

# Christians as Culture Warriors

SATURDAY, July 12, 2025 at 8:00am CT

## HOST: DAVID WHEATON:

Christians as culture warriors, that is a topic we'll discuss today right here on the Christian Worldview radio program where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a non-profit listener-supported radio ministry. Our website is [TheChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org) and the rest of our contact information will be given throughout today's program. As always, thank you for your notes of encouragement, financial support and lifting us up in prayer. A culture warrior is one who works to change the prevailing perspectives and practices that characterize a society. Now, Christians are often demeaned as culture warriors for their work opposing abortion, pornography, homosexual so-called marriage, the transgender movement and more. Yet what is rarely mentioned is that there were and are cultural warriors on the other side who work to push all this sin on our nation, one based on Christian principles in order to quote, fundamentally transform the United States of America. President Barack Obama said that.

M.D. Perkins, the director of the new documentary film *Culture Warrior*, joins us to discuss the call Christians have to be salt and light in our society. In light of the example of Don Wildmon, the founder of American Family Association and a Christian culture warrior who boldly persevered in pushing back for decades against the onslaught of Godlessness in the media and broader society. We'll tell you how you can watch this compelling and inspiring documentary today during the program. Let's get straight to the interview with director M.D. Perkins. Before we get into the film, M.D. explain to us the contributing dynamics as to why the majority of American culture departed from a God-revering mentality or attitude to one that is God-rejecting and when did that take place?

## GUEST: M.D. PERKINS:

There's so many dynamics that have shaped American society, American culture, and culture just by the way is just how people think. It's their values and beliefs and normal practice, how we define common good and all of that, so when we think about the things that have shaped American culture and changed it, there's of course major events in American history. We can think in terms of especially the sexual revolution, which really threw gas on the fire. But if you think back, there's probably the times, I think in the late 19th into the early 20th century where there was this shift in the way that the church accepted the scripture and began to think about what the Bible was and what it meant. This was influenced by something called German higher criticism, which was just a naturalistic way of understanding the Bible. It removed the supernatural elements from it, said all of the miracles could be explained.

Either they didn't happen or they could be explained by natural phenomenon. And it began to erode this sense of who God was and how He spoke to us through scripture. And that impact on the church is massive, David. That's how we get the decline of the mainline denominations across America. The rise of the fundamentalist movement, which moved a lot of Christians, evangelical Bible-believing Christians out of those

denominations into smaller denominations. A lot of Christians got out of social activism because of the rise of the social gospel movement that was happening in this time where that basically just becomes a humanitarian effort and all of these things. I think the story of culture war takes place in the seventies, eighties, and nineties, but the precursor to that like you're alluding to goes back even another 50, 60, 70 years before.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

There really was a culture war taking place before what we thought was the culture war where people were dismantling the Christian elements of our society. There was a culture war against the Christian culture at some point much earlier before it was really noticed. Now, was there some sort of smoke-filled room with the nefarious plans to secularize American culture or was this more just the way the leaven of sin tends to permeate a society?

**GUEST: M.D. PERKINS:**

Well, I think there's elements of both and there were concerted efforts to remove the biblical influence from institutions, from media, from even the way that the church was represented in society, so there are those elements, but also like you said, there is that erosion that tends in. The corrosion that comes with sin and accepting sin when you're not preaching the gospel clearly. I believe it's in the book, *Moby Dick*, Herman Melville as the narrator makes the point that the pulpit leads the world. That idea that the preaching of the gospel and what the Christian message was is so central that it actually transforms society.

So when you have this erosion of the understanding of what scripture even means and what it is and its authority, then you begin to have all of these differing sources of conflict. Because when we talk about the culture war, we're talking about worldview, we're talking about values and we're talking about morality and who is the one who's shaping that worldview and that sense of values and what we value and what we cherish and our understanding of morality? First of all, the institutions became secularized, and so that's a very specific process, but once they become secularized, then there's this attempt to reshape society as a secularistic entity that removes gospel and biblical influence from it.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

It's been a long march as the title of that book communicates the long march through the institutions, and here we are today.

