



CAPITOL
ministries®

JULY 31, 2023

PUBLIC SERVANT
ENDORSEMENT 2

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U.S. Senator, Oklahoma

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Proverbs 14:34

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Understanding the Separation of Church and State



When Jesus said, “*render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s; and to God the things that are God’s*” (Matthew 22:21b), He was proclaiming a huge new distinction—something quite different for the coming Church Age, relative to the past with Old Testament (OT) Israel. This passage, among other New Testament (NT) passages, represents the biblical basis of *institutional* separation of civil government from God’s ordained institution of the Church. (Lest you misunderstand what I am saying, I must be careful to add at this point that *institutional* separation does not imply *influential* separation, as is posited by many secularists today.)

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- CURRENT AND
FORMER GOVERNORS
- Mike Dunleavy **AK**
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 - Sarah Huckabee Sanders **AR**
 - Sonny Perdue **GA**
 - Rick Perry **TX**
 - Jim Pillen **NE**
 - Tate Reeves **MS**
 - Kim Reynolds **IA**
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 - Scott Walker **WI**
 - Glenn Youngkin **VA**

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 - Brandon Williams **NY**
 - Roger Williams **TX**
 - Joe Wilson **SC**
 - Rob Wittman **VA**
 - Steve Womack **AR**
 - Rudy Yakym **IN**
 - Ted Yoho **FL**

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

- Governors:** Fridays 9am (EST), Zoom
- Former Cabinet Members / White House Senior Staff:** Fridays 9am (EST), Zoom
- Senate Members:** Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served
- House Members:** Thursdays 8am, AG Hearing Rm., Longworth 1302, hot breakfast served

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.



PUBLIC SERVANT ENDORSEMENT

James Lankford

U.S. Senator, Oklahoma



“Many people may be surprised to learn there are groups of senators all over the Hill who spend time alone in Scripture or gather for study in small groups.

For me, that time is Tuesday mornings with Ralph Drollinger who leads the Capitol Ministries Senate Bible Study. Ralph teaches verse by verse, book by book, and we have dialogue about how the Scriptures affect us and how to apply them to our lives.

This is a country where we can practice religious liberty. We can live out our values, meditate on them, talk about them, or even debate them in public settings like the United States Congress, our state houses, or city council meetings and county gatherings. Those are all natural places for dialogue because faith is natural to who we are.

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Unlike the preceding biblical epoch of OT Israel, where God’s people and the State were one—a theocracy or sacerdotal (“priestly or ecclesiastical”) system of governance—in the age to come, Jesus expects the two institutions to be differentiated in structure, purpose, and leadership.

It follows, therefore, that America’s greatest resources are leaders in both institutions who are men and women of character.

Read on, my friend.

Ralph Drollinger

I. INTRODUCTION

The Bible clearly teaches that today there is to be an *institutional* separation of Church and State. To think otherwise is to believe in a theocratic or sacerdotal form of government. What the Bible does not teach—and what the secularist would like to say the U.S. Constitution supports—is an *influential* separation of Church and State. Clearly, however, such thinking is not supported in the Constitution nor the Scriptures.

“*Render unto Caesar*” represents one of the biblical passages that supports the idea of *institutional* separation. Let us examine this thinking more closely from a historical perspective.

As primitive Christianity began, as recorded in the book of Acts, the separation of the Church from the State of

Rome clearly existed. Not until the fourth century A.D. when Constantine co-opted Christianity as the State religion (in his attempt to unify the vast and diverse Roman Empire) did the previously existing, clear separation between the two institutions disappear. Tragically, this lack of separation occurs even during the Post-Reformation period! Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin practiced a sacerdotal societal structure versus a *composite* one per the clear teaching of the NT (cf. Matthew 22:17–22; Romans 13:1–8; 1 Peter 2:13–14). In that much of the Reformers’ emphasis on doctrinal correction of heresy related to soteriology (the doctrine of salvation), no surgical excising was performed relative to the aberrant earlier wedding of Church and State.

Important to this study is the thought that in the NT era—save the first three



centuries of it—a theocratic, sacerdotal system has existed in most countries of the world. Historically, not until the American experiment in government did our Founding Fathers react to sacerdotal England (wherein the Church of England and the State of England still remain one and the same) and seek a pragmatic solution to separate themselves from a forced religious belief system incumbent on being born in England.

