

JULY 23, 2018



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## *Five Wrong Views* PART 4: Believers Should Do Evangelism *and* Not Politics



**T**HIS WEEK WE ARRIVE AT THE fourth wrong view of Church and State: The idea that believers should be involved in evangelism only and not politics.

The short of what's wrong with this view is this: if every believer adhered to this somewhat popular Evangelical teaching, there would be no believers in office! There would be no salt and light influence in a representative form of government.

I used to give credence to this camp, but that began to change some years ago when I personally witnessed the leading advocate of this position, a megachurch pastor in Southern California, rally his congregation to come out for a city council meeting where the decision would be made whether the Christian college he was the president of, would be granted a land use permit to construct a memorial chapel in his name. This glaring

*Continued on page 2*

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### Weekly Bible Studies

CABINET: 7:00 AM Wednesdays, Location Undisclosed. *Light Refreshments Served.*

SENATE: 8:00 AM Tuesdays, Rotating Offices of Senators. *Hot Breakfast Served.*

HOUSE: 9-10 PM Tuesdays, Capitol Hill Club, Main Dining Room. *Dessert Served.*



## ■ CAPITOL MINISTRIES UPDATE

## Technology Drives Michigan Ministry Leader's "Windshield Ministry"



REV. DEAN MATHIS, CM's Ministry Leader to Michigan legislators, has been ingenious with the use of technology from the beginning of his ministry.

When his discipleship ministry started in 2012, Rev. Mathis soon learned that the majority of legislators from Michigan's lower peninsula commute to the centrally-located Capitol, and that a long-standing legislators-only Bible study was already well established.

Undaunted, and with the help of a volunteer, Rev. Mathis recorded his Bible studies on CDs so legislators may listen to them on the drive to and from Lansing. He called the Bible study on wheels his "Windshield Ministry."

Rev. Mathis hand-delivers the CDs so that he may personally meet with legislators and pray with and for them. In 2017 he delivered 1,185 Bible studies, which represents as many personal visits, and in the first 8 weeks of session in 2018, he has delivered 330 Bible studies to legislators.

And now he is learning that CDs are quickly becoming outdated. Some vehicles don't even have CD players, and so he is rethinking his delivery method.

"I am working on an app that would allow people to access my Bible studies from my website and listen to them from their phones or other devices," Rev. Mathis said. "I hope to build in a dictating component, so the study may be turned into text that can either be printed or downloaded."

*Continued on page 5*

incongruity collided with my growing realization that I could not minister to believers in the California Capitol if deep down I believed they were out of step with God's will — having become involved in the political process in a representative form of civil government. I realize both of these are anecdotal arguments; nonetheless those experiences opened me up to thinking through to the other side of this debate and studying the Word on this matter with a lessened predisposition.

Today I come down on the side that believers are to be involved in politics versus being against it, or isolated from it. What follows are the biblical arguments for participation in the State in ways beyond evangelism.

Ralph Drollinger

## I. INTRODUCTION

**T**he fact that believers should affect the *world* in which they live (versus isolate themselves from it) is evident from the Sermon on the Mount. Note Matthew 5:13-16:

*"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine*

*before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."*

When Jesus lights a *lamp* — when He brings an individual to true saving faith in Himself — what results is a person who will *give light to all who are in the house*. This is not difficult to decipher from this passage. The word *house* (v.15) is another way of expressing two previously used words in the passage. This simply means a believer will affect people on the *earth* (v. 13a), people in the *world* (v. 14a). This passage teaches that it is normative for believers to affect the physical *earth/world* or "land" in which they live in the here and now.

But notice the progression of this



passage: Verses 13-16 as quoted above, come after verses 1-12, which are commonly known as Jesus' Beatitudes. The Beatitudes teach concise virtues (listed in the opening portion of His Sermon on the Mount) that are emblematic of His mature followers; i.e., character qualities such as *gentleness* (5:5), *righteousness* (5:6, 10), *mercifulness* (5:7), *purity* (5:8), etc. Per the progressive nature of this passage, one's manifestations of *salt* and *light* (similitudes expressing the idea that believers are to be preservers and illuminators in the *earth/world*) will be in direct proportion to the degree these previously listed characteristics inhabit the believer. The point is this: over the long run, one cannot affect his surroundings in a godly way unless he first possesses godly character.