**GUEST: M.D. PERKINS:**

Absolutely.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

M.D. Perkins is our guest today on the Christian Worldview Radio program, the director of Culture Warrior and Don Wildmon of AFA and the Battle for Decency. If you're a culture warrior, M.D., that's almost considered a pejorative today and it associates you with Christians or conservatives not liking or pushing back against an increasingly God-rejecting culture. But as we've been discussing a bit, there must have been earlier culture warriors on the other side of the war in America that were trying to undermine the God-affirming

culture that was taking place back then. Who comes to mind as being some of the culture warriors on the other side?

**GUEST: M.D. PERKINS:**

The secularization of the institutions, particularly I'm thinking of the colleges and universities. When Princeton Theological Seminary, for example, is no longer a bastion of robust Christian Orthodox theology, but now becomes a bastion of liberalism. Who was involved in that process? When we think about the history of these institutions, they became liberalized and secularized and that process would've included the seminary presidents, board members, even major donors. The history of philanthropy and the way that rich industrialists got involved in shaping these institutions often named after themselves, I think there's all kinds of different ways that society was shaped by these alternate influences that wanted to move Christians away from a Christian understanding of the world and move society away from being influenced and shaped by Christian values.

They wanted pieces of them. If you've ever read Andrew Carnegie's *The Gospel of Wealth* for example, that presents this notion of basically just humanitarianism. And he specifically didn't believe that philanthropists, industrialists should give their money to churches except in terms of church buildings. He believed they should build up libraries, universities, all these other secular institutions. And so the long-term ramifications of that in American society are massive, and that's just been a tiny little fascination I've had in some of the research because like you, I've wondered how far back does this go? When does society become so secular? And if you just keep going back further and further, you just keep finding more and more fascinating things along the way

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

During the midst of this cultural change in America, M.D., along comes a man named Don Wildmon. For those who don't know who Don Wildmon is, he grew up in Mississippi and the film goes into great detail on this and grew up in a Christian family. I'm going to play a soundbite early in the film and then I'm going to have you ask you to tell us more about Don Wildmon. Here's from the movie *Culture Warrior*.

**Culture Warrior Audio Sound Bite:**

He reminds me of a Caleb in the Old Testament. When Caleb was 85 years old, he was still wanting to fight giants and climb mountains, and Don Wildmon was a giant fighter and a mountain climber.

My earliest impressions of Don after meeting him were that he's a man of conviction, a man of action, and a man of integrity. Once he was convicted about a given issue, then he was going to say and do something about it and call others to do something.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

What were the early influences that you noticed on his life and perhaps decisions he made that led him to this relentless pursuit to push back against, particularly the media promoting immorality, violence and more? What was it in his youth that really led him to this?

**GUEST: M.D. PERKINS:**

Well, Don came to faith when he was young, around nine years old, and he states that even at that point just sitting in a revival meeting in a Methodist church that he sensed that God was calling him to do something and he didn't fully know what that was. He eventually goes into the pastoral ministry as he's graduating from high school into college age. He grows up in a home with parents who are Methodists, they're religious, they're God-fearing, they're Bible believing and so they instill in him a lot of those Christian values and an understanding of the world. And if you think about the way that the Methodists have been throughout their history, there's always been a sense of social activism and involvement that humans within the church are not just by themselves within their home and their local church, but there's also an aspect of how does this impact how I interact with my neighbor and what does that mean about society and how do I treat others in a larger social sense?

There were all of those values I think that swirled around and had shaped Don Wildmon's thinking. Don was not someone who was just completely passive on those issues. I've read many of his early sermons that he preached way before he started the National Federation for Decency, and those are very socially conscious. He's got an awareness of Christians needing to be involved, to be aware, to be active in politics and society, to take up roles in government and on these issues. But I think it's that night in 1976 when he's sitting down with his family to watch television and he's just impacted by the state of where things have gotten as a culture, and it shocks him. He makes this statement in one of his books later, "Look what happened while we looked the other way." When I think of Don sitting there that evening sitting down just to watch TV with his family, enjoy the holiday season. This was around Christmastime in 1976 and all the three networks have something objectionable on them.