If, biblically speaking, the Church and State are to be separate institutions, does that suggest, as the secularist would postulate, a total disenfranchisement of the Church from the State, i.e., an *influential* separation as well? Is that the extrapolation Christ would desire from the Matthew 22:21 text? No!

As we will see from this study, the institution of the State is quite dependent on the existence of a strong and healthy institution of the Church (which it does not control) to build men and women in *righteousness* for service in government.

Without a strong Church that makes disciples, the State soon goes wayward due to the sinfulness of its leaders.

Since this is such a vital need and concern of the State itself, as well as of the State's leadership, what more so and specifically does the book of Proverbs state about the absolute need for *righteous* governmental leaders? Let us turn our attention in pursuit of the answer to that question.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

Every statesman needs to take a lesson from Proverbs 14:34. In this important Proverb is a nationalistic (versus personal) bestowal of truth that is a sound political maxim:

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.

Righteousness in the lives of individuals—both in a country's citizens and leaders—is the superior virtue over all others. This quality is a *nation's* number-one national resource! The writer of Proverbs is stating that this one ingredient assures the *exaltation* of a *nation*.

Neither the international trade nor the gross domestic product nor the presence of natural resources is most fundamental to the *exaltation* of a *nation*. Rather, the *righteousness* of a *nation's* individuals is its greatest resource—and the greatest commodity that a *nation* needs to manufacture!

The same principles that build individuals in *righteousness* (as expounded by the Word of God) are the same principles, multiplied by and through individuals, that build a *nation*. When a *nation* is impregnated with highly principled individuals, it gains well-being.

Given this cut-to-the-chase analysis of our greatest need, the question then quickly becomes one of how *righteousness* is formed in the lives of individuals. Having come to this conclusion, therein exists, in terms of serving the institution of the State, the absolutely critical preeminent duty of the Church in an insti-

VERSE OF THE WEEK



Proverbs 14:34

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.



America's greatest resources are leaders in both Church and State who are men and women of character.





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Living our beliefs is not about driving legislation or determining how we vote, it is determining who we are as people; it is the nature of our faith.

I am grateful for the work of Ralph Drollinger and Capitol Ministries which helps elected officials understand how to apply the Word to our lives. God uses those efforts to affect the laws of the country.

It is important to our nation that we not only be able to live our faith now, but also to pass on who we are to the next generation who will assume leadership in the days ahead.”

tionally separated society: to convert the soul and disciple, i.e., to Christianize the leaders of the State and its citizenry.

Conversion is even preeminent to education. Without a moral foundation, *knowledge makes arrogant...* (1 Corinthians 8:1b) and is of little value in terms of *nation* building. Therefore, in our composite country, the State is highly dependent on an institution it does not control for its own health and sustainability—the Church. Conversely, for the Church to spend her energy in the Capitol community attempting to affect policy with little manifest concern for the souls of the State’s leaders is to practice, biblically speaking, a misinformed and misguided sort of involvement. It is to attempt to do what others—strong-in-Christ public servants—can do much better! It is to be less than efficient. It is to misunderstand the primacy of her God-ordained role in a composite society.

The Church can best influence the State by building and sending *righteous* public servants to serve in government. Keep in mind, the State is not in the business of manufacturing *righteous* individuals. Rather, God has designed it to punish unrighteous individuals (cf. Romans 13:4; 1 Peter 2:13–14). Proverbs 29:2 serves to summarize this point:

When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when a wicked man rules, people groan.

States Proverbs 11:10–11 in this regard:

When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, and when the wicked perish, there is joyful shouting. By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted,

but by the mouth of the wicked it is torn down.

Adds Proverbs 28:12:

When the righteous triumph, there is great glory, but when the wicked rise, men hide themselves.

As you can see, Proverbs has much to say about the necessity of *righteous* governmental leaders! Scripture shouts about this matter! The Church must be in the business of manufacturing them via evangelism and discipleship at all levels of their career paths.

III. THE GERMINATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The necessity of evangelism by the people of God to birth *righteous* individuals and achieve an ongoing healthy State is proclaimed by Proverbs 11:30:

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who is wise wins souls.