### WHO ONE IS AND HOW ONE AFFECTS HIS WORLD ARE INTRINSICALLY INTERTWINED

Such an interpretation of the meaning of this passage is supported by the following key grammatical understandings. First, the twice-used verbs at the beginning of verses 13 and 14 are *You are* (*humeis este*). These verbs are present active *indicatives* in the Greek language. That is in contrast to them being imperative verbs, or put another way, commands from Jesus. This is a subtle but important distinction. It means one is Christ-influencing in culture (agents of the preservation and illumination of truth) to the degree one

is mature in the Savior. Jesus is not saying, "Be *salt* and *light*!" Rather, He is teaching that to the degree one internally manifests Christ-likeness is the degree to which one will externally affect his *world*, or in the case of the capital community, its people and its laws.

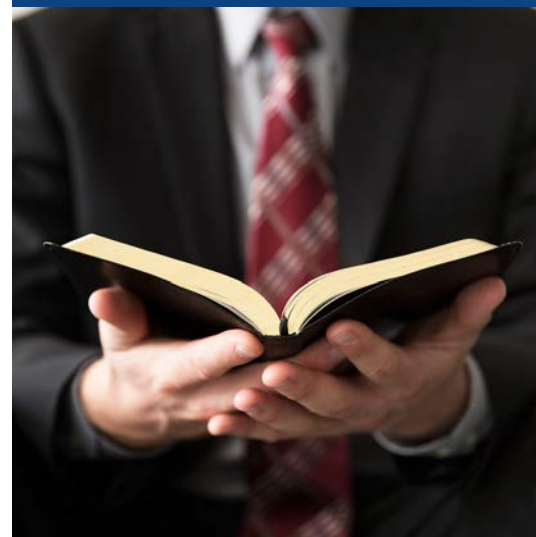
Why is this so important? Jesus is not saying "you must be *salt* and *light*!" Jesus is not speaking in the imperative here. Rather the use of *you are* means this: *you are preserving and illuminating in society to the degree you are beatitudinal! You are* is based on what Jesus has already said in the Sermon on the Mount! Indicative of beatitudinal character — always connected to Christ-like maturity — is preservation and illumination manifestations in the *world* today! There is no way around this plain meaning and connection in this passage. Such is the cadence of this passage.

Secondly, notice in the original language, the beginning of the next verse, verse 16. The adverb at the start of the passage further evidences Jesus' sequential thinking relative to what He has previously delineated. In the passage, "*Let your light shine before men in such a way,*" the phrase "*...in such a way,*" (*houtos*) means "in this way," or "thus." The verb "*shine*" (*lampo*) is an imperative, meaning God is commanding you: in other words, our light must shine in this way. And what is that way? That others see your godly character and your resulting cultural preservation and illumination. What

#### ♥ VERSE OF THE WEEK

### Matthew 5:13-16

*"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."*



*Cultural participation in the world is a necessary ingredient to becoming an effective witness!*



George Washington



*"I now make it my earnest prayer that God would . . . most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of the mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion."*

— George Washington, first President of the United States; Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army; member of the Continental Congress; President of the Constitutional Convention; 'Father of His Country'; judge.

George Washington, *The Last Official Address of His Excellency George Washington to the Legislature of the United States* (Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin, 1783), p. 12; see also *The New Annual Register or General Repository of History, Politics, and Literature, for the Year 1783* (London: G. Robinson, 1784), p. 150.

## PART 4: Believers Should Do Evangelism *and* Not Politics

results is that others *glorify your father who is in heaven*. That's to say, following this formula, you become a powerful witness in a fallen *world*! Here is a graphic summation:



Personal spiritual maturation will be *indicated* by one's cultural participation which then testifies of God in an onlooking *world*. This progression reveals the biblical formula for having an effective testimony — glorifying God — in a fallen world.

