

SHOULD YOU TRY TO CHANGE OTHERS?

by Herbert W. Armstrong

HAVE YOU tried to induce others to read *The Plain Truth* or listen to the *World Tomorrow* program? Perhaps your wife—your husband—one of your family—a close relative, or friend?

Have YOU tried to change others' views? Have YOU started to "preach" to them?

If you have, you have probably stirred controversy, antagonism—lost a friend, or even a wife or husband.

But if you haven't—**DON'T!**

I know that many of our readers—yes, *thousands* of you, out of our millions of readers of *The Plain Truth*—have been led to understand God's TRUTH. You have learned to LOVE your Creator's TRUTH, which he reveals—and which we make plain. The truth becomes the most precious thing in your life. You become excited about it. You are filled with enthusiastic ZEAL over it.

Before, like all unconverted people, you were SELF-centered, selfish. But *now*, your mind is GOD-centered. Now, instead of exclusive SELF-concern you have an enthusiastic OUTGOING concern for others. Especially those in your own family—your relatives, your closest friends. You want to share this wonderful truth. You want *them* to inherit eternal life in the kingdom of God. You want to save them from perishing.

Your motives are well-intended.

Your zeal is splendid—but you may be like a woman I knew years ago who had more zeal than wisdom. This woman tried by her TALK to "save" her husband and her teenage son. But instead of arguing them into it, she turned them to hostility, resentment, embitterment against God! This woman tried to save her neighbors—almost her whole town. She only turned them all against her.

But, some will ask, didn't Jesus tell us we are the light of the world—and that we must let our light SHINE?

Oh yes! But did you notice HOW he said we must let our light shine? Listen: "Ye are the light of the world. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may SEE your GOOD WORKS. . ." (Matt. 5:14, 16). Notice that carefully! He did NOT say "that they may HEAR your good ARGUMENTS." He said "that they may SEE your GOOD WORKS"!

But now wait a minute!

Should you ever tell anyone about the radio program, or let anyone see *The Plain Truth*? Yes, by all means—but be CAREFUL *how* you do it. To just MENTION the broadcast to a friend, and SUGGEST that he or she might find it interesting, is fine. I wish you would. BUT, don't go too far! Don't URGE, ARGUE or try to TEACH religion.

Did you ever notice that our program makes plain the REAL MEANING of today's world news, and that it reports *tomorrow's* world news *before it happens*? Your friends

may be interested in news, but not in religion.

Did you ever notice that our broadcast is not at all like the religious broadcasts on the air? It NEVER starts out with religious hymns, and a voice in a sentimental syrupy tone. Do you know what happens when such religious broadcasts start? Most people who are tuned in change stations quickly. Either they tune to a different program, or they turn it off. Only the "religious audience"—a small part of the whole audience—remains. And they probably tune in specially because they are regular listeners to that particular program.

But do you know why millions of people buy and read such magazines as *Reader's Digest*, *Good Housekeeping*, *McCalls*, etc.? These magazines are filled with articles about people—about their everyday problems—about world conditions—HUMAN-INTEREST subjects. Many are interested in those things. But only a very few by comparison are interested in a sentimental, emotional, religious program that sounds just like a church service.

On the *World Tomorrow* program we want ALL people to hear the good news. So we talk about the things all people want to hear! We talk about the very questions, problems, conditions and subjects that cause multiple millions to buy and read these other magazines, and the newsmagazines.

But we make these interest-gripping subjects far *more* interesting by injecting *life* and *spark* and *meaning* into them by use of bibli-

cal material that astonishes—in a nonreligious-sounding manner—giving the surprising, eye-opening, practical and authoritative answers to the many increasingly disturbing questions, problems, and happenings of our day. In this way, we open people's eyes to the real ANSWERS to the *otherwise* unanswerable problems that plague governments, science, and people generally.

People are ASTONISHED to learn that such answers are *in* the Bible. They are being told by educators that "there are no answers. There are NO SOLUTIONS." Then they hear the ANSWERS on our program—answers that MAKE SENSE. It SURPRISES people to learn that the Bible is up-to-date, dealing with TODAY'S conditions, news, problems.

Then there's a lot in HOW it is done. It is done in the professional MANNER of a network news analyst, or a network documentary.

So, if you want to induce more and more people to listen to the broadcast, tell them it is an exciting NEWS, HUMAN-INTEREST, EDUCATIONAL program.

The Plain Truth

You might do many of your friends a great service by letting them see your copy of *The Plain Truth*. Don't URGE them to read it. Don't ARGUE about it or try to talk them into reading it. If it doesn't grab their interest, FORGET IT! If it does, tell them they may have a free subscription, already paid—NO COST to them—and show them on the inside front cover the mailing address, so they may write in for it.

We must let our light shine by our GOOD ACTIONS. I learned this lesson about letting people see your *good deeds* rather than your good ARGUMENTS many years ago.

Don't YOU Make THIS Mistake!

The year 1927 was a very eventful year in my life.

As soon as I swallowed my bitterest pill of rebellion, surrendered to *obey* the Mighty God through faith

in Jesus Christ, this new Christian WAY became the most happy, joyful experience of my life. Studying the Bible became a passion. I plunged into it with a fierce zeal.

The all-day sessions at the Portland, Oregon, public library did not stop with my capitulation to the truth following the six months' anger-inspired study to end my wife's "fanaticism."

No longer was it an intensive study driven by anger and determination to have my own way. Now it was an enthusiastic study of eager anticipation, literally *thrilling* to every new discovery of spiritual "light" and biblical truth.

Now a passion swept over me. With the best intentions in the world, I set out on a vigorous cam-

Especially is this true where a husband or wife yields to God's truth without the other.