It's not that he had never seen that before, but it's that in that moment he's realizing a level of complacency that he had had just active in his family, active in his church, going to vote and all of that, but really anything beyond that, he didn't really think of it as his concern. If you're bothered by what's on television, then you just turn it off. That's the answer. But to realize that television is having a shaping influence not only on himself and his family, but his church members, and then what if Christians didn't watch television? Well, you're still friends with people. You still have these relationships out there in the world. You don't control how other people have been shaped by the influence of television, so he's just begins to build this awareness that goes even bigger than those initial foundations that he would've had just coming up as a Methodist, as someone who's concerned about society, patriotic American and all that, but seeing something much bigger.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

M.D. Perkins is our guest. He is the director of the film we're discussing, Culture Warrior. You can watch this film. We have a link directly to it at our website, [TheChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org), or go directly to the film's website, [culturewarrior.movie](http://culturewarrior.movie), where you can stream it. They also have DVDs available as well. One thing that was interesting, M.D., was how Don Wildmon really understood the power and the influence of media. Again, only three network channels at that time, NBC, ABC, CBS, and he knew the kind of influences this would be having on individuals, not just culture, but cultures made up of individuals as you said. And he wanted to do

something about it, but he understood the worldview behind what was going on. Before anyone even used the word worldview, he could see that was taking place. Here's another clip from the film and then I'll follow up with a question.

**Culture Warrior Audio Sound Bite:**

Yes, he focused on the amount of sex and violence on TV at the time and profanity, but also what was the worldview that was being communicated through the stories that they were telling on television through the shows?

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

That was Don Wildmon's son Tim. And then the film goes on to show Don speaking about this worldview that is being communicated through the media.

**Culture Warrior Audio Sound Bite:**

And they said the most striking finding they found in their study was this, that two-thirds of the people who control the networks, the entertainment programs, network vice presidents, producers of programs, writers, elite people, two-thirds said that television entertainment programs should be used to reshape society. You may think you're being entertained but you're not. You're being preached at and your children are being preached at.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

This is back at a time in the late seventies, eighties when people weren't really realizing what was taking place, is that the television particularly was being used to influence the worldview of Americans. M.D. do you think most Christians even understand that fact today that media is used, movies, whatever it is, is used to shape people's minds? And if so, why do Christians consume so much mainstream entertainment?

**GUEST: M.D. PERKINS:**

That's a fascinating question. Obviously Christians understand the power of media to some example, or we wouldn't be utilizing it. We're on a radio program right now. People understand the power of television and its use in gospel efforts. Billy Graham understood that very early on, and so Christians have utilized the power of the communicative aspects of the medium to speak to people and to present the gospel and to shape people's worldviews. But there's an aspect that I think Christians are often naive about, which is the way that art and entertainment, those aren't neutral categories. Those are shaped by individuals. I went to art school, I went to Savannah College of Art and Design, I studied film production, television. I also got a robust art education, so I understand what goes into creating art and I understand how to talk about it and all of those things.

I say that to say that when Christians talk about the influence of art, they don't often understand that every artist when he creates something is making very specific decisions about how to show something, the tone of it, how it feels, how it comes across to an audience, what level of expression is there and how that seems to hit somebody. And then how you can move somebody along by the dramatics of a story or the compelling

nature of how something is crafted. And I think we've often been so naive in thinking about entertainment or art or just leisure in general, the way that those things do shape us. Don makes that statement that, "Even if you got all the sex and violence off television, I realize there was something still seriously wrong with it." That's an amazing statement for him to make because it recognizes with a level of discernment that is very rare in the Christian Church, just the power of the medium in its entertainment form, that it isn't just about what you're showing on the screen, it's also about how things are presented, how the story unfolds.