Summarily of the introduction, to those who say, "The believer should only be about evangelism in the political arena," this passage evidences their omission of a vital and necessary step: Cultural participation in the *world* is a necessary ingredient to becoming an effective witness! (Cf. 1Corinthians 9:21-23)

### CAN ANY EVANGELIST BE EFFECTIVE WHO SHUNS CONNECTING TO ANOTHER'S WORLD?<sup>2</sup>

The thought that one should be all about evangelism with no cultural engagement is a biblical misnomer. Matthew 5 does not support that

idea; Jesus Himself does not support that idea. This passage lends to correcting such thinking. One cannot eliminate the necessary need for the believer to be a preserver and illuminator on the *earth* and in the *world* if he desires to be a good evangelist. As if this introductory argument were insufficient, what follows are eight additional biblically supported reasons as to why believers should be involved in politics.

## II. EVANGELISM ONLY IS TOO NARROW AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE MISSION OF JESUS

In the Great Commission passage of Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commands His followers to teach others more than just the truths of the Gospel (as primary and important as that is to the mission of Jesus). He teaches believers to go way beyond evangelism and *make disciples*. How is the believer to do that? By "*...teaching [others] to observe all that I commanded you.*" Paul echoes the necessary breadth of instruction above and beyond the truths of the Gospel when he said to the Ephesian Elders, "*For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God*" (Acts 20:27). Paul said regarding all of his biblical writings, *The things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.* (1Corinthians 14:37). Peter said regarding his "more than salvation teachings": *that you should remember... the commandments of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles* (2Peter 3:2). Accordingly, Jesus



wants others to know *all* of His instruction. That means He wants His followers to learn about marriage, family, church, commerce, and government. Such is required to *make disciples* (which is the main *command* of the Great Commission). Conclusively, while the primacy of Jesus' mission is to convert the lost, the entirety of His message encompasses *making disciples*.

### Myopic Thinking

That the believer should only evangelize political leaders (and not get involved in politics) represents ultra-myopic thinking. It follows that the evangelist would need to counsel his convert to immediately leave office! If an evangelist won every elected leader to Christ the government would have to shut down!

So, what does Jesus teach — what is *the whole counsel of God* (NKJV) — regarding civil government? Among other things this: He Himself created it (Genesis 1:26; Colossians 1:16); He ordained it (Romans 13:1); He sustains it (Colossians 1:17); and it is intended to moralize a fallen *world* (Romans 13:4). In addition to His saving grace, Jesus' purposes, compelled by a heart of compassion for the lost (Matthew 9:36), manifest common grace and restraining grace to all of His creation through this ordained institution (cf. Matthew 5:45b). How great is His love!

The aforementioned descriptors and supporting passages clearly reveal

that Jesus has a purpose for the institution of government that is in addition to evangelism. Accordingly, when one of the leading advocates for the "All evangelism, no politics" viewpoint states:

[Jesus] did not come to earth to make the old creation moral through social and governmental reform but to make new creatures (His people) holy through the saving power of the gospel and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup>

He is propagating too narrow an understanding of the mission of Jesus! What this author says does not represent the whole counsel of God relative to His purposes for His institution of civil government! As primary the role of evangelism is by the believer to government, there must always be the aforementioned broader understanding of Jesus' teachings regarding this institution. The believer must be about teaching *all* that Scripture says about civil government and even more specifically, teaching these truths to civil government leaders!

In a parallel and expansive sense, to say that Jesus' overall purpose and mission was solely about salvation is to imply that Jesus possesses no instruction about marriage, family, church, or commerce either.

Another error of this same influential Christian author is his tendency to spiritualize away the importance

*Continued from page 2*

"We are exploring ways to keep current as far as technology goes," he said. "All that is in the hopper and not finished yet, but I'm working on it."

To maintain that personal contact which is so important in ministry, Rev. Mathis will write a one-page synopsis of the upcoming Bible study that he will hand-deliver to legislators.

Even though they hold positions of power and high-visibility, legislators often feel cut-off, and nearly everyone they know wants something from them.

"That face-to-face contact provides the opportunity to support legislators because they tend to get isolated," he said. "I encourage them, support them, tell them the Lord loves them, and offer the spiritual help they need. I also help them learn from God's Word the wisdom they need to do a good job as legislators."

Dealing with anxiety is one of the studies Rev. Mathis has written this year, based on Philippians 4:6:

***Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.***

The next week when he visited one legislator's office, her staff told Dr. Mathis she hadn't waited for the drive home to hear the lesson: "When she got that study she said, 'I need this! I'm going to listen to this right now!'"

