

“It has been quite a while since anyone has asked me whether it is possible to be both a Christian and a lawyer.”

By: Dani Shaw-Buchholz

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Yet for some, the debate goes on. Someone recently wrote to me to tell me he was receiving a lot of negative feedback concerning his desire to go into law. He asked the question: How can God use such a qualification to advance His kingdom?

There are many ways in which Christian lawyers can use their qualifications to advance God's kingdom. For the evangelists among us, that may take the form of sharing our faith with our clients or praying with and for them in the midst of difficult situations. For others, it may entail educating clients about the concepts of justice, mercy and forgiveness and helping them to make wise decisions when faced with legal challenges. The manner in which we make business decisions or career choices and the principles we apply when making those decisions are critical means of integrating faith and the practice of law. Additionally, advocating on behalf of disadvantaged or disenfranchised members of our society, critically examining existing laws and urging the adoption of just laws are further examples of ways in which we can fulfil our calling as lawyers while advancing Kingdom principles.

The simple fact that some of us work in so-called "secular" professions rather than traditional Christian ministries does not mean we cannot use our skills to advance the Kingdom of God. Living out the gospel in our professional lives and bringing a Biblical perspective to the work we do can be as important as asking our clients to repent and be baptized. As one CLF article states "We believe that law is a vital arena [a]ffecting all areas of life, and therefore, with God's calling comes the responsibility and stewardship of integrating faith and law." Escaping the influence or application of the law is a near-impossible task. Separating our faith from the practice of law ought also to be.

As a lawyer who works for a Christian organization, I cannot help but integrate my faith and the day-to-day practice of law. Questions such as how to terminate an employment relationship without undermining the dignity of the employee, how to effect reconciliation when relationships have become strained and how to encourage my client to keep its word are important places where faith and law can intersect. The advice that I give can promote healing, reconciliation and

advancement of God's Kingdom, or it can promote bitterness, resentment and an unholy digging in of one's heels.

On a policy level, lawyers are particularly well placed by virtue of their training and perhaps even their positions in the community to use their skills to advance God's Kingdom by advocating on behalf of the disadvantaged or disenfranchised. A read through the Bible makes it very clear that God is concerned about the widows and the orphans, the poor and the powerless. Lawyers, who are trained as advocates, ought to take seriously the commands of Psalm 82 to "defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed." The opportunities to use one's skills as a lawyer to advance the Kingdom of God are limitless. While we might not all be evangelists, the gospel can be proclaimed and the Kingdom advanced in thought, word and deed. Learning to articulate the gospel and advance the Kingdom through the legal profession can be challenging at times, but it is a challenge worth undertaking.