We're talking about worldview, we're talking about values, and we're talking about morality. And so when you're talking about that, there are so many ways that that can very subtly be suggested by the way that a story unfolds, the way that a character responds. Don made the statement once that if Christians made up such a majority of religious people in society, if most people were religious, then why wouldn't you turned on a TV set at that time, you didn't see a majority of the characters profess some sort of religion or Christian belief? Everybody became a secularist on television because it was crafted by secularists.

So that's something that I think Christians need to be aware of even now, is that when you sit down and watch television or you're watching your streaming platforms, whatever TV shows, movies, music, all of these different types of entertainment and leisure, it's not just that specific messages are being sold to you, it's that the whole environment of it is supposed to shape your attitude and interest in something else that's often not God-glorifying and is often undermining your sense of morality and values based on what you understand from scripture. Christians need to wake up on that. We understand how it relates in children's programming because people understand that there should be some sort of moral here, that the way that a story turns out speaks to what you believe is right and wrong and good and bad, and you play that out in a larger scale, it impacts adults as well.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

Christians can be very careful about what their kids watch, oh, does this have any of this or any of that in there and let's keep our kids from watching it, but they think they're all grown up now and that they can watch what the mainstream culture feeds them on television or the streaming platforms and it won't affect them. And that's just not possible, where we're really just merely a product of that what influences us. If it doesn't outright influence us, it can desensitize us to the sin that's being presented and like you say in very compelling captivating ways. Just one quick follow up on that question as to why entertainment and humor are so effective to influence people's worldview. Stay tuned because that's coming after this short break to tell you about some ministry resources. I'm David Wheaton. You are listening to the Christian Worldview Radio program.

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**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

M.D., I noticed that a lot of the programs that Don Wildmon was pointing out back then and they would survey and keep track of what was being shown, sexual scenes, violence, whatever it was that was ungodly between 7:00 and 10 o'clock at night and the sitcoms and the dramas every night on network television. The one common thread was that they were either amusing or caused you to laugh, and so what is it about the

dynamics of entertainment and amusement or laughing that is so conducive to influencing people? In other words, they weren't speeches on why you should think a certain way, why God is wrong and the Bible is untrue or something, it's done in an entertaining, humorous way.

**GUEST: M.D. PERKINS:**

Part of it is that we often think of sermons as didactic, that it's clear direct teaching, but as Don said earlier in that clip that you're being preached at and your children are being preached at and it's happening through these entertainment shows. There's something disarming about laughing. It's part of why we make each other laugh and why we feel more comfortable after we've laughed when we're with somebody. It can break up an awkward social interaction or you weren't really sure about somebody, but then you share a laugh together and you feel more bonded. I think that's just part of relationally how God created us to be, but that can be used for nefarious purposes when you think of the ways that entertainment shapes the way that we bond with others. For example, Ed Vitagliano, who's executive vice president here at American Family Association, he makes the case that one of the biggest ways that homosexuality became accepted in society was through the show, *Ellen* in 1997. We mentioned it briefly in the documentary as part of the boycott against Disney because ABC was owned by Disney at that point.

But the point was that here's somebody who you can relate to. She's funny, she's goofy, she's a little awkward. She's somebody that you could really root for as a character, but then she has this struggle that then she presents and people look at it and they think, well, homosexuality isn't that big of a deal. Why can't she just love who she loves? And so then whatever restraint was there in people's thinking regarding homosexuality, very easily become swept away because they just like the characters. They like the people that are being presented in these shows and then that undermines their convictions about certain issues. Now, obviously anyone who's undermined in that way, maybe their convictions weren't that strong to begin with, but at the same time it can still erode away over time the way that people who are more solid might think about things as well. And so the show *Ellen* probably did more to change public attitudes and sentiments around homosexuality than any political campaign, any money spent by these non-profit activist groups and all these different things, and part of it was the power of laughter.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

Very true. M.D. Perkins is our guest today here on the Christian Worldview talking about *Culture Warrior*, the new film that he has directed. It's available, you can get a link to it directly from our website, [TheChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org) or just go directly to the film at [CultureWarrior.movie](http://CultureWarrior.movie). Now, M.D. there is a lot in this film that we're not going to be able to get to and all the different things that Don Wildmon again, he started the National Federation for Decency, then changed names into what it is today, the American Family Association, and all the various entities like American Family Radio on which this program airs. One of the key things back then that was blossoming, you could say and now has exploded today is the issue of pornography. I want to play a soundbite from the film where Hugh Hefner's daughter, again, Hugh Hefner was the publisher of *Playboy* magazine, a pornographic magazine and where she was describing how Americans are accepting of *Playboy* magazine and people like Don Wildmon are on the fringe. Here's from the film.

