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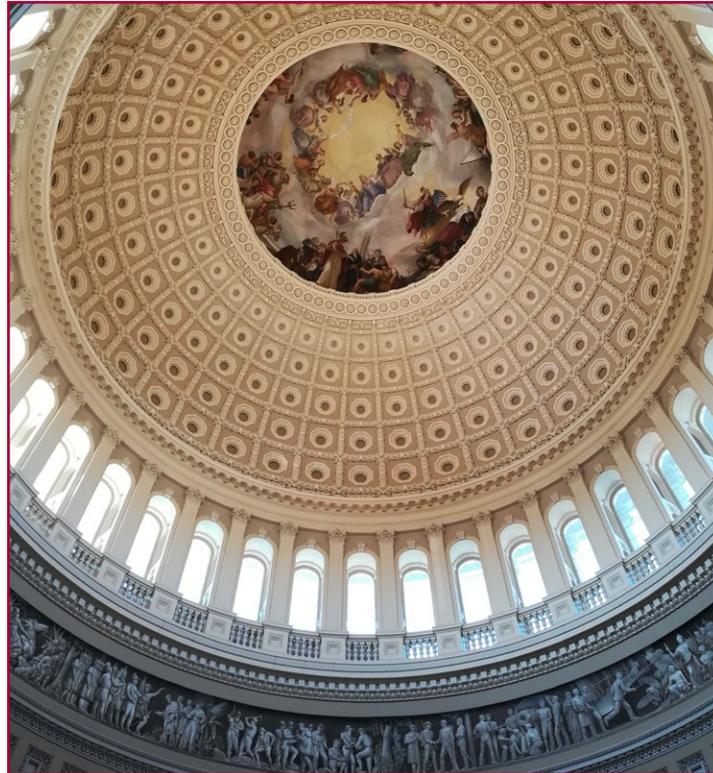
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Why Believers Should Be Involved in Politics



THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT BELIEVERS are to impact the world around them with God’s precepts and for His glory. The ways in which this happens vary, respective to the call God has placed on each believer. We are called to have an influence for God in our chosen field.

While some churches teach that believers should be involved only in evangelism and abstain from a career in politics, that’s not what the Bible teaches. “*You are the salt of the earth*” and “*You are the light of the world*” (Matthew 5:13, 14) indicate that all believers are to have a here-and-now influence in addition to evangelism and discipleship.

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WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

- White House Senior Staff:* Thursdays 7am, OMB Conference Room, hot breakfast served.
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The views expressed in each Bible study are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the position of any individual Bible Study Sponsor.



■ MINISTRY UPDATE

Why We Do What We Do

As an affinity group, political leaders are hugely overlooked for ministry by churches, the religious right, and many para church organizations.

Because they embrace the general and misguided thinking that culture can be transformed by changing laws and political policies, these organizations concentrate primarily on lobbying legislators for laws that reflect biblical values.

Certainly, such laws are important, but God's Word shows that as a primary approach the lobbying-for-better-laws methodology is flawed. God's Word says that "protos"—or first in importance—is reaching political leaders with the Word of God. *"First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity."*

(1 Timothy 1:1-2)

"How can a legislator who doesn't know God be expected to write laws according to His precepts?" asks Ralph Drollinger, President and Founder of Capitol Ministries. "What God blesses is His Word. We need to regularly be expositing Scripture to the leaders of nations."

To do that, Capitol Ministries plants intentional, biblically reliant discipleship Bible teachers in national capitals across the world.



Think about the implications of this: If every believer adhered to this somewhat popular "evangelism only" Evangelical teaching, there would be no believers in office! There would be no biblically based preservation or illumination influences whatsoever in a representative form of government.

I believe Scripture supports believers being involved in the political arena (just like they are in most every other vocation) versus being against it or isolated from it. The way to change the direction of a nation is for believers to be involved. Someone's morality will be the basis of law and culture; why not God's?

What follows are the biblical arguments for participation in the state in ways beyond evangelism.

