

## Misunderstandings about the Christian Worldview in Plural Society and Public Engagement

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### Abstract

This article explores Christian worldview as a central theme, especially within two contemporary scenarios in the context of Brazil: the present plurality of worldviews, and the growing engagement of Christians in the spheres of society. In the face of the first scenario, this paper argues that religious intolerance by Christians to other worldviews may reflect a misunderstanding about the comprehensiveness and truthfulness claim of the Christian worldview. In the second scenario, we argue that a misunderstanding of Christian worldview may confuse God's own action in the world with human effort to inaugurate the Kingdom of God. In response, we offer an alternative way, namely, the way of Christian witness. In this way, the praxis of Christian worldview in the face of the two scenarios presented is to witness the effects of the Kingdom to come, discerning the eschatological tension and the different characteristics of the already and the not yet.

Key words: Christian worldview, Plurality, Christian engagement, Spheres of Society, Brazil

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In the last fifty years the concept of Christian worldview has demonstrated its importance in contemporary theological debate, especially with regard to its proposal for a more integral and engaged Christianity in the world, serving as an important conceptual ally for *Missio Deo*, the Mission of God. In fact, much of the material we currently have on the subject was written and disseminated during this period,<sup>1</sup> mainly by evangelicals, who show interest in both Christian worldview and in underlying themes such as the Mission of God and the Kingdom of God.<sup>2</sup> This period of evangelical effervescence has given us books, articles, events, and institutions based on Christian worldview,<sup>3</sup> making the concept widely known and accepted among evangelicals. Some names that contributed to the discussion and dissemination of this theme were John Stott, Francis Schaeffer, Brian Walsh, Richard Middleton, Nancy Pearcey, David Naugle, James Sire, and Albert Wolters, among others.

The main purpose of this paper is to address the possibility of a misunderstanding about the concept of Christian worldview, when Christians find themselves in pluralist society with the challenge of being present in a way that is faithful to their articles of faith. To explore this problem we will use the following path. First, we will define what we mean by the term Christian worldview in order to clarify the discussion. Second, we will elaborate two possible

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<sup>1</sup> Despite major productions in this period, the first Protestant work to use the German term *Weltanschauung* (derived from Kant) is authored by James Orr, entitled *The Christian View of God and the World* (1893).

<sup>2</sup> As a landmark of evangelical interest we can cite the International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne in 1974, where important names in evangelicalism were present and actively assisted in the formulation of the Lausanne Covenant. In its turn, the Lausanne Covenant has become an important document that highlights a more comprehensive understanding of God's Mission and God's Kingdom.

<sup>3</sup> Examples of institutions are L'Abri and Youth With A Mission, founded (respectively) by Francis Schaeffer and Loren Cunningham.

misunderstandings of the concept from two scenarios, respectively: the plurality of worldviews and Christian engagement in the spheres of society. Third, we will offer a way forward, different from the noted possible misunderstandings, about the Christian worldview and its practical implications in society.

### What do we Mean by "Christian Worldview"?

Given that the concept of Christian worldview has many different approaches and different conceptual scopes, i.e., different currents that define it differently, we will use the definition derived from Albert Wolters, who states: worldview is "the comprehensive structure of a person's belief about things" (2006, p. 12). Although short, this formulation helps us understand the following propositions: every worldview is (a) a "structure" of "understanding" of reality (the "things"), which is grounded through (b) a certain belief (or beliefs). This means that the worldview, regardless of which one, is founded on the basis of beliefs, which alter the overall understanding of life and the world of the individuals who hold them. In other words, we can say that a worldview is the result of a set of basic<sup>4</sup> or fundamental beliefs (Wolters, 2006, p. 13) about the world in a more or less structured way. Thus, worldviews provide different ways of interpreting everything that exists, including the subjectivity of those who hold them.