As beneficial as technology is, it doesn't replace a face-to-face Bible study. Rev. Mathis is still planning to plant a mid-week Bible study that is not in direct competition with the one already established.

"There is an unreached people group in the legislature who I hope to reach through a sit-down study and I need prayer support because I will have to open some doors to get that done." **cm**



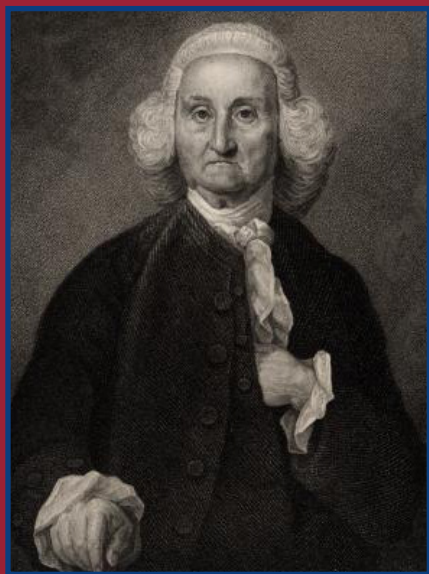
■ ENDORSEMENT

## The Late Jerry Falwell



*“The Capitol Ministries dream has the greatest potential of making a difference in America of anything I have encountered.”*

Jonathan Trumbull



*“The examples of holy men teach us that we should seek Him with fasting and prayer, with penitent confession of our sins, and hope in His mercy through Jesus Christ the Great Redeemer.”*

— Jonathan Trumbull, judge; legislator; Governor of Connecticut; confidant of George Washington, who called him ‘Brother Jonathan.’

Jonathan Trumbull, *Proclamation for a Day of Fasting and Prayer*, March 9, 1774.

of good civil government relative to the propagation of the Gospel. He states:

The ideal human government can ultimately do nothing to advance God’s kingdom, and the worst, most despotic worldly government in the end cannot halt the power of the Holy Spirit or the spread of God’s Word.<sup>4</sup>

In an ultimate sense and in view of the grandeur and sovereignty of God, what is said here is true. But is this a tenable argument for noninvolvement in civil government by believers? One does not have to be much of a student of current geopolitics, history, or historic missions to know that Middle Eastern countries, North Korea, Cuba and Russia, among others, have suppressed the growth of the Body of Christ to a much greater degree than non-suppressive countries. How many missionaries have come forth relative to the cause of Christ from the aforementioned lands? Practically speaking why have 90% of missions in the past century been funded by America? Should believers be involved in politics if for no other reason than to keep missionary-sending countries missionary-sending countries for the purposes of spreading God’s Word? The ideal country can advance God’s Kingdom more so than a nonideal country.

**GOOD GOVERNMENT IS  
THEREFORE IMPORTANT  
TO ACHIEVE AND MAINTAIN  
IF FOR NO OTHER REASON**

## THAN THE FULFILLMENT OF THE GREAT COMMISSION

The present and historic impetus for much of the fulfillment of the Great Commission stems from countries that honor freedom. That means the believer’s role in sustaining a country’s health and well-being is a noble and important task and is certainly in keeping with *all that* Jesus *commanded* us.

When America overthrew Saddam Hussain in Iraq, the subsequent new constitution included an article which provides for freedom of religion! In keeping with that same line of thinking, how wonderful would it be if President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence negotiated freedom of religion with North Korea as part of the denuclearization agreement and opened that country to Christianity as well as to the rest of the world! Both serve to illustrate how the State can positively affect the mission of the Church!

To illustrate one of many possible results from living by too narrow an understanding of the mission of Jesus, radio preachers must now edit their radio broadcasts in Canada so as to not include any mention of Romans 1. This life-changing book addresses the severity of sin, the principle of justification, the importance of faith, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, among many other major issues of faith. This is due to new Canadian laws influenced not by Christians. What will become of the great ra-



dio ministries in America that have so affected our culture for good and evangelized the lost<sup>5</sup> if the laws, unaffected by Christian influence, also begin to prohibit the Church from evangelizing here?