Ralph Drollinger

I. INTRODUCTION

The 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 under foot 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 (cf. Ephesians 2:8–9)—what

results is a person who *"gives light¹ to all who are in the house."* It is not difficult to decipher what this passage means. 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. 13) and people in the *world* (v. 14a). This passage teaches that it is normative for believers to affect the physical *earth/world* or "land" in the here and now.

But notice the progression of the whole chapter. 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* (Matthew 5:5), *righteousness* (5:6, 10), *mercifulness* (5:7), *purity* (5:8), etc. Per the progressive nature of them, 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. 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* (in Greek: *humeis este*). These verbs are present active indicatives in the Greek language. That is in contrast to them being imperative verbs, as commands from Jesus. This is a subtle but important distinction. It means one is Christlike in culture (agents of the preservation and illumination of truth) to the degree “you are” beatitudinal, i.e., 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 Christlikeness is the degree to which one will externally affect his *world*, or in the case of the capital community, its people and its laws, and in the case of this study, the economic well-being of the nation! William Wilberforce changed the slavery laws of England because he was beatitudinal, Christlike, to a high degree over many years in office!

Why is this so important? Again, allow me to repeat the profundity of this exegetical insight. Jesus is not saying “you must be *salt* and *light*!” Jesus is not speaking in the imperative. Rather, the use of *you are* means *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 Christlike 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 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 follows is that others *glorify your Father who is in heaven*. Following this biblical sequencing, you become a powerful witness in a fallen world through your cultural participation—not absent from it! Here is a graphic summation:

SPIRITUAL MATURATION

Matthew 5:1–12



CULTURAL PARTICIPATION

Matthew 5:13–15



OTHERS’ EVANGELIZATION

Matthew 5:16

 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!



John Adams



Personal spiritual maturation will be *indicated* by one's cultural participation, which then testifies of God in an on-looking *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. 1 Corinthians 9:21–23). You can't be an “evangelism only” advocate in the political arena without cultural participation! It is a complete misnomer.

Can any evangelist be effective who shuns connecting to another's world?²

Matthew 5 does not support that idea. Jesus Himself does not support that idea. This passage lends to correcting such thinking. The believer must 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.³

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). Further, the great apostle said regarding all of his biblical writings, “The things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment” (1 Corinthians 14:37). Peter said regarding his “more than salvation teachings” “that you should remember ... the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles” (2 Peter 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*.

That the believer should only evangelize political leaders (and not get involved in politics) represents ultra-myopic, unbiblical thinking. It follows that the evangelist in the capital would need to counsel his convert to immediately leave office! If an evangelist won every elected leader to Christ, the government would have to turn off the lights (assuming the janitor didn't get saved!).

So what does Jesus teach? What is “*the whole counsel of God*” (Acts 20:27 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*

“Statesmen, my dear Sir, may plan and speculate for liberty, but it is Religion and Morality alone which can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand. The only foundation of a free constitution is pure Virtue, and if this cannot be inspired into our people in a greater measure than they have it now, they may change their rulers and the forms of government, but they will not obtain a lasting liberty. They will only exchange tyrants and tyrannies.”

— John Adams, second president of the United States; signer of the Declaration of Independence; judge; diplomat; one of two signers of the Bill of Rights.

John Adams, letter to Zabdiel Adams, June 21, 1776, *The Works of John Adams*, by his grandson, Charles Francis Adams. Boston: Little, Brown and Company 1851; 9:401.



(Romans 13:4) and provide justice (1 Peter 2:13–14). In addition to His saving grace, Jesus purposes, compelled by a heart of compassion for the lost (Matthew 9:36), to manifest common grace and restraining grace to all through this ordained institution (cf. Matthew 5:45). How great is His love!

The aforementioned descriptors and supporting passages clearly reveal that Jesus has a purpose for believers within 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.⁴

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 previously listed above. As primary the role of evangelism is by the believer to government, there must always be the aforementioned broader understanding of all Jesus taught regarding His larger purposes for this institution. The believer must be about teaching *all* Scripture says about civil government and, even more specifically, teaching these truths to civil government leaders themselves!

