

Pastors Perspective Column for October 2022

By Pastor Tim White

Should Christians Vote and Engage In Cultural Issues?

Forty Million is a significant number in almost any topic. Statics tell us that in 2020 forty million evangelical Christians did not vote in the 2020 election, including an estimated fifteen million who were not registered. How different would this day be if even one-third of that number had voted according to their declared biblical beliefs? We will all be receiving ballots this month, so what should the Christian do?

While most evangelical pastors encourage their people to vote, not as many (as I see it) are willing to plainly confront the cultural and moral issues being promoted by the different candidates and political parties in the light of Scripture. I completely understand a pastor's struggle on this topic. We want to minister to all people without "unnecessarily" bringing up current societal issues that may turn some people away. We do not wish for a disagreement on cultural matters to prevent us from sharing the message of repentance and forgiveness. I get that loud and clear.

However, what is our calling as pastors and as Christian citizens of America?

Point #1: America's foundation and perpetuation are forever rooted in the principles of Christianity. Thomas Jefferson said: "No nation has ever yet existed or been governed without religion. Nor can be. The Christian religion is the best religion that has ever been given to man...." John Quincy Adams said, "The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: it connected the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity."

The New York State Legislature declared in 1838: "Our government depends...on that virtue that has its foundation in the morality of the Christian religion." The Supreme Court, in the 1892 case of the United States v. Church of the Holy Trinity, declared: "No purpose of action against religion can be imputed to any legislation, state or national because this is a religious people... We are a Christian people, and the morality of the country is deeply engrafted upon Christianity."

Charles Finney, the leader of the second Great Awakening, said, "God will bless or curse this nation according to the course Christians take in politics." Is any explanation needed for how our nation has become what we see on the news every night? He went on to say: "The Church must take right ground in regard to politics. Politics are a part of religion in a country as this, and Christians must do their duty to their country as part of their duty to God." At a recent event, one speaker (also a pastor) correctly stated that "America did not build the Church, but the Church (meaning the biblical principles of Christianity) built America."

Consider what these scriptures say about how important it is that righteous leaders guide a nation and how all people will be blessed or suffer based on the morals of the leader and his advisors: Proverbs 14:34; 29:2, 12; Psalms 33:12. And then these verses that tell us to work for the peace and safety of the nation we are in and to not align ourselves with "wicked rulers": Jer. 29:7; Psalm 94:20-21; Eph. 5:11. And of course Romans 13:1-7 says that we are to respect rulers who protect law-abiding citizens and punish the criminals – therefore, when elected officials call evil "good," and good "evil," they have lost their right to govern us and must be opposed.

Point #2: The People are the “Sovereign” of our nation. In a monarchy, the King is the “Sovereign.” In a dictatorship, the Dictator is the “Sovereign.” In America, as the Washington State Constitution (Art. I, Sec. 1) states, “All political power is inherent in the people, and governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, and are established to protect and maintain individual rights.” Therefore, all political power resides in “the People,” not the President, Governor, Congress, Legislature, or the Courts. We, the people, are the “Sovereigns” of America, and therefore, we must faithfully and fearlessly uphold this sacred God-given role.

The government’s sole purpose is to protect the people’s God-given (inalienable) rights. In other words, those in political office work for us – not the other way around. The campaign season is the interview process, and our vote determines who gets hired according to who we believe will uphold the values and principles we hold most dear. Once elected, should they become corrupt or fail to maintain our cherished principles, we have the power to replace or remove them. It is time to send some “pink slips” this November 8th.

Noah Webster (1782-1852) said: “To preserve the government, we must also preserve morals. Morality rests on religion...When the public mind becomes [debased] and corrupt, laws are a nullity and constitutions are waste paper.” Are we seeing this in our day? John Adams said, “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

As the “Sovereigns” of America, we have the responsibility – given by God and our founding documents – to oversee the moral state of our nation through the ballot box, the Initiative process, and involvement in discussions about laws and policies that shape our daily lives and culture. When Christians refuse or fail to be involved, informed, and engaged in the civil government process, they have surrendered a sacred place of authority that most people on earth will never know and the early Church did not have. We can see the “collateral damage” in America resulting from many evangelical Christian churches being disengaged, uninformed, or simply absent.

From the 1600s until sometime in the 20th century, pulpits across America would fearlessly preach “election sermons” and address the issues on the ballot in light of the Bible. Preachers held the candidates’ views up to the “plumb line” of Scripture without concern for offending those who disagreed. Alexis de Tocqueville saw that America’s greatness was rooted in her “goodness” that he said was the fruit of the “thundering pulpits” of the churches. So let the rumbling begin – for the sake of our children’s generation and our Sovereign duty before God.

As the early Church prayed, let us pray too: “Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus” (Act 4:29-30). And all God’s people said: “Amen?” – [NOTE: All founding fathers’ quotes from Dr. David R. Reagan’s book, “America’s Suicide,” chapter one, Lamb and Lion Ministries].