In turn, the *Christian* worldview corresponds to the worldview that, founded under the beliefs of the revelation of the Triune God, Christians understand the reality around them. Unlike other religious worldviews, the Christian worldview is based on an ideal of conformity with beliefs derived from Scripture, and therefore we can also call it a *biblical* worldview (Wolters, 2006, p. 18-9). However, in order not to leave such a definition somewhat abstract, we suggest, with Albert Wolters, Michael Goheen and Craig Bartholomew, that such beliefs from Scripture present as their central themes the themes of *creation*, the *fall*, and *redemption*; all three on cosmic levels in their extension – not restricted to spiritual or ecclesiastical dimensions. It follows that individuals who hold the biblical worldview, have an integral view of these three themes, understanding the world from their perspective and not presupposing the existence of secular, i.e., godless realms (Wolters, 2006, p. 22-3; Goheen; Bartholomew, 2016).

In other words, we can say that the Christian worldview is theocentric and, therefore, prioritizes God and his Revelation as ontological data that guide the understanding of the world. However, not unlike other worldviews, which also claim the rank of ontological *status* for the basis of their beliefs (Sire, 2012, p. 189), the Christian worldview claims to be the "public, universally valid truth" (Goheen; Bartholomew, 2016, p. 26). It is in this sense that Christians who adhere to the concept of Christian worldview tend to see their faith in greater proportions, taking it on as a "comprehensive whole" (Naugle, 2017, p. 430).

It should be further emphasized that the Christian worldview is not merely a theoretical and abstract understanding, but a practical one that invites public engagement. Indeed, the Christian worldview necessarily implies a certain practical way of living consistent with its basic beliefs, since, as James Sire put it, "we live our worldview or it is not our worldview." (2012, p. 195). That is, the Christian worldview is not what individuals say about it, but what shows itself in its experiential and practical dimension in the lives of Christians. The reason for this is that the very function of the worldview in individuals is less *descriptive* and more *normative*, functioning as a practical guide to life (Goheen; Bartholomew, 2016, p. 54). Furthermore, the

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<sup>4</sup> By *core beliefs* we want to highlight the difference between *common beliefs*, such as the belief that a certain soccer team will win the championship, and *basic beliefs*, which radically alter the individual's way of life because they serve as a foundation, such as the belief in Jesus.

Christian worldview also provides a "missional impulse" for Christians, that is, it serves as a viable and credible alternative to current social demands, as was the case for Abraham Kuyper in his engagement in public and political life from the Christian worldview (Goheen; Bartholomew, 2016, p. 58).

Thus, we can say that the statements made so far certainly reveal a *public, objective, comprehensive, and necessarily practical* character of the Christian faith; elements that are present in the concept of Christian worldview. In this way, we highlight the indispensable place of the Christian worldview in current debates and echo the statement of David Naugle, who says that understanding Christianity as a worldview "has been one of the most significant developments in recent church history" (2017, p. 29).

So, in sum, in a theoretical way, the concept provides a holistic view, in its "cosmic dimensions and universal applications of faith" (Naugle, 2017, p. 30). And in a practical way, the concept also serves as a firm foundation for Christians to engage in culture and academic life for the glory of God (2017, p. 30).

### **Exploring Two Possible Misunderstandings**

After aligning the concept of Christian worldview and its practical implications, we will now look at two of its possible misunderstandings, starting from two scenarios in today's society: the plurality of worldviews and Christian engagement in the spheres of society. The first scenario is the issue of the plurality of worldviews present in Western society today. In this scenario the Christian challenge is at the same time to remain faithful to basic beliefs, in tension with other worldviews, without insisting on removing them from social life. The second scenario is the engagement of Christians in the various social spheres, with the challenge of a presence and transformation faithful to the Scriptures, without being carried away by a secular project of power. Thus, we will analyze individually how the concept of Christian worldview can be misunderstood in each of these scenarios.