In an expansive and parallel 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—the believer as well, should only

be about evangelism to those ordained by God institutions. Should believers engage in marriage counseling or just evangelize those who desire to get married? Should believers seek to grow godly businessmen in Christ or just evangelize them? You get the point. Why is the institution of government, or government leaders, deemed evil and others not in light of the biblical objective to *make disciples* in the *whole* world?

Another error of this same influential Christian author is his tendency to spiritualize away the importance 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.⁵

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 as well as 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 percent of missions in the past century been funded by America? Should believers be involved in politics if for no other reason than to preserve 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.

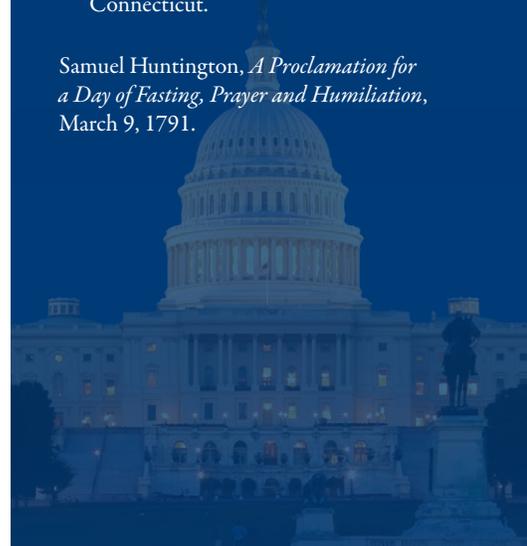
Samuel Huntington



“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.”

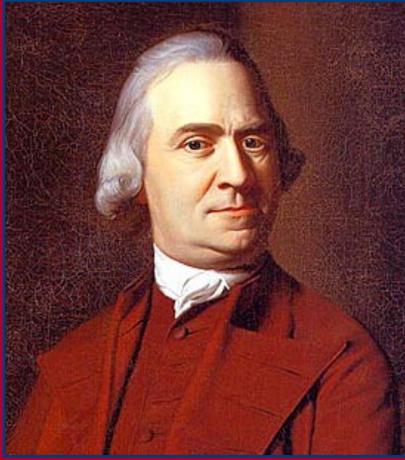
— Samuel Huntington, signer of the Declaration of Independence; president of Congress; judge; governor of Connecticut.

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





Samuel Adams



“If ye love wealth better than liberty, the tranquility of servitude better than the animating contest of freedom, go home from us in peace. We ask not your counsels or arms. Crouch down and lick the hands which feed you. May your chains set lightly upon you, and may posterity forget that ye were our countrymen.”

— Samuel Adams, signer of the Declaration of Independence; Father of the American Revolution; ratifier of the U.S. Constitution; governor of Massachusetts.

Samuel Adams, speech at State House in Philadelphia, August 1, 1776.

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, which includes its economic viability, is a noble and important task and is certainly in keeping with *all that Jesus commanded* us.

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 1.⁶ 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, and many other major issues of faith. This is due to Canadian laws that were not influenced by Christians. What will become of the great radio ministries in America that have so affected our culture for good and evangelized the lost if the laws, unaffected by Christian influence, also begin to prohibit the Church from evangelizing here? How will the church of this pastor, who advocates this limited understanding of governmental involvement, pay his salary if they lose their tax-deductible status?

Governments indeed either facilitate or hinder the advance of God’s kingdom.

Again, and worth repeating, believers should be involved in civil government if only for the sake of the Great Com-

mission! Church leaders should applaud, respect, support, sustain, prepare, and elect more Christian political leaders in order to create and/or preserve the preachers’ freedoms to propagate the gospel.

Christian public servants I know view themselves in a partnership with pastors. Should not pastors view themselves in partnership with Christian public servants?

Should the Church raise up young men and women—disciple them—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! Evangelism only is too narrow an understanding of the mission of Jesus.