Audio Sound Bite:

Playboy is so obviously mainstream American culture and entertainment that it's hard to find a lot of people who find a magazine stepping over the boundaries of what is good taste or what is acceptable. The Wildmon type groups succeed by pretending they have more power in the marketplace than they really do, and that's how they create fear on the part of companies that they approach. And you need to also understand that they're a fringe group and I think that they're going to be increasingly perceived as a fringe group.

#### **Culture Warrior Audio Sound Bite:**

Well, at first they wanted to ignore him, but then after a while they couldn't because so many stores stopped selling Playboy and Penthouse. He cost them a lot of money.

#### **HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

M.D. this issue of pornography back then it was Don was leading boycotts and pickets and so forth against 7-Eleven who was the largest distributor of it or held the magazines in their convenience stores and other places around the country, other markets and so forth. Don Wildmon made them take notice and hurt that industry. How did he do it and how to actually take on and push back against something that is a behemoth of a demand by human beings to be involved in sexual sin like pornography.

#### **GUEST: M.D. PERKINS:**

Don saw the issue of pornography and its degrading nature almost immediately. The first letter of the NFD newsletter published in 1977 talks about the problems with pornography, so even as Don's focus is primarily around television, pornography was very much on his mind as that next step. You move away from the entertainment media and you move into these things that are specifically made for sexual purposes and all of these sorts of things. And so another interesting aspect is Don was willing to see where the fight was. It wasn't just the seedy adult bookstores on the bad part of town, but he saw pornography sitting there on the shelf in 7-Eleven, convenience stores, drug stores, grocery stores, the places where families frequent. And so to organize boycotts and pickets of a lot of these convenience stores, what Don often found is that there were store managers that were just being given an ultimatum from on high within their corporate structure to put these magazines out.

But if they had received a complaint from a customer, they could very often get those magazines removed because that was the kind of material that their shoppers didn't want to see or purchase. And so just getting Christians to even wake up to just speaking out on these very common things instead of just being frustrated about it and yourself thinking like, oh man, I wish they weren't doing this, but to actually speak up about it because that gives an opportunity for public witness. When you actually take the time to write that letter, make that phone call or now in our day, send the email or make a social media post about something, you're having an opportunity for someone else to respond to that. Now, a lot of things have changed over the course of these last 50 years in terms of how companies respond to even direct criticism, but there's still opportunities for Christians to stand up and speak out on these issues.

We would certainly say that boycotts are one of those ways that Christians could exercise stewardship within their own lives and within the public marketplace. That oftentimes is rejected by many people these days.



They don't like the idea of boycotts. They sound real confrontational, but the point of them was to draw attention to the issue. When people rally together for a particular cause to raise an awareness around an issue, it often gets those things a point of discussion even well beyond what you might realize. What people don't understand about this time in the mid-eighties is that there was actually a presidential commission that was put together to study the influence and impact of pornography on American society because Ronald Reagan was in the White House. There were people like Don Wildmon and other Christian leaders who were speaking up, James Dobson, Alan Sears, who had gone on to found ADF and others who were part of this commission to talk about the influence and impact of pornography on American society.

How much more do Christians still need to be aware of and fighting against the ongoing issues with pornography in our society where you even now are starting to have generations of people in my age group and slightly younger who've grown up fully under the influence of internet pornography and the immediate access of that through smartphones and the ramifications on men and women as well, and the impact on children? The rise of childhood sexual abuse, peer-on-peer sexual abuse between young children is on the rise now in this society and it's because of the influence and proliferation of pornography through the internet. Christians need to be aware of this. They need to find different ways to get involved, some of the age verification laws and things happening in different states or ways that we can be active currently in our day on some of these issues.