#### **The Christian Worldview in a Plurality of Worldviews**

It is common ground that we currently live in a condition of intense plurality in various aspects of human life: lifestyles, aesthetic preferences, morality, various religions and beliefs, all present in the same social spaces. Behind all these pluralities lie a plurality of worldviews, each with its own plausibility structure.<sup>5</sup> As we have seen, worldviews are responsible for transmitting different notions about the world to people, leading to great disagreement and a real conflict<sup>6</sup> of inevitable social interests. However, even in this scenario, such social plurality does not change the fact that the Christian worldview claims to have the truth of Scripture, as we have seen above. Thus, we find ourselves with the challenge of answering: what misunderstanding can occur in the face of this scenario of plurality when we take into account the Christian worldview and all its comprehensiveness?

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<sup>5</sup> I refer here to the term coined by Peter Berger (1985). Berger explains that, in the pluralistic social dynamic in which different worldviews coexist, each one of them conquers a certain structure that keeps it plausible, making it endure and not disappear by becoming obsolete, both at the subjective level (in the consciousness of individuals), and at the objective level in society.

<sup>6</sup> For detailed discussion of the conflict of worldviews, see Ronald Nash in his work entitled *Conflicting Worldviews* (2012).

First, we need to recognize that in this pluralistic scenario the Christian worldview must deal, more than ever, with tolerance<sup>7</sup> of other worldviews, especially religious ones. Otherwise, the first misunderstanding of the Christian worldview can be generated: religious *intolerance* and *proselytism*. That is, through the conviction that the Christian worldview represents the most adequate understanding of the world, one can mistakenly understand that the Christian presence in the world must be intolerant towards others who do not share the same perspective. This misunderstanding can take place when, driven by the evangelistic impulse to present the good news, Christians misunderstand their role toward non-Christians. A well-known case in Brazil is of the great opposition and intolerance by evangelicals to African matrix religions, even motivating attacks on "Umbanda terreiros" with the aim of removing them from their place of worship in God's name (Zarur, 2019).<sup>8</sup> However, even in this case, we recognize that it is not an error of the Christian worldview per se, but in the understanding of individuals who were mistaken in misunderstanding the scope and claim of the truth of the Christian faith.

Secondly and in contrast, we can say that God has commissioned his children to proclaim the good news in love so that those who believe may also become his children (cf. Jn. 1. 12-14), but has not given them the task of trying to remove other competing worldviews from society through intolerance and proselytism. Here it is worth noting that the challenge of every religion is no different from the Christian challenge in a pluralistic society. Therefore, in the terms of the political scientist David Koyzis, we need to apply a certain *provisional justice* so that there is freedom for the different worldviews to live together in such a society:

This provisional justice means that even if we disagree with the other on basic and fundamental matters about the nature of the world, about our place in it, and about our responsibility to God and neighbor, we are still obliged to protect their freedom to believe and, to some extent, to practice their belief in everyday life. Our willingness to protect this religious freedom is not derived from indifference nor from a skepticism about our own beliefs, but from the recognition that in the present age, to use the expression coined by Newbigin, God wants to provide a space and a time for people freely to surrender to his kingdom. (Koyzis, 2014, p. 247-8)

Thus, we perceive that the Christian does not deny his faith publicly by affirming the right of coexistence with other worldviews; on the contrary, by affirming it with all the weight of his convictions in the public square, he also allows other religions to do the same. We can also put the same issue in other terms, as the theologian Miroslav Volf does when he denounces what he considers a *flaw* in the Christian religion, namely, the *coercion of faith*. He claims that "in this case, faith is not idle, but active - hyperactive in fact - imposing itself and oppressing those who do not want it" (2018, p. 35). This coercive oppression occurs, according to the theologian, as a type of violence<sup>9</sup> when Christians misunderstand their role in the world, confusing themselves with God's role in the final judgment. As a consequence, "they would mistakenly shift violence from the end times to the present time in which God explicitly avoids the use of violence to enable repentance" (2018, p. 71). That is, because of a possible misunderstanding, in place of the proclamation of the good news as a possibility to better understand the world,

<sup>7</sup> Aware that the tradition of religious tolerance begins in philosophy with John Locke, we will only work with evangelical authors, since we will treat the subject panoramically without further pretensions.