III. THE MISSION OF JESUS INCLUDES A TRANSFORMATION OF NATIONS

Note the Great Commission passage in Matthew 28:18–20 below and the use of the word *nations*:

“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”

The word *nations*, as included by Jesus here in His Great Commission passage, cannot and should not be overlooked. 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 only "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 and disciple-making are inescapable—as is the objective of affecting geopolitical *nations* for good. If "*teaching them to observe all that I commanded you*" is the overall purpose for Christ coming to *earth*, as previously seen (the gospel ministry being a vital part of that [cf. 1 Corinthians 15:3–6] and the starting point for *making disciples*), then, just as important, the mission of Jesus has an eye toward and includes the transformation not only of individuals but as a result of that, *nations* as well.

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? More specifically, does one avoid teaching about Joseph's influence on Pharaoh's government or Daniels' on Nebuchadnezzar's government? What parts of the *whole purpose of God* (Acts 20:27) should the Bible teacher omit? Foisting too narrow an understanding of the mission of Jesus inevitably leads to editing what por-

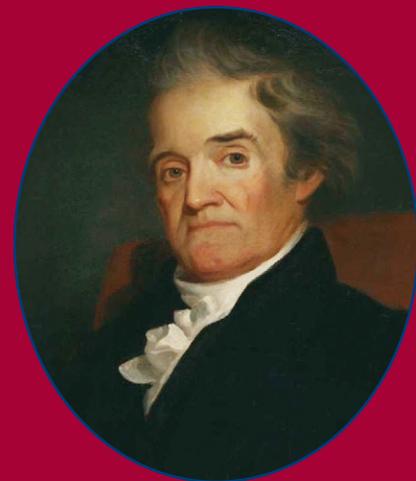
tions of Scripture you will either teach or omit—and create a huge ensuing incongruity in light of 2 Timothy 3:16: "*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching*" and Acts 20:27: "*declaring to you the whole purpose of God.*"

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

Akin to the first point regarding the believer being an illuminator and preserver in the world to the degree they are spiritually mature, God tends to leave His saints on *earth* after He saves them for this purpose. So after one is saved, 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, too, is a command from Jesus! The spirit of what Jesus is teaching believers to do demands that the believer consider the following kinds of issues (as they relate to tangential ways of *loving your neighbor*): For example, (1) make sure the law punishes thieves who could otherwise rob my *neighbor*, (2) work to create and enforce laws pertaining to internet protection of my *neighbors* from hackers who would otherwise steal their credit card information, and (3) create policies that ensure that those who educate my *neighbor's* child cannot teach them things that are evil. You get the idea. How could these policies that are so compatible with the mandates of Scripture *to love thy neighbor* be accomplished if believers who believe in the moral truths of Scripture

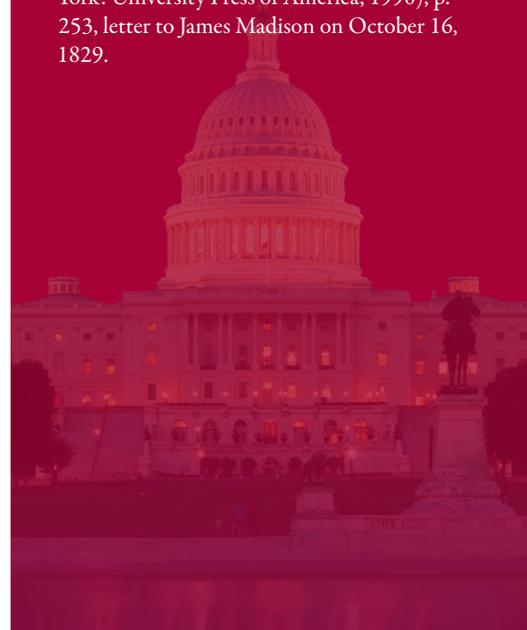
Noah Webster



"[T]he Christian religion, in its purity, is the basis, or rather the source of all genuine freedom in government.... and I am persuaded that no civil government of a republican form can exist and be durable in which the principles of that religion have not a controlling influence."

— Noah Webster, revolutionary soldier; judge; legislator; educator; "Schoolmaster to America."

K. Alan Snyder, *Defining Noah Webster: Mind and Morals in the Early Republic* (New York: University Press of America, 1990), p. 253, letter to James Madison on October 16, 1829.