The fruit of the righteous generally includes our influence, productivity, instruction, and example. But notice what specifically is added to the definition of this fruit: evangelism or the winning of souls! When Jesus visited the woman at the well in John chapter four, He was undoubtedly very thirsty and in need of water. He, however, set aside His personal needs to *win* the woman to salvation! He forgot about His own desires in want of achieving a higher priority: the joy of her salvation—the beginning of a *righteous* life.

Righteousness means
“right-way-ness.”



The soul of the woman at the well was the most important matter on Jesus' mind. If only more Christian individuals whom God has placed in the Capitol would practice this priority of another's soul over and above a self-centered preoccupation with career.

States Charles Bridges regarding the absence of soul winning:

The Christian who neglects his brother's salvation fearfully hazards his own. He is gone back to his native selfishness, if he does not exhibit that love and kindness of God that has appeared unto men.¹

He goes on to add:

How poor is the mitre [head dressing] or the crown; how debasing the wisdom of the philosopher, the scholar, or the statesman, compared with this wisdom!²

The most important and wisest use of time in the Capitol is evangelizing the lost and creating, by God's grace and imputation of the Holy Spirit, men and women who will hunger and thirst for *righteousness* the rest of their lives! Several years ago, the CapMin ministry leader in the New York State Capitol won 13 legislators to Christ in his first 18 months of serving there!

How misinformed, simplistic, and overlooked is the wisdom of our *nation's* leaders when the formation of *righteous* individuals through aggressive evangelism is never even mentioned—let alone emphasized! We need Franklin Graham to hold a crusade in the Capitol! What could be more important to the *righteousness* of our *nation*? Such ignorance in our priorities bespeaks the

famine of biblical literacy in our Capitol! Make no mistake here: *righteousness exalts a nation!* Therefore, the priority of evangelism is the key to a great *nation* more so than anything else! We need to get this through our head, my friend! Evangelism is the germination of *righteousness!* We need today to convert public servants who are lost without Christ!

IV. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF RIGHTEOUS LEADERSHIP FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

Given the need for *righteous*, aka, biblically based leadership in the *nation*, what are some of the qualities *that* Proverbs states need to be present in statesmen? Notice the following specific instructions from Proverbs that define what *righteousness* should look like in a public servant. The *righteous* need to be:

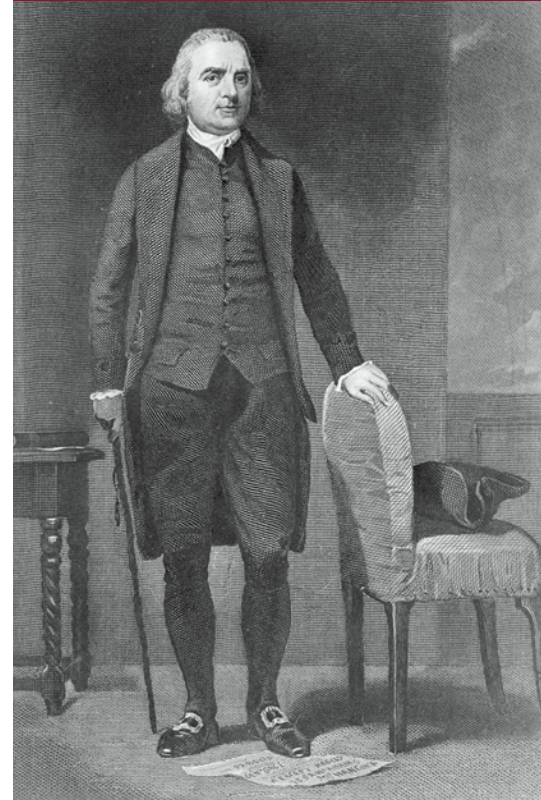
A. SELFLESS IN SERVICE

Proverbs 16:12 personifies the need for *righteousness* in the leadership of government:

It is an abomination for kings to commit wicked acts, for a throne is established on righteousness.

A *righteous* leader will have no interests of his own apart from the public good. In his or her heart will be a consideration of others as more important than self (cf. Philippians 2). God requires that leaders whom He appoints (cf. Romans 13:1) be a blessing to the people and benefactors to their country. Ecclesiastes 8:9b states: *a man has exercised authority over another man to his hurt.*

Samuel Adams



“If men of wisdom and knowledge, of moderation and temperance, of patience, fortitude and perseverance, of sobriety and true republican simplicity of manners, of zeal for the honour of the Supreme Being and the welfare of the commonwealth; if men possessed of these other excellent qualities are chosen to fill the seats of government, we may expect that our affairs will rest on a solid and permanent foundation.”