#### **HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

M.D. Perkins is our guest today here on the Christian Worldview talking about the film he directed, Culture Warrior, and the subtitle is Don Wildmon of AFA and the Battle for Decency. One thing that comes across loud and clear in the film you can't miss this is just what kind of person Don Wildmon must have been. He passed away and went to heaven back in 2023. His wife is still living. For a man from a small town in Mississippi who became a pastor and then left that to start the National Federation for Decency, then AFA, and to be taking on these huge media giants like the networks and the pornography industry and Disney and Hollywood. These are quote unquote "giants" of influence in our culture, and you can just imagine the type of unending pushback, slander, and mockery that he received as an individual person in his family. I'm just going to play a short clip here from the film.

#### **Culture Warrior Audio Sound Bite:**

It always stood out to me that he didn't really care about what other people thought about him. He didn't care what was written in this news article or what was said on this television program.

"I was a preacher from Mississippi. They called me a bunch of names. They called me Hitler. They called me McCarthy. Gene Jankowski, president of CBS called me the Ayatollah of the religious right. That ain't bad for a country preacher from Mississippi."

#### **HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

He was a dynamo of a person for sure, but he was still a human being with feelings and emotions and so forth. How did he deal with the unending mockery, the slander of him and how do we as individuals get past

worrying about that? Because that's what we're going to receive when you go to the school board meeting and all the parents are there and you say something that's biblical, how do we get beyond the fear of man, so to speak?

**GUEST: M.D. PERKINS:**

Well, that's a constant struggle for all Christians. It doesn't matter how mature we are in our faith, we're always susceptible to the fear of man. Don, I think temperamentally was wired to be a warrior, to be bold and to not care often what people thought of him, but I don't think that means that it never got to him. We would much rather not deal with controversy and conflict and mockery or scorn. I had a conversation with Wesley Wildmon, who is one of Don's grandsons. He's involved here at AFA now. And in the early days of him getting involved, he sat down with his granddad and he asked Don, "How did you deal with the pushback?" Essentially the question that you just asked me. And Don's answer he said was very short and succinct.

He said, "Well, I asked myself, is their criticism true? And if it's true, then I'm needing to make some adjustments in my life and respond to that. But if it's not true, then I just kind of move on because it doesn't matter." And I think that in a nutshell tells you so much about Don's character and his approach. If they're obviously counter to what we're saying, then we can just move on. But if there is some way that we haven't been careful in our approach or we haven't been honest about how we've dealt with the issue or something else that maybe we need to consider, we can in humility and the spirit working within us, we can recognize that and grow from it.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

M.D., one of the strongest parts of the film is when Don was talking about the fact that all these different things he and AFA have been pushing back against in society, this anti-Christian content they've been pushing back against. But Don Wildmon said that it's a spiritual warfare and it's really a threat to Western civilization itself. Let me just play this soundbite and then follow up with a question.

**Culture Warrior Audio Sound Bite:**

I think Don understood the culture war first and foremost as spiritual warfare. He understood good and evil from a biblical perspective and right and wrong. He had a passion for the church to be the church and live in this sin infested world with the power of the Holy Spirit that's offered to us and in a victorious way and to live out the life that the Lord's calls to live and made every provision for us to live. He realized that the sin saturated culture in which we live, if just left unchecked would destroy everything good and right about this country.

"A couple of years ago I realized what it's all got to do. We are fighting this thing on bits and pieces at different levels. Let me tell you what's at stake. We aren't really talking about abortion. We aren't really talking about pornography. We're not talking about dirty pictures, dirty books. What we're engaged in is a great struggle to determine whether or not western civilization, which has grown up under the Christian view of man, whether or not it will continue to be undergirded founded up on the Christian view of man, or whether or not it'll be replaced by a humanist view of man. Now, if you don't think that the choice is going to have some consequences, you aren't thinking--"

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

It's a big statement and there might be some listening today thinking, why are you getting so uptight about what the media puts on the television shows at night? If you don't like it, just don't watch it. Like you said earlier, if you don't like the movie, don't go to it. Don Wildmon did not see it that way at all. He saw that this march going through our culture, the culture that went from a God-revering culture to a God-rebelling culture, that this wasn't just a number of issues that we need to fight back against. But this was a threat to western civilization itself, which was founded upon things that came out of the reformation, when the church recovered the gospel and the authority of scripture and so forth.