Congress, 1854



“The great, vital, and conservative element in our system is the belief of our people in the pure doctrines and the divine truths of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

— Congress, 1854

Journal of the House of the Representatives of the United States of America (Washington, DC: Cornelius Wendell, 1855), 34th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 354, January 23, 1856; see also: Lorenzo D. Johnson, *Chaplains of the General Government With Objections to their Employment Considered* (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman & Co., 1856), p. 35, quoting from the House Journal, Wednesday, January 23, 1856, and B. F. Morris, *The Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States* (Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1864), p. 328.



are not involved in policy making? Galatians 6:10 reinforces this same, important 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 underscores the believers’ 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.*” *Good works* has a present and broader meaning and application than evangelism only.

“Why should churches teach their people how to do good works in hospitals, and in schools, in businesses, and in neighborhoods but not in government?”⁷

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

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

When a believer, through the power of the Holy Spirit, 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 the one who practices evil.” First Peter 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.*”⁸ These passages serve to illuminate the fact that 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. It is important to review the aforementioned in light of this point: such a realization necessitates the believer’s involvement in civil government since it is part of Jesus’ overall mission and institutional invention. It would seem to follow too that some are called by God to serve Him in His institution of government, just as, and to the same degree, that some individuals are called to serve Him in His institution of the Church, albeit their institutional objectives differ as to how they achieve restraining evil.

One other point here is worth mention. Christian isolationists (those who believe in the institutional superiority, exclusivity, and preeminency of the institution of the Church) too often harbor a sense of self-righteousness: as if the authority of the Church is over the authority of the state. The Church is not preeminent to the state; and in many instances 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 did not come 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!

A more pointed illustration of this today is when the Church does not report sexual abuse on its campus to governmental authorities, believing they, the Church, should be the exclusive and final adjudicator in such matters.

Yet another example of a failed church-state theology was the total lack of punctuality of church leaders relative to the canonization of the New Testament. It was the state that motivated NT canonization! Not until Constantine in the early fourth century demanded it from Eusebius did the Church get around to sewing the twenty-seven books together (so to speak)! These are but a few illustrations of God using His institution of the state in ways that indicate its meaningfulness and importance to Him.

It stands to reason therefore that believers should respect the unique role of the state (and not harbor condescending superiority attitudes toward it) and thusly be involved in civil government, versus isolating themselves from it, lest they end up inheriting a lawless, bankrupt country, wherein they most likely lose their religious freedoms to perform "evangelism only."

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 are well documented by authors

Schmidt⁹ and Colson¹⁰ in their wonderful works. Here is a summary:

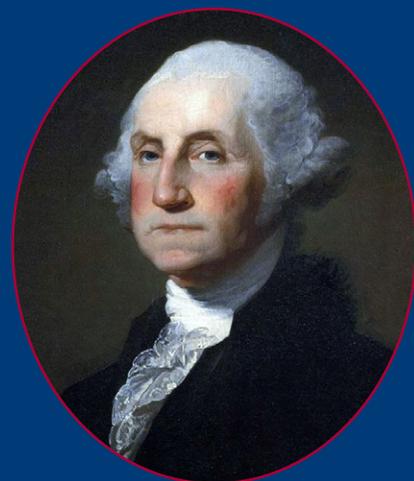
A. THE DIGNITY OF MANKIND

The historic spread and impact of Christian influence on the state by Christians being involved in the state has been responsible for many victories: Christian involvement in the state-influenced outlawing infanticide, child abandonment, and abortion in the Roman Empire (374); Christian involvement in the state prohibited the burning alive of widows in India (1829); Christian involvement in the state ended slavery in the British Empire (1840); Christian involvement in the state stopped the binding of women's feet in China (1912); and Christian involvement in the state outlawed racial discrimination in America. These are but a few of the historic contributions of beatitudinal, mature-in-Christ believers, God's called-out agents of preservation and illumination, being engaged in politics!

B. THE CONSTITUTIONS OF MANKIND

Christians involved in politics 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 missions movement worldwide. These advanced views of government have birthed individual freedoms, justice, freedom of religion, and the institutional (but not influential) separation of church and state.

George Washington



"It is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favors."

