every Christian become firmly anchored in God’s Word and resolve through prayer, daily conversations, using available media, and getting involved in places and activities where God’s grace may flow through them, to break the spiral of silence about Christ and His Kingdom and make our case boldly, consistently, and with sincere Christian love. Until living, declaring, and defending the truth of God becomes the calling and pursuit of every believer, we will continue to languish and betray the hope of the Gospel, and our weary world will founder and sink in a raging sea of lies.

Let God be true and every man a liar. And let Him be true in you and every aspect of your life.

### *For reflection*

1. How do you experience the reality of the Kingdom of God?
2. What do you do each day to seek the Kingdom and righteousness of God?
3. What opportunities will you have today to declare and defend the truth that is in Jesus?

*Next steps – Preparation: Outline your next steps for making the most of conversation, publication, and participation to make the case for Jesus and the Kingdom of God. How will you prepare each day? What can you do to be more alert for opportunities to seek and advance the Kingdom?*

*Declare and Defend*

*For reflection or discussion*

1. What can you do to better prepared yourself for giving a reason for the hope that is in you?
2. Have you mapped out your Personal Mission Field? Watch [this brief video](#), download the worksheet, and get started today being a more consistent and fruitful ambassador of the Kingdom and agent of God's grace.
3. Why must the Kingdom of God be the defining priority of our lives? What does that mean for you?
4. How will you improve your use of conversation, publication, and participation to fight against the spiral of silence?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from this study?

*For prayer:*

*Declare and Defend*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at [www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org) to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship to help us extend our ministry and resources to others. You can contribute to our ministry by using the Contribute button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 103 Reynolds Lane, West Grove, PA 19390.

Thank you.