### GOVERNMENTS INDEED DO FACILITATE OR ELSE HINDER THE ADVANCE OF GOD'S KINGDOM

Again, and worth repeating, should believers be involved in civil government if only for the sake of the Great Commission? Yes! Church leaders should applaud, respect, support, sustain, prepare and elect more Christian political leaders to work hard (amongst other things) to preserve the preachers' freedoms to propagate the Gospel.

### CHRISTIAN LEGISLATORS WHOM I KNOW VIEW THEMSELVES IN A PARTNERSHIP WITH PASTORS. SHOULD NOT PASTORS VIEW THEMSELVES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHRISTIAN LEGISLATORS?

Should the Church raise up young men and women to run for office with the same passion and enthusiasm that it places on raising up godly pastors, wives, husbands, children and businessmen? Absolutely, yes!

### III. THE MISSION OF JESUS INCLUDES A TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY

If *teaching them to observe all that I commanded you* is the overall purpose for Christ coming to *earth*,<sup>6</sup> as previously seen (the Gospel ministry being a vital part of that [cf. 1 Corinthians 15:3-6] and the starting point to *making disciples*) then the mission of Jesus has an eye toward and includes the transformation of marriages, families, commerce, and governments. The mission of Jesus has a sum total intent on transforming societies, or as they are called in the Great Commission passage, *nations* (*ethnos*). The Great Commission passage is clear: believers are to affect *nations!* Those who advocate too narrow a view of Jesus' mission are forced to interpret *ethnos* to mean "people groups" so as to comport the passage to their viewpoint of non-civil government involvement. But, for those who hold a bigger view of Jesus' mission, individual evangelism is inescapable, but so is affecting geo-political *nations* for good.

### IV. WHICH PARTS OF THE BIBLE SHOULD THE CHURCH NOT PREACH ABOUT?

It follows from the previous points that the pastor or believer who holds to a "Do evangelism, not politics" limited understanding of Jesus' mission must decide what portions of the Bible he or she should teach. Does one omit teaching from Genesis 9:5-6, John 19:11, Acts 25:11, Romans 13:1-7 or 1 Peter 2:13-14 since they have to do with believers impacting government? Does one avoid teaching about Joseph's

John Hancock



He called upon the people of the state of Massachusetts to pray . . .

*"... to cause the benign religion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to be known, understood, and practiced among all the inhabitants of the earth."*

— John Hancock, signer of the Declaration of Independence; President of Congress; Revolutionary General; Governor of Massachusetts.

John Hancock, *Proclamation for a Day of Thanksgiving and Praise*, September 16, 1790.





James Iredell



*“For my part, I am free and ready enough to declare that I think the Christian religion is a Divine institution; and I pray to God that I may never forget the precepts of His religion or suffer the appearance of an inconsistency in my principles and practice.”*

— James Iredell, ratifier of the U.S. Constitution; Attorney General of North Carolina; U.S. Supreme Court Justice appointed by President George Washington.

James Iredell, *The Papers of James Iredell*, Don Higginbotham, editor (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1976), Vol. I, p. 11 from his 1768 essay on religion.

influence on Pharaoh’s government, or Daniels’ on Nebuchadnezzar’s government? By way of extension, if one “just preaches the Gospel” should one avoid teaching on marriage and family? What parts of the *whole counsel of God* should the Bible teacher omit? Foisting too narrow an understanding of the mission of Jesus inevitably leads to editing what portions of Scripture you will teach or omit — and a huge ensuing incongruity in light of 2 Timothy 3:16-17: *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching* . . . and Acts 20:27, “*declaring to you the whole purpose of God.*”

## V. GOD LEAVES CHRISTIANS HERE ON EARTH BOTH TO DO EVANGELISM AND TO DO GOOD FOR OTHERS

After one is saved (God tends to leave His saints on *earth* after He saves them) what is the believer to do? Should he or she only evangelize others the remainder of their *earthly* lives? What about Matthew 22:39, “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*”? This command is listed six other times in the New Testament. Like the Great Commission command, this is a command from Jesus as well! The spirit of this commandment demands that I consider these kinds of issues: making sure the law punishes thieves who could otherwise rob my *neighbor*; working to create and enforce laws pertaining to internet privacy to protect my *neighbors* from hackers who would otherwise steal their credit card information; creating policies that ensure that those who educate my *neighbor’s* child cannot teach them thing

that are evil. How could these policies that are so compatible with the mandates of Scripture *to love thy neighbor* be accomplished if not by Christians involved in policy making? Galatians 6:10 reinforces this idea of loving thy neighbor in the here and now: *So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially those who are of the household of faith.* Ephesians 2:10 further cites societal responsibility when it says, *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.*