And this bled into the civil sphere as well and individual liberties and the things that our country was founded on, and it made our country great, so why isn't this an exaggeration, what Don Wildmon was just saying that this culture war that's taking place is a very threat to western civilization? And now fast-forward to today, and where are we today, M.D., compared to when Don Wildmon was fighting this back in the seventies, eighties, nineties, and early 2000s?

**GUEST: M.D. PERKINS:**

All you have to do is look around and see the level of where the conversations have gotten to. Back in the seventies and eighties we were talking about things on television. And like you said earlier, the content that was on television is not nearly as profane or obscene as things that are just now so commonplace. Just think of the way that language has changed, how common it is for people to use cuss words and taking God's name in vain, to think of the ways that culture has become more sexualized and permissive, how it's expected that young men will engage in pornography. It's expected that young women will sleep around when they're in college, and it's expected that marriages are not going to last very long. And it's expected that when our leaders speak to us on anything, that they're not telling us the truth and we can't hardly trust anything that the media says.

And all of these things have happened by a slow erosion over time, so when Don was raising the alarm way back in the seventies and eighties and nineties, he was seeing things well ahead of what was coming down the line that we are experiencing now. Because Don Wildmon and other Christian leaders did stand up and speak out on this there was salt and light that was happening that the Bible describes where we were holding back the corruption. People asked, "Well, is any of it effective?" Well, I can walk into a grocery store right now and not buy pornographic magazines. That's not just because pornography has moved to online. There's still magazines out there, people still purchase them and they're still pornographic magazines. But because there were stands that were taken at a particular time, there's still a lasting influence of that, so you still see that salt working in its preserving influence. And that's what Don was calling the church to recognizing that so many of these things are interconnected. Like when you talk about the culture war, you're talking about that connection between worldview and values and morality and who influences that?

What is the shaping influence that tells you what is good and what is bad? What is helpful for society and what is harmful for society? And yes, we have the natural revelation of God in us through our conscience and our moral sensibility there, which can also be seared and distorted, so there's certain elements of that that have been maintained over time, but it can also be lost over time too. Maybe now people are a little more aware of that. I hope Christians are more cognizant. I think the transgender issue really brought it home to even just a lot of regular people who struggle with that whole definition of, I think that I'm a woman, but now society has to conform to my sense of reality. And I think a lot of people are starting to wake up and hopefully push back against that. But to get to that point, there were a lot of philosophical underpinnings, a lot of social underpinnings, a lot of apathy and ineffectiveness by the church as well that allowed those things to grow and fester over time.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

Final question for you, M.D., and I think this will be of encouragement to all of us as we seek to live out our Christian faith in our society today, is that Don Wildmon saw his mission was not to be quote unquote "successful" but to be faithful. Let's hear that soundbite from the film.

**Culture Warrior Audio Sound Bite:**

I don't think we need to confuse the Christian gospel with the American standard. American standard of success is that you're number one, I'm the largest, I'm the richest, I'm the most powerful, boom, boom, boom. I don't see that in the gospels. I don't see anywhere, I don't read anywhere where God says, Don Wildmon, you have to be successful. The only thing I do read in there is, hey, all I ask of you is to be faithful, and there's a world of difference between the two.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

Don Wildmon was faithful, and to a large extent he was successful at pushing back against the onslaught of this godlessness that was taking place and still taking place in our society today. Now, M.D., some Christians don't see the call or the model of culture warring in scripture. Jesus and his apostles, the early church, they were focused on evangelism and discipleship, according to the great commission that was their priority. Where does societal activism against sin fit into the Christian calling and how to navigate that when there are necessarily associations with those who don't believe in the true biblical gospel, come from a different religious foundation where the clarity of biblical doctrine in the gospel can be confused while working together against a particular issue?