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

Samuel Adams, letter to Elbridge Gerry, November 27, 1780.



Noah Webster



“In selecting men for office, let principle be your guide. Regard not the particular sect or denomination of the candidate—look to his character.”

— Noah Webster, American Revolutionary War soldier, judge, legislator, educator, “Schoolmaster to America.”

Noah Webster, *Letters to a Young Gentleman Commencing His Education*, 1789.



How often I catch wind about the motives of our leaders and their selfish desires in seeking reelection. Only from the knowledge, understanding, and submission to the realization that God has appointed a person to office can selfish motives be eradicated and replaced by the *righteous* motives of selfless service. *Righteous* public servants, states Ecclesiastes, serve others to the point that they *hurt* themselves in doing good! Can the same be said of you? Are you selfless in service?

B. JUST IN JUDGMENT

A major God-ordained responsibility of government is the punishment of evildoers (1 Peter 2:13–14). Within that vein is the awesome responsibility of just treatment through due process. A major portion of the job description of every elected official is to make sure the *nation* has an excellent judiciary system, especially God-fearing *righteous* judges (ones who, I might add, support the laws of the land—not make them up!). I have purposefully reversed the order of the following Scriptures in order to display the causal and reflective aspects of just leadership as it pertains to the longevity of a *nation’s* vitality:

A king who sits on the throne of justice disperses all evil with his eyes (Proverbs 20:8).

A righteous man who walks in his integrity—How blessed are his sons after him (Proverbs 20:7).

In ancient times kings would decree *justice* from their thrones. They were to rule in fear of God. So should be our lawmaking, police enforcement, and

judicial appointments today. States Proverbs 24:23b–25:

To show partiality in judgment is not good. He who says to the wicked, “You are righteous,” peoples will curse him, nations will abhor him; but to those who rebuke the wicked will be delight, and a good blessing will come upon them.

If Solomon were here to visit our nation’s Supreme Court, he would urge the justices to concentrate on conveying righteousness on the unrighteous. Recent decisions by our land’s highest court have been more in keeping with that position, especially the June 24, 2022 Dobbs decision in which a majority held that the U.S. Constitution does not confer a right to abortion and returned the matter to the states. That decision reflected the wisdom in Proverbs 31:8–9:

Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all the unfortunate. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and defend the rights of the afflicted and needy.

Rather than make up rights for the unrighteous, judges should defend the rights of the less fortunate—for example, the voiceless, yet-to-be born human beings! Only through *righteous* lawmakers and law enforcers can a society have any semblance of *justice*. *Justice* stems from *righteous*, God-fearing individuals who are grown into such by the discipleship priorities of the Church in a composite *nation* of co-abiding institutions of Church and State.



C. KNOW-HOW IN HIRING

If *righteousness exalts a nation*, then it follows that the open acknowledgment of it and the discernment to elect people of integrity are the sure path to national prosperity. It follows that when and if the *righteous* have been elected to office, they should, in turn, hire *righteous* employees to dispatch their values. Too often, however, I have seen *righteous* elected officials hire the wrong kind of people. The wise statesman hires others who represent his character! Hiring wrong, corrupt, and wicked individuals will ruin a statesman's office. Contrary to *establishing* the office, they will misrepresent and corrupt! States Proverbs 25:5:

Take away the wicked before the king, and his throne will be established in righteousness.

D. COMMITTED IN CONVICTIONS

For a Christian public servant to flounder in his principles—to compromise biblical absolutes in his policies or interactions with others—grievously tarnishes his testimony and, I might add, the corporate testimony of the body of Christ on the Hill. To be truly *righteous*, believers must hold fast to biblical convictions when the pressure is on! To do so requires not only biblical knowledge of those convictions, but also fellowship in the Capitol with other like-minded believers on a regular basis. When the fiery trial of our convictions arrives, will we stand firm and remain *righteous*, or will we fold? States Proverbs 25:26:

Like a trampled spring and a polluted well is a righteous man who gives way before the wicked.