## “WHY SHOULD CHURCHES TEACH THEIR PEOPLE HOW TO DO GOOD WORKS IN HOSPITALS AND IN SCHOOLS, AND IN BUSINESSES AND IN NEIGHBORHOODS, BUT NOT IN GOVERNMENT?”<sup>7</sup>

The biblical connection between *loving* one’s *neighbor* and being involved in civil government is strong.

## VI. GOD ESTABLISHED BOTH THE CHURCH AND THE STATE TO RESTRAIN EVIL

When a believer wins someone to Christ, such internal regeneration should quell evil in the heart of the convert (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17). However, history and present observation indicate that not everyone comes to Christ, nor are those who do completely and immediately sanctified in



their manifest actions. Accordingly, God has instituted, in addition to the Church, civil government to restrain evil by the use of force and punishment in a fallen *world*. Romans 13:4 is clear about this wherein Paul states (speaking of government), . . . *but if you do what is evil be afraid, for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on one who practices evil*. 1Peter 2:13-14 states similarly, *Submit yourselves . . . to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers . . .*<sup>8</sup> God mediates His reign by vesting His authority in and through civil government (Romans 13:1) in order to restrain evil in a fallen *world*. Whereas the Church is God's conduit of saving grace, the State is God's conduit of restraining grace. Such a realization necessitates the believer's involvement in civil government since it is part of Jesus' overall mission.

One other point here is worth mention. Christian isolationists often harbor ideological superiority: as if the authority of the Church is over the authority of the State. The Church is not preeminent to the State; the Church must submit to the State. The glaring historical and embarrassing American illustration of this is the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. The abolition of slavery came not from the institution of the Church via evangelism. It was the State that birthed a human being's freedom from another person's ownership. Sometimes the State restrains evil

more effectively than does the Church!

Keep in mind too, that it was not the punctuality of the Church leaders that gave us the canonization of the New Testament. It was not until Constantine in the early 4th century demanded it from Eusebius that the Church got around to sewing the 27 books together!

It stands to reason therefore that believers should respect the unique role of the State (and not harbor condescending attitudes towards it) and be involved in civil government lest they end up inheriting a lawless country, and wherein they most likely lose their religious freedoms.

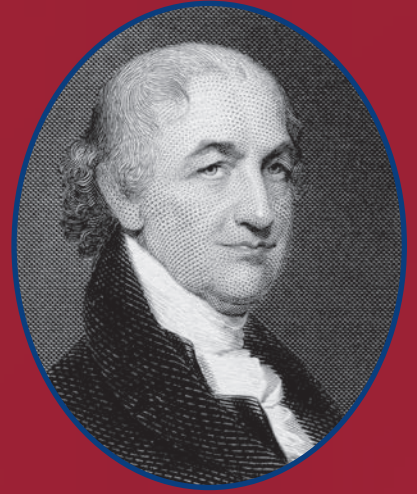
## VII. CHRISTIANS HAVE INFLUENCED THE STATE POSITIVELY THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Standing in sharp contrast to the idea of noninvolvement in the State by believers other than evangelism, are the following examples: There are at least three categories of historical influence of believers on the State. These accounts are numerous and well documented by authors Schmidt<sup>9</sup> and Colson<sup>10</sup> in their wonderful respective works. Here is a summary:

### A. The Dignity of Mankind

The historic spread of Christian influence on the State has been responsible for many victories: Its influence outlawed infanticide, child abandonment and abortion in the Roman Empire

Caleb Strong



He called upon the people of the state of Massachusetts to pray . . .