<sup>8</sup> These cases, already emblematic in Brazil, mark some even greater absurdities, such as the case of drug dealers who declare themselves evangelicals and order the destruction of terreiros of other religions (Bustamente, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> The term violence for him does not necessarily have to do with physical violence, but any kind of symbolic violent manifestation of an individual or group towards others.

God, and life (through the Christian worldview), an *ethos of violence*, albeit symbolic, may emerge that does not respect other worldviews and their proper place in society.

In the same way, John Stott elaborates a critique that should be placed in our discussion. In exploring also the theme of social pluralism, Stott develops the argument that there are three responses that Christians can adopt in the face of this reality. The first is about the path of imposition, in which Christians "with a commendable zeal for God" who believe deeply in His truth and will, end up wanting "society to reflect them" (2019, p. 82). Therefore, Christians want to impose, in various ways, including politically and legally, their worldview. However, Stott considers this response, while honest from the standpoint of valuing truth, a "foolish and nostalgic longing" for a "Christendom that disappeared long ago" (2019, p. 84). The second is the exact opposite, that is, it is about *laissez-faire*, which considers all worldviews equal and without authority over each other. This would be a tolerant attempt to make all worldviews coexist, but devoid of truth because it does not take into account that God has revealed his truth in Christ (2019, p. 85). Thus, Stott rejects both of these responses. In his words:

... the biblical doctrine of God and that of human beings guide our conduct in a pluralistic society, the former excluding *laissez-faire*, the latter excluding imposition. Because God is who he is, we cannot be indifferent when his truth and law are disrespected, but because human beings are who they are, we cannot impose them. (2019, p. 88)

And finally, we have the path of persuasion, which Stott considers the best way. According to him, better than the previous two extremes is argumentation aimed at persuasion.<sup>10</sup> "What, then, should Christians do?" he asks, while answering, "We should try to educate the public conscience to know and desire the will of God" (2019, p. 88).

Up to this point we are already able to perceive that the scenario of a plurality of worldviews leads to the challenge of rethinking the role of the Christian toward non-Christians in society. We argue that a mistaken way of understanding this relationship would be the path of religious intolerance (even when this is driven by zeal to defend the truth), or the path of a proselytism that does not respect the due spaces of other worldviews (even when its impetus is the preaching of the good news). Therefore, in agreement with Koyzis, Volf and Stott, we affirm that in a plurality of worldviews the approach most consistent with the Christian worldview is neither to withhold religious freedom from non-Christians, nor to resort to any possible coercions of faith, both of which would only lead to a misunderstanding of the Christian worldview and its all-embracing truth.

### **The Christian Worldview and Christian Engagement in the Spheres of Society**

In addition to the evident reality that we live in the midst of a plurality of worldviews, we can also observe the growing engagement of Christians in the various spheres of society in recent decades. As an example, we cite the involvement of evangelicals in party politics in Brazil, which grows significantly with each legislature, since the mentality of *withdrawal from the world* has been replaced by the mentality of *religious influence in politics* (Nascimento, 2018, p. 50-4). Indeed, Christian engagement in the world, whether in politics, the marketplace, the media, among other fields of society, seems to be a constituent (and indispensable) part of

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<sup>10</sup> This formula of Christian public engagement through rational discourse and intellectual debate strikes us as incomplete, in consideration of James K. A. Smith's *You Are What You Love* (2017). Smith highlights the influence of loves and desires, rather than rationality, on human choice. Still, the Stott way is not intolerant, serving as a good methodological and practical approach.