It nearly broke up our marriage—even though my wife Loma did NOT attempt to inject her new religious belief into me. In our case the marriage was saved only because I accepted the challenge to study into it myself, confident I could prove she was wrong. But most mates will not study into it. Most unconverted mates, especially if the converted one tries to talk the other into his or her religion, will break up the home.

In the more than fifty years since my conversion, I have known of dozens and scores of marriages that have ended in divorce *because the newly converted mate tried to talk*

the unconverted one into accepting his or her religion. In very few, if any, instances has the unconverted mate been talked into accepting it.

Of all things evil and harmful a newly converted Christian can do, the very WORST is to try to talk your husband or wife into your religion. WHATEVER else you do, let me *plead* with every such reader, NEVER commit this tragic mistake. If you love your

husband or wife, *don't do it!!* If you love your Savior who died for you, and now lives for you, *DON'T DO IT!*

Remember these scriptures: "No man can come to me," said Jesus, "except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44). Again, Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came *not* to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother. . . . And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother [or wife or husband] more than me is not worthy of me. . . . And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:34-38; cf. Luke 12:51-53).

God made every human a free

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paign. To me, it was the loving and intense desire to *share* the wonders and glories of salvation and Bible knowledge with those we felt we loved most. But to most of them, it was an unwanted effort to "cram my religion down their throats."

I did succeed, apparently, in talking one sister-in-law into a certain start. I had to learn later it was a false start. As too often happens when a high-pressure salesman talks one into something he doesn't really want, she turned against it all shortly afterward.

I had to learn, however, that, even though I had believed I was a pretty good salesman in my earlier business experience, I was utterly unable to "cram my religion down my relatives' throats." My efforts only aroused hostility.

This is a near universal mistake committed by the newly converted.

moral agent. Thank God!—no one has power to force on *you* any unwanted religion.

Every individual makes his *own* decision. A religious difference between husband and wife is a serious handicap.

But if such difference already exists, do not make matters worse by *talking* religion to your mate. Do all your *talking* to God in prayer. Let your mate *see* your happy, pleasant, cheerful, joyful, loyng WAY of life—not *hear* your arguments or nagging! Allow your mate complete religious latitude and freedom—whether to be converted, religious, irreligious, or atheistic!

I am glad I learned that lesson early. I have had to maintain certain business connections with many people, since being plunged into God's Work.

I never try to talk *anyone* into accepting Bible truth or being converted. We go *to* the world over the air and in print, and everyone is free to listen or read—or to tune out or not read. We try never to force God's truth on anyone. That's GOD'S WAY!

Do you know how the apostle Paul won individuals to Christ? Not the way people attempt to do it today. He said, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save *some*" (I Cor. 9:22). When he talked to an unconverted Jew, do you suppose he spoke as a typical Christian, thinking he is "witnessing for Christ"? Do you suppose Paul said to the unconverted Jew: "Have you received Christ as your personal Savior? Oh, *won't* you just kneel with me right here, dear brother, and give your heart to the Lord?"

Or, do you suppose he said: "Look here, my Jewish sinner-friend, you're on the way to hell. Your religion is wrong. Every day you reject Christ as your Savior you are crucifying him afresh. You are worse than a thief or a murderer. I'm going to keep after you with my arguments, and drum

them into your stubborn ears, and beat them into that stiff, rebellious mind of yours until I *force* you to become a Christian."

No, that is not the way Paul spoke to Jews. Paul said: "Unto the Jews I became *as a Jew*" (I Cor. 9:20, 22). Paul spoke to others *from their point of view!* He talked to a Jew just like *another Jew*—from the *Jewish viewpoint*—showing sympathy and understanding of the *Jew's* way of looking at Christianity. They were hostile to the idea of Jesus being the promised Messiah. Paul did not arouse hostility—he put it down. He came to them as *one of them*, so that they were *sympathetic* toward him, not hostile. He became *as a Jew*, "that I might gain the Jews." Even so he

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gained only a small minority, yet it was a large number.

Perhaps you have had your eyes opened to the fact that sin is the transgression of God's law. Most professing Christians have been taught, and consequently sincerely believe, that "the law is done away." Paul was inspired to write that the carnal mind is hostile to God and to God's law, "it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). If you say to your unconverted mate who is hostile to God's law, "You're just a rebellious *sinner*, and your church is one of these false, worldly churches. You've got to *repent*, and obey God's Commandments"—you have not only aroused hostility, you have yourself been hostile, and you probably have broken up your marriage.

How did Paul talk to such people?

Listen: "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews. . . . To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (I Cor. 9:20, 22).

One of the first principles of successful advertising I learned early in my career is that to get results you must *first* learn the attitude of your reading audience toward whatever product or service you are advertising. You must not antagonize those whom you expect to persuade. You must approach them from *their* point of view—not from *yours*, especially if your viewpoint is contrary to theirs. To win them to *your* point of view, you must approach them from *their* viewpoint. Otherwise you only arouse hostility.

I know that these words are addressed to a very large number who have made this terrible mistake. That is why I have devoted so much space to this point.

If you believe God's truth, and your husband or wife does not, NEVER TALK RELIGION to him or her. If your mate normally thinks and speaks only of material and worldly things, then you must speak of material things

to your spouse. Don't try to make them read *The Plain Truth* or booklets. If our broadcast has, probably because of your own aggressiveness in trying to get your mate to listen, become a sore spot, tune into the television program when your mate is not around. Or go off to some private room to hear the radio program. Keep the volume turned down. *Make every effort NOT to antagonize* your husband or wife.

And again, when you *talk* about it, talk to God in prayer. Let your mate see your *good works*, in a manner that he or she will naturally approve. Avoid every hostility. Be *pleasant*. Keep *cheerful!* Be *happy!* Radiate JOY! Give LOVE and warm affection! Do everything to cause your husband or wife to *like* you! That is the Christian way! □