*" . . . all nations may know and be obedient to that grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ."*

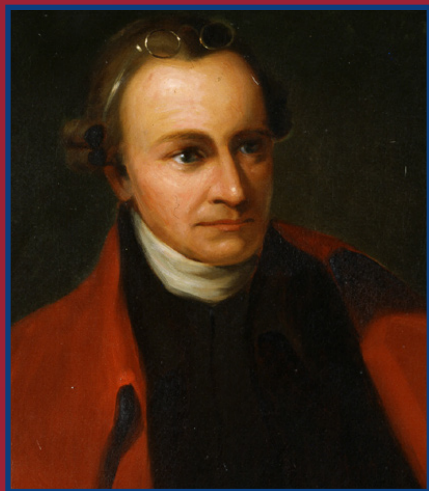
— Caleb Strong, delegate at the Constitutional Convention to frame the U.S. Constitution; ratifier of the Constitution; U.S. Senator; Governor of Massachusetts.

Caleb Strong, Governor of Massachusetts, *Proclamation for a Day of Fasting, Prayer and Humiliation*, February 13, 1813.





Patrick Henry



*“The great pillars of all government and of social life [are] virtue, morality, and religion. This is the armor, my friend, and this alone, that renders us invincible.”*

— Patrick Henry, Revolutionary General; legislator; ‘The Voice of Liberty’; ratifier of the U.S. Constitution; Governor of Virginia.

Independent Chronicle (Boston), November 2, 1780, last page; see also Abram English Brown, *John Hancock, His Book* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1898), p. 269.

(374); it prohibited the burning alive of widows in India (1829); it ended slavery in the British Empire (1840); it stopped the binding of women’s feet in China (1912); and it outlawed racial discrimination in America. These are but a few of the historic contributions of Christians engaged in politics.

### B. The Constitutions of Mankind

Christians were influential in the writing of the Magna Carta in England in 1215, the Declaration of Independence in America in 1776, and the Constitution of the United States in 1787. These are the most important documents in the history of governments known to mankind. All were significantly influenced by believers and are the basis, not only of prosperous countries, but the ensuing Christian mission movement worldwide. These advanced views of government have birthed individual freedoms, justice, freedom of religion, and the institutional separation of Church and State.

### C. The Education of Mankind

Believers have greatly influenced the development of higher education in America.

**OF THE 182 COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN AMERICA IN 1932, 92% HAD BEEN FOUNDED BY CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS**

ment of a society theretofore unknown in history, a society that has accelerated the Great Commission to levels of accomplishment equal to that of the first century Church.

These are but a few illustrations of Christian influence on the State above and beyond evangelism only. Therefore, when a prominent Christian author reasons in 2000, “God does not call the church to influence the culture by promoting legislation and court rulings that advance a scriptural point of view” and “Using temporal methods to promote legislative and judicial change . . . is not our calling — and has no eternal value”<sup>11</sup> one wonders how he can arrive at such a narrow understanding of the mission of Jesus. In his much earlier commentary on Matthew 5:13-16, (1985) this author said, “. . . Christians can have a powerful influence on the welfare of the world.”<sup>12</sup> And therein he quotes Martyn Lloyd-Jones, who said, “[What saved England was that] . . . The political situation was affected, and the great Acts of Parliament which were passed in the last century were mostly due to the fact that there were such large numbers of individual Christians found in the land.”<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, in the year 2000, this same writer wrote a book to attempt to influence pastors to avoid governmental involvement (ref. endnote No. 3). Christian influence on the State throughout history, as well as the contextual argument of Matthew 5:1-16 (presented in the introductory section) favors this author’s more biblical 1985 position.

Such influence has led to the advance-

**VIII. DOESN’T THE BIBLE SAY**



## THAT PERSECUTION IS COMING?

When studying eschatology, the doctrine of future biblical events, one could reason “Since things are going to get worse in the end times (cf. Matthew 24:9-12; 21-22; 2Timothy 3:1-5) why should anyone attempt to improve government today? The answer is simple: In the meantime, the believer is to be “*salt and light*” (Matthew 5:13-15), to “*love your neighbor*” (Matthew 22:39), and to *do good works* (Ephesians 2:10) in addition to evangelizing the lost (Matthew 5:16). One cannot disobey the clear commands of God in the here and now in lieu of end-time passages.

## THE FATALISTIC FUTURE OF THE WORLD TOMORROW IS NO EXCUSE FOR SOCIETAL DISENFRANCHISEMENT TODAY

Scripture explicitly mentions that no one knows the exact time of His Second Coming (Matthew 24:36; 25:13), therefore the believer should influence civil government for good as long as he or she is able.