God's Mission and needs the development of a Christian worldview that provides the proper foundation for this engagement (Goheen; Bartholomew, 2018, p. 60). Thus, we assert that the Christian worldview has an unparalleled capacity for transformation; first in Christian individuals, then in society and culture at large, due to its intellectual coherence, comprehensiveness, and practicality (Naugle, 2017, p. 431). However, in this scenario of engaging Christians in the spheres of society through the Christian worldview, a second misunderstanding may arise: a desire for an improper domination of the social spheres. That is, if misunderstood, the Christian worldview can be mistaken as a kind of tool of secular domination, so to speak, that is associated with the idea of a supposed implementation of the Kingdom of God on earth.<sup>11</sup>

First of all, we must say that this discussion, although recent, has been held in Brazil due to the appearance of some theological trends that emphasize a type of improper domination of the spheres of society. That is, these theologies, called in articles "*theology of domination*" and "*theology of the seven mountains*" are characterized in this way because they make Christian engagement a way to maintain ecclesiastical and social powers (Cunha, 2019; Oliveira, 2020). Among the main actors of these actions are Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals, which have great political penetration. Sociologist Paul Freston calls this phenomenon "corporatism" of Pentecostal evangelicals (Freston, 2020), while sociologist Ricardo Mariano says that both Pentecostals and Catholics are equally in the dispute for the occupation of the public sphere (Mariano, 2011). However, as the present article does not wish to make evaluations in the field of law or political philosophy, but wishes to make theological notes, we need to see how these evangelical actions can trigger a second misunderstanding about the Christian worldview.

As evidence that such misunderstanding has already occurred, an article in the Brazilian newspaper *The Intercept*, written by Túlio Gustavo, posits an alleged plan of "evangelical domination" in Brazil. For Gustavo, this domination plan has as its foundation the "theology of the seven mountains," which in turn is anchored in the "Christian worldview" (Gustavo, 2019). Although in our view this article is mistaken in its propositions, what draws our attention is the identification made in it between the Christian worldview and theologies and actions that aim at an improper domination in society.<sup>12</sup> Why does this occur? As in the first scenario, we can say that the problem does not lie in the concept of the Christian worldview *per se*, but in possible misunderstandings about it. In this case, the article cited above serves to show us that there must be a careful engagement of Christians in social spheres, since mere engagement without qualification can generate undue results,<sup>13</sup> invalidating even other Christian actions beneficial to society.

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<sup>11</sup> At this particular point several underlying discussions may arise, as the concepts of the *Kingdom of God*, *social spheres*, *political and religious domination*, are discussed not only by theology, but by political philosophy and the social sciences as well. Aware of this, this article will only explore the topic of the Christian worldview in its relation to the Kingdom of God and a possible misunderstanding of the relationship between the two.

<sup>12</sup> In other articles in the same newspaper, other authors say that the Neo-Calvinist tradition is responsible for also trying to dominate politics in Brazil, because of the comprehensive ideas of worldview in Kuyper's writings. However, a careful reading will show that neither Kuyper, nor the rest of the neo-Calvinist tradition has as a desire the social domination of the spheres, but a plural and acceptable coexistence in the public spheres, as explicitly shown by the researcher Thiago Moreira (2020, p. 24).

<sup>13</sup> We are calling all Christian actions in the public sphere that do not work for the common good and for the glory of God "improper domains." As Bartholomew says, when it comes to engagement in culture, Christians need to be fully equipped with the Christian worldview with the aim of the good of the world and the glory of God (2017, p. 130).

Second, to explore this problem, we argue that this second misunderstanding easily happens when Christian engagement is conflated with the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth - or, put another way, with the human task in God's Mission. Craig Bartholomew says it well. Bartholomew criticizes "messianic activism" saying that "we mistakenly appropriate the vision of progress central to modernity and think that if *we* just work hard enough we will usher in the kingdom in our generation" (2017, p. 123-4). In other words, when Christian engagement attempts to inaugurate the kingdom of God *through its own labor power*, the result is improper engagement that has nothing to do with the Christian worldview, but a supposedly messianic activism.

Furthermore, this misunderstanding may also be related to the question of the missional task - that is, what is the human role in God's Mission. In the most recent formulations about *God's Mission*,<sup>14</sup> not only *evangelism* and spiritual conversions, but every kind of action that God is doing in the world toward the restoration of his creation can be considered part of Mission (Goheen; Bartholomew, 2017, p. 240). In this sense, God acts in all aspects of life and even in all spheres of society.

