

WHY IS THE WORLD HOSTILE TO CHRISTIANS?

Recently Liberal Senator Cory Bernardi has been in the news. He has made comments in his new book, *The Conservative Revolution*, that has sparked angry comments from the Federal Opposition and other political parties against him. Among the many subjects Senator Bernardi speaks about in his book, one topic that has hit a raw nerve with so many is his comments on abortion. The Federal Opposition is now urging Prime Minister Tony Abbott to completely disassociate himself from Senator Bernardi's "extraordinary reactionary agenda."

In his book Senator Bernardi writes "It is horrendous and unacceptable that the abortion death industry despatches 80,000 to 100,000 unborn children [in Australia] every year..." "The political pressure from the left has ushered us into a morbid new world. It is not enough to stop the trend. What is needed is a reversal back to sanity and reason."

The number of Medicare rebates processed for abortions between July 2012 and June 2013 in Australia is 60 245. Depending on when the abortion is carried out, Medicare rebates can range from \$150 to \$280. As a nation, WE are paying for murder. God have mercy!

Speaking to ABC News Breakfast, Senator Bernardi said, "It's a lot (abortions) and I don't know anyone in this country that wants to see more abortions; in fact, I think most people would like to see less abortions..." "I think we need to start to investigate measures and ways in which we can assist in that regard..." "The question is for everyone in this debate, is where does life begin? For me it's at conception, for other people it is 24 week of gestation, others say it's not until the child is born and a sentient being, some weeks after birth." Senator Bernardi then let's himself down by saying: "I haven't said we should outlaw or prohibit abortion; I have said there is a right-to-life issue we should be exploring."

We keep saying, "Abortion is murder!" and the world keeps responding, "Shut up!"

When we as a church as individuals speak out against abortion, or really, any other issue that is contrary to God's Word (homosexuality, pornography, etc.) we are always met with hostility. Why is this?

The answer is quite simple. In fact, Jesus answers it for us: "*If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you.* ¹⁹ *If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you,*" (John 15:18-19). When we believe in Jesus and live our faith, we don't endear ourselves to the world that doesn't believe. The unbelieving world hated Jesus and plotted His death. The unbelieving world will hate Jesus' followers too.

We can get along with the world, and unbelievers will like us, if we join them in their ways. But Jesus has chosen us from the world. We no longer belong to the ways of unbelief. When that becomes evident, the world turns on us just as it did on Jesus.

The general truth applies, as Jesus had said before (John 13:16; Matthew 10:24): "*No servant is greater than his master.*" As servants and friends of Jesus,

we can expect others to respond to us as they do to Jesus. Those who would persecute Him will persecute us. As we are well aware, we don't have to look far to see the evidence of that truth.

Likewise, those who hear and keep Jesus' Word will keep our word because we, as Jesus' servants, bring them His Word.

All these things happen because of Jesus' name. Those who do the hating and the persecuting don't know Jesus because they don't know the Father who sent Him. People cannot know the Father without the Son nor the Son without the Father. Those who were about to put Jesus to death just didn't know God.

So, how do we respond to such anger against us? The apostle Peter said, "*Do not repay evil for evil or insult for insult, but with blessing,*" (1 Peter 3:9). Paul too, set a good example. He said, "*When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly,*" (1 Corinthians 4:12-13). To answer kindly means to appeal to reason. Present the facts, set the record straight, clear up misunderstandings, persuade kindly, conciliate.

When we feel the sting of anti-Christian bias, it is easy to react in the same way. But we should never be the ones who charge the atmosphere, engage in sarcasm or make catty remarks. When we do, we encounter the world on its battlefield, use its weapons, and fight by its rules. We might win arguments that way, but we will not win people to Christ.

We must stand on biblical grounds, use biblical means, and follow biblical principles. We do not have to conquer this age. Jesus Christ has already done that. He announced, "*I have overcome the world*" (John 16:33). The world must not see in us a reflection of itself. Instead, we must show them Jesus. Yes, we will be persecuted when we speak up for God and His Word, but that is no reason for us to keep silent. We have a message of love and forgiveness, and we must continue to proclaim this message to the unbelieving world.