## IX. WILL POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT DISTRACT BELIEVERS FROM THE MAIN TASK OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL?

Evangelism-only advocates frequently argue that political involvement by the Church today serves to distract believ-

ers from the main task of preaching the Gospel to the world. But the question isn't whether political involvement by the Church will divert energy away from preaching the Gospel, if indeed God has called the believer to be *salt* and *light* as a predicate for evangelism, which He has.

## X. SUMMARY

For these reasons the “Do evangelism, not politics” understanding of the Christian is an incorrect understanding of Church and State. Believers should be involved in politics in ways similar to their involvement in making their marriage better, their family better, their business better, or their church better. Running for office, serving in civil government is no less spiritual than going into full-time ministry, getting married, raising a family or building a business.

What should follow next week is the inverse: Wrong View No. 5:

## DO POLITICS, NOT EVANGELISM

In that no noteworthy believers hold to this position today (all leading Evangelical thinkers believe the body of Christ should do evangelism in government), I will not spend any time on it. Next week, a proper, biblically-reasoned understanding of Christians and government, Part 5:

## UNDERSTANDING THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

Samuel Huntington



*“It becomes a people publicly to acknowledge the over-ruling hand of Divine Providence and their dependence upon the Supreme Being as their Creator and Merciful Preserver . . . and with becoming humility and sincere repentance to supplicate the pardon that we may obtain forgiveness through the merits and mediation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”*

— Samuel Huntington, signer of the Declaration of Independence; President of Congress; judge; Governor of Connecticut.

Samuel Huntington, *A Proclamation for a Day of Fasting, Prayer and Humiliation*, March 9, 1791.



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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>This is also a present active *indicative verb*.

<sup>2</sup>In 1 Corinthians 9:22b the Apostle Paul states, ***"I have become all things to all men so that I may by all means save some."*** This is an appropriate supporting passage relative to this scriptural understanding of cultural involvement. Paul was willing to get involved in the lives, professions (including the political arena, e.g., Philippians 1:13, cf. 4:22; cf. Acts 26:88ff.) and cultures of others without compromising biblical truth in order to evangelize the lost. How can today's Church evangelize politicians if it is unwilling to connect with politicians?

<sup>3</sup>MacArthur, John *Why Government Can't Save You: An Alternative to Political Activism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000) p. 11-12. It is worth noting MacArthur's exposition of Romans 13:1-7 in 1994 wherein he states respective of ordination and moralization: "Human government is ordained by God for the benefit of society . . . In order to promote and protect the good in society human government must punish the evil." (MacArthur, John *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Romans 9-16* [Chicago: Moody, 1994] p. 218, 225) Implicit in his comments is his seeming admission to a broader role of the mission of Jesus (cf. Colossians 1:16). Unfortunately, his later incongruous thinking ("Do evangelism, not politics") has influenced many.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7

<sup>5</sup>Many leading Christian thinkers believe one of the major reasons America has not gone the way of Europe is due to the presence and power of Christian radio.

<sup>6</sup>Said another way, did Christ come to save or make disciples? The Great Commission, Matthew 28:19-20 indicates the latter. Christ did not end His ministry commanding His followers to evangelize, but rather to make disciples.

<sup>7</sup>Grudem, Wayne *Politics According to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010) p. 48. Note I am utilizing Dr. Grudem's respective chapter outline (with its much appreciated comprehensiveness) in this study with his permission.

<sup>8</sup>The one exception to obedience to the authority of the State is when civil authority would necessitate disobedience to God's Word (cf. Exodus 1:17; Daniel 3:16-18; 6:7, 10; Acts 4:19).

<sup>9</sup>Schmidt, Alvin *How Christianity Changed the World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004)

<sup>10</sup>Colson, Charles *God and Government: An Insider's View on the Boundaries between Faith and Politics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007). (Previously published as *Kingdoms in Conflict*)

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 130; 15

<sup>12</sup>MacArthur, John *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Matthew 1-7* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985) p. 243

<sup>13</sup>Lloyd-Jones, Martyn *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 1:157 (as quoted in MacArthur, John *Why Government Can't Save You: An Alternative to Political Activism* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000])

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