However, from this broader understanding of Mission derives a theocentric rather than anthropocentric notion of Mission and the Kingdom of God. That is, God's Mission does not place under human beings the task of inaugurating the Kingdom on earth by their hard work in social spheres, rather, "Jesus indicates that the kingdom does not come by force or coercion, but rather by the fragility of a message about the kingdom" (Goheen; Bartholomew, 2016, p. 210). This, of course, neither excludes nor discourages Christian engagement in society, but corrects this second misunderstanding through the exchange of imperatives. Instead of unduly *dominating* (in order to maintain a certain *status quo* or political power), Christians recognize their task in the Mission by *servicing* in love. In this sense, we can fully agree with Jim Stier who says, "as followers of Christ, they [Christians] will influence all spheres, not in a spirit of control, but through service in love. This is God's way" (2008, p. 531). Not for nothing, it can be observed that Jesus teaches his disciples that, unlike the rulers of peoples who dominate and exercise power over nations, among them the logic would be reversed: whoever wants to be important, let him be their slave in service (cf. Mt. 20.24-28).

### Discerning the Times as Witnesses

In contemporary scenarios of worldview plurality and Christian engagement in the spheres of society, misunderstandings about the Christian worldview can arise, of which we cited two. However, we see a possible way for Christians to deal with the challenge of both scenarios. Toward this way forward, we first make a theological note about eschatological tension and its implications for Christian worldview, since it will help us on the proposed way forward.

By "eschatological tension" we refer to the tension present in Scripture between the "already" and the "not yet" of the kingdom of God.<sup>15</sup> This term is used to demonstrate that, on the one

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<sup>14</sup> Leslie Newbigin proposes that Mission is not just about the activities coming from Christians, as missions and evangelism used to be understood. For him, Mission is *Missio Dei* and is therefore what God is doing in the world in partnership with his people. Thus, evangelism is as much a part of Mission as welfare is (2016). Said differently by other authors, God is restoring his fallen creation, and his Mission consists of that, and not just taking people to heaven, as was previously understood (Bartholomew; Goheen, 2017).

<sup>15</sup> Originally the terms "already" and "not yet" were coined by Oscar Cullmann, who developed the concept of eschatological tension. However, in this present text, we are using them from the theologians Michael Goheen and Craig Bartholomew who apply them to the idea of the biblical narrative (or Scriptural Drama) divided into six acts of history.

hand, the kingdom is *already* here, due to Christ's death and resurrection which inaugurated a new beginning of history. However, on the other hand, this kingdom *has not yet* fully arrived for us, since it awaits the return of Christ for its full consummation. It follows from this that we currently live in an *intermediate* time between the *present time* and the *time to come*, that is, between the already and the not yet (Goheen; Bartholomew, 2017, p. 229).

Thus, given the two scenarios explored so far in this article, it is vital for us to recognize that Christians face a tension that will have no full resolution until the messianic return of Christ and his final judgment occur. In other words, the eschatological tension poses a dilemma for the Christian worldview: while Christians coexist with other worldviews that conflict with their interests in society, as well as engage in social spheres in which individuals with diverse worldviews inhabit, they also claim that the Christian worldview is the most appropriate way to view the world, "after all, the Bible claims to be nothing less than God's own true story about our world" (Goheen; Bartholomew, 2017, p. 28). How to deal with this paradoxical dimension of the Christian faith?

To answer this final question, we argue for two elements that mark the implications of the Christian worldview in the two scenarios explored: discernment of the present time and its difference from the time to come; and Christian witness as a plausible path of Christian engagement. Let us look at the two individually.