— 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 Washinton, *First Inaugural Address*, April 30, 1783.





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.

C. THE EDUCATION OF MANKIND

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

Ninety-two percent of the 182 colleges and universities in America in 1932 had been founded by Christian denominations.

Such influence has led to the advancement 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 serve as 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,”¹¹ one wonders how he can arrive at such a narrow (and aberrant) understanding of the mission of Jesus. In his much earlier commentary on Matthew 5:13–16 (1985), this same author said, “Christians can have a powerful influence on the welfare of the world.”¹² 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.”¹³ Unfortunately, in the year 2000, this same writer wrote a book to attempt to influence pastors to avoid

governmental involvement (ref. end-note 3). Christian influence on the state throughout history as well as the contextual argument of Matthew 5:1–16 (presented in the introductory section) favor this author’s previous, biblical, 1985 position.

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; 2 Timothy 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), to *do good works* (Ephesians 2:10), and 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—a “prophetic determinism” that overshadows and expunges any sense of a present-day biblical obedience.

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 anyway (Matthew 24:36; 25:13), therefore the believer should influence civil government for good as long as he or she is able.

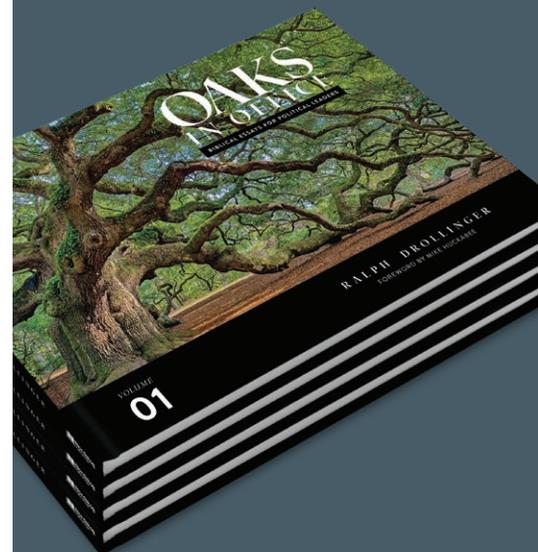
IX. WILL POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT DISTRACT BELIEVERS FROM THE MAIN TASK OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL?



Evangelism-only advocates frequently argue that political involvement by the Church today serves to distract believers from the main task of preaching the gospel to the world. Such could occur, and I have witnessed that to be the case in the political arena by religious right advocates. 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 the most effective form of evangelism, which He has. It is genuine involvement in people's lives over time that leads to soul winning.

X. SUMMARY

For these reasons, the “do evangelism, not politics” understanding of the Christian is a false dichotomy and an incorrect understanding of Church and state. Believers should be involved in politics in ways similar to the way they'd think about making their marriage better, their family better, their business better, or their church better. Running for office and serving in civil government is no less spiritual than going into full-time ministry, getting married, raising a family, or building a business. **cm**



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- Quito, Ecuador
- Riga, Latvia
- San Jose, Costa Rica
- Suva, Fiji
- Tegucigalpa, Honduras
- Vilnius, Lithuania
- Warsaw, Poland
- Yamoussoukro, Cote d'Ivoire
- Yaoundé, Cameroon

1. This is also a present active indicative verb.
2. 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.), 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?
3. This outline is used by permission from Dr. Wayne Grudem, who has addressed these same issues in his excellent book, *Politics According To The Bible*. With his permission, relative to the brevity that he had (in terms of overall book page count in the above book), he gave me permission herein to develop each point more fully, which I have done.
4. John MacArthur, *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.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
6. 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.
7. Wayne Grudem, *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.
8. 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).
9. Alvin Schmidt, *How Christianity Changed the World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004).
10. Charles Colson, *God and Government: An Insider’s View on the Boundaries between Faith and Politics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007). (Previously published as *Kingdoms in Conflict*.)
11. *Ibid.*, p. 130; 15.
12. John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Matthew 1–7* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), p. 243.
13. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 1:157 (as quoted in John MacArthur, *Why Government Can’t Save You: An Alternative to Political Activism* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000]).