E. BARRING BRIBERY

To what avail are the best laws if people do not uphold them? The reason capitalism is slow to root in Russia and former CIS countries is due in large part to a lack of *righteousness* among its leaders and citizens; personal *bribery* overthrows the best of legal constructs. Samuel's sons took *bribes*, and their perfidy ruined Israel. Consistency must pervade every grade of official responsibility lest *bribery* corrupt a culture from the top down. People of God, people of *righteous* convictions, must pervade the leadership of all systems of governance for them to survive. States Proverbs 29:4 in this regard:

The king gives stability to the land by justice, but a man who takes bribes overthrows it.

F. POTENT IN PRAYER

What every country or state most needs is *righteous* men and women beseeching God's presence in their personal and State affairs. Do not be deceived by syncretistic "prayer breakfasts." God only hears the prayers of leaders and citizens who are upright and who live *righteously* through faith in Jesus Christ. States Proverbs 15:29 in this regard:

The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.

Proverbs 15:8–9 states further:

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is His delight. The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD; but He loves one who pursues righteousness.



NOW AVAILABLE

The book of Acts records how a small band of men—the apostles—in very short order *turned the world upside down* (Acts 17:6, KJV) during the first century in which they lived. This small team of uneducated, common men were not elite leaders, so how were they able to saturate the world with the gospel—changing lives, changing culture, and eventually changing the Roman Empire?

Scripture provides the answer: not only did they fulfill the Great Commission one soul at a time through a ministry of geometric evangelism and discipleship, but they succeeded *by concentrating on and impacting a particular element of society, specifically kings and all who are in authority* (1 Timothy 2:1–4).

All in Authority, Reigniting the Bible's Top-Down Missions Strategy provides the biblical exegesis for this missional strategy that is found in both the Old and New Testaments. The book provides a clarion call for the Church to make political public servants a priority mission field in our nation today. Request your complimentary copy at capmin.org.



Scripture is clear: the prayers of those who are at enmity with Him, who passively or actively reject the Son of God, are worthless and go unheard. And the State suffers for want of God's blessing. The *righteous* leader is a man of potent prayer.

V. CONCLUSION

All would agree that characteristics of *righteousness* are necessary to the dispatch of good government, but the only way to produce these virtues in leaders is through the discipleship efforts of the Church in the lives of individuals. As the Church goes then, so goes the State. Said another way:

**The State is reflective of the
righteousness of its people more
so than the causal agent of it.**

Put still another way, the preacher is much more important than the politician to the future of the country. At the end of the day, in God's design, the latter reflects the aptness of the former.

Given this premiere truth regarding society, far be it from the Church to expend all its efforts in activism, seeking to cajole those who hold office (who oftentimes reject Christ) to vote biblically. It won't happen. Instead, the call and emphasis of Proverbs regarding the germinating health of a *nation* clearly unveils an emphasis on *righteous* leadership. Accordingly, the Church must emphasize this task: developing statesmen in Christ! They are the ones who are the greatest resource of the government of the United States of America.

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- Columbia* South Carolina
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- Yamoussoukro* Cote d'Ivoire
- Kinshasa* Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Quito* Ecuador
- Malabo* Equatorial Guinea
- Mbabane* Eswatini
- Addis Ababa* Ethiopia
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- Accra* Ghana
- Conakry* Guinea
- Tegucigalpa* Honduras
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- Antananarivo* Madagascar
- Lilongwe* Malawi
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- Maputo* Mozambique
- Nauru*
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- Freetown* Sierra Leone
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- Pretoria* South Africa
- Dodoma* Tanzania
- Nuku'alofa* Tonga
- Kyiv* Ukraine
- Washington D.C.* USA
- Montevideo* Uruguay
- Port Vila* Vanuatu
- Lusaka* Zambia
- Harare* Zimbabwe



*Making Disciples
of Jesus Christ
in the Political Arena
Throughout the World*



Capitol Ministries provides Bible studies, evangelism, and discipleship to political leaders. Founded in 1996, we have started ongoing ministries in over forty U.S. state Capitols and dozens of foreign federal Capitols.

Capitol Ministries

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1. Charles Bridges, *An Exposition of the Book of Proverbs* (New York: Robert Carter, Publisher, 1847), 114.
2. Ibid.