First, we consider that discerning the times is a fundamental part of understanding the implications of the Christian worldview today. That is, recognizing that the present time is marked by eschatological tension can help correct both misunderstandings, so that Christians can discern the efforts necessary to live between the already and the not yet without falling into the temptation to "resolve" the eschatological tension *artificially*. Jim Stier's warning may clarify the issue:

If we try to impose a "*final solution*" on society, we run the risk of using the institutions of power in an evil way to persecute those who oppose us. History is replete with such cases. We must disciple the nations with the spirit and methods of Jesus. He could have annihilated any opposition, but instead he died. ... Though no one saw it, his Kingdom had won. (Stier, 2008, p. 532)

This "final solution" mentioned by Stier is equivalent to the artificial realization of God's *eschaton*, that is, the attempt of the consummation of the Kingdom of God without the return of Jesus Christ. As an example, we can cite the appropriations that both political liberals and socialists have made of the doctrine of Christian eschatology throughout political history – as has been widely noted by Charles Taylor and Giorgio Agamben (Dulci, 2018, p. 184). For Pedro Dulci, such political appropriations have attempted to transform the Christian waiting for Jesus into secular hopes for a kingdom without the *eschaton*. However, in the evangelical field the "messianic activism" criticized by Goheen and Bartholomew may have a similar result to these political appropriations. In the words of the theologians, "pernicious frenetic activism can develop in committed Christians, mirroring the idolatrous efforts within the humanist culture that surrounds us" (2016, p. 51). In other words, without the insight that the present time is distinct from the time to come, attempts can occur to produce an immanent eschatology, so to speak. One who captures exactly this point of our objection is again Pedro Dulci, when he says:

Within the Christian worldview it is simply impossible to equate the ultimate expectations of divine redemption with the political anticipations within arm's

reach. Every time a Christian individual or group believes for even a moment that it is possible for us to implement God's reign in any sphere of life, these people lose communion with the tradition of orthodox Christianity. (2018, p. 184)

In this way, we consider that discerning the times, recognizing the eschatological tension without falling into the temptation of "resolving" it, can be a great contribution to the Christian task in both contemporary scenarios. However, this does not yet configure another way that encourages Christian engagement in a manner consistent with the Christian worldview.

Therefore, in the second place, we want to offer the way of Christian *witness* as a plausible way forward. This way seems more in line with the Christian perception of reality revealed in Scripture; the imperative to *witness* is the element that characterizes the period of history in which the Church finds itself,<sup>16</sup> since it is called to witness to the Kingdom to come in the present time (Goheen; Bartholomew, 2017, p. 243). Again with Goheen and Bartholomew, we state the following, "If we believe that Jesus is Lord, we need to *bear witness* about the lordship of Christ in all areas of human life and culture" (2016, p. 191). In the practice of witnessing, then, the concept of Christian worldview is expressed in a manner consistent with its content.

It is worth highlighting that we use the term witness not in the limited sense as a synonym for verbal testimony or any other more specific (or limited) connotation of it. Rather, the term means understanding life and the world as spaces for witnessing "about God's restorative power" (Goheen; Bartholomew, 2017, p. 243). In summary, we can state:

Witness will mean embodying God's renewing power in politics and citizenship, in economics and business, in education and academic study, in family and neighborhood, in media and art, in leisure and entertainment. (Goheen; Bartholomew, 2017, p. 243)

Stated this way, such Christian witness fits the Christian worldview, especially as Christians face a plurality of worldviews and pursue Christian engagement in social spheres.

### Conclusion

Christian witness better answers the imperative of finding a praxis consistent with the Christian worldview. Since other worldviews are (and will be) present in society as long as the consummation of the centuries does not occur, Christian witness will remain a faithful expression of Christian action in the contemporary world. Thus, we agree with Albert Wolters when the theologian reaffirms the centrality of the concept of Christian worldview:

All zealous Christians, in whatever areas they are called to exercise their responsibilities, must take the issue of the biblical worldview seriously and orient both their thinking and their action accordingly. To ignore the issue is to deny the practical relevance of Scripture to most of our common life. (2006, p. 127)

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<sup>16</sup> The Vatican's interreligious dialogue council also describes witness as a way to deal with the multi-religious presence in today's world. In contemporary Roman Catholic understanding, Christian witness involves principles such as acting in God's love, rejecting violence and coercion, respecting all people, and encouraging freedom of belief (Vatican, 2011). We consider, beyond any theological disagreement, that this document translates, in a biblical way, the concerns raised here.

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