**GUEST: M.D. PERKINS:**

There's several passages of scripture that come to mind that I think are helpful when we think about Christian social engagement. One I alluded to earlier, being salt and light, that aspect of salt preserving against the influence of rot and decay and light, clearly projecting truth and reality and all those things. There's also Ephesians chapter 5, verse 11, which says, "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them." That's a verse that I connect very closely with Don because that was Don's call. He was calling things out. He was pointing people to understand what was happening in these dark corners of your everyday life in American society. What is it really like to hear what television producers and executives think about American

society and culture? What is the influence of pornography and anti-Christian bias in media, the rise of the homosexual agenda, all these different things that were at work.

And so he had to expose those things. And the other aspect you talked about, Christians feeling that conflict between preaching the gospel and standing up and speaking out on social issues or matters of societal concern. Well, within the Great Commission, you have this call to make disciples of all nations and to teach them to observe all that Christ commanded. And so when you take that all that Christ commanded aspect of it, there's a way that we need to understand and rightly engage with the things that are happening all around us because they influence everyone. And in a country like America where we have the opportunity to participate in the process, it's not just handed down to us or stamped upon us from on high, but we have the opportunity to participate in the process, then we need to take advantage of that opportunity if we want to preserve the opportunity for that religious liberty going forward.

There's of course all kinds of things you could say about that. Sometimes that does mean that you lock arms with people who in a common cause that we can collectively see is wrong. You don't have to be a Christian to know that it's bad for people to drunk drive. We can come together on an issue like that and say that this is harmful to society, it's harmful to people. But while at the same time maintaining our distinctives and saying, well, I'm coming from this as a Christian, and now because you have common course with somebody on something, you may actually have an opportunity to present the gospel to somebody because you are appealing at first to a sense of common good and decency but now you're undergirding that understanding of common good and decency with the biblical understanding of it. I actually think that cultural engagement provides us with opportunities to evangelize and present the gospel. It doesn't remove that from our opportunity, it actually gives us those opportunities.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

Very well answered, M.D., we thank you for directing this very compelling film, Culture Warrior. We hope many listeners go to [culturewarrior.movie](http://culturewarrior.movie) to watch it, or again, we have a link at our website [TheChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org). Thank you for all the time and thought and effort that you and everyone at AFA put into producing this film. And we just wish nothing but God's best and grace to all of you as you continue to lift up God's word in not only the church but the culture as well. Thanks again for coming on the program.

**GUEST: M.D. PERKINS:**

Thank you, David. God bless you.

**HOST: DAVID WHEATON:**

A few things impacted me from the conversation with M.D. Perkins. Number one, that it was the influence of German higher criticism in the late 1800s and early 1900s in the way they challenged the inspiration and inerrancy of scripture that led to American seminaries and churches being led astray, which then caused people's views to change and the culture changed. Same old deception Satan used in the garden. Indeed has God said, questioning God's word. Number two, every Christian is called to be a culture warrior in some way. M.D. referenced that passage in Ephesians chapter five, "Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of

darkness, but instead even expose them." Verse 15, "Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise making the most of your time because the days are evil." The days certainly are evil. And the reason why we need to be culture warriors to some extent is because sin dishonors God and it destroys people.

If we love God and others, we will do what we can to not let them be enslaved by sin. And finally number three, to keep our priorities in order. The Great Commission is our primary mission, but we can stand for what's right while in pursuit of that mission, not compromising the clarity of the gospel or biblical doctrine, though while doing so. And always viewing the other side as not the enemy, but the mission field. Again, you can watch the film at [culturewarrior.movie](http://culturewarrior.movie), or we have a link to it at [TheChristianWorldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org). Thank you for joining us today on the Christian Worldview and for your support of this non-profit radio ministry. Let's remember to be salt and light in our society. Until next time, think biblically, live accordingly and stand firm. The mission of the Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

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