

BRING BACK THE ELECTION SERMONS

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By Pastor Tim White

For 250 years, pulpits across the pre-revolution colonies and our young nation preached annual “Election Sermons.” Yes, you read that right. From as early as 1634 into the 1880s, American pulpits “thundered” boldly about the day’s issues, the role and actions of government, the evils of King George, and the qualifications and ideologies of the candidates seeking a place of power.

As I wrote in my July column, our second president, John Adams, had nothing but high praise for these very pastors and appraised them as being “among ‘the most conspicuous, the most ardent, and the most influential’ men of that day. President Adams accredited their “thundering pulpits” as the catalyst that awakened Americans to the values and principles that ultimately led to Independence, as recorded in “The Works of John Adams” edited by Charles Adams. Our founders would be shocked to witness the silence from pulpits on current issues and politics today.

Should your pastor choose to preach an election sermon, some will be alarmed that he would allow “politics” in their pulpit, and conversely, there will be those who will say, “It’s about time!” I have heard both. Those bold preachers of the 17th to the 19th centuries understood something that many pastors, churches, and Christians have lost sight of: the Church’s role in society is to be the “Watchman.”

In Old Testament times, the watchman stood on an elevated place like the walls of a city or a strategically placed tower. As you probably have already figured out, the watchman’s job was to give warning to the rest of the people whenever he saw suspicious activity or an approaching army. God declared to the prophet Ezekiel, “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me.” (Ezekiel 33:7 NIV84).

As watchmen, we desire that God bless our nation, and so, as needed, we are to warn our country when she strays from our Judeo-Christian principles as a prophetic voice. However, this prophetic role is not about creating a theocracy, as the leftist purveyors of myths and anti-Christian propaganda want you to believe. Instead, it is about helping to secure a moral and safe society where justice is impartial and individual God-given rights are protected, as our founding fathers did.

Most importantly, there was a warning given to the watchmen if they did *not* warn the city’s people of the impending danger. God would not hold the watchmen accountable for the people’s *response*, but He would hold him responsible for the harm that would come to the city’s people if he failed to warn them promptly (Ezekiel 33:8). Likewise, the preacher is not accountable for the people’s response. However, God will hold them accountable for the harmful consequences that fall upon their society if they fail to speak up and warn them.

We need to realize that laws are established through the political system. These laws either protect our freedoms and uphold high moral standards or trespass on individual rights and invite immorality and injustice. It is through this system that society is either governed well or not. The future moral and material condition of the nation and culture in which our children will live is in our hands — so let us be the prophetic watchmen that are so needed today.

There are two vital bullet points. First, Jesus is not on the ballot. There are no perfect candidates. Repeat after me: “The candidates’ *policies* will impact our state and nation, *not* their *personalities*.” Maybe you saw this quote: “A vote is not a valentine. You aren’t professing your love for the candidate. It’s a chess move for the world you want to live in.” We must face reality: Only one of the two will get in, so if you don’t vote for the better option, you have just voted for the least desirable candidate regardless of your “perfect write-in.” Think and vote strategically.

Second, our nation’s future is in the hands of Jesus’ Church. Are you aware that about forty million Christians, according to surveys, do not vote, and another fifteen million are not even registered? That is a total of fifty-five million Christians who sit on the sidelines. That is fifty-five million Christians who are negligent in their responsibility as a citizen of our nation and as a “watchman” to their society. That is a voting block that has the potential to shape the direction of America!

If a significant majority of self-identifying Christians voted strategically according to biblical standards and values, we would see a notable (and needed) shift politically and legislatively in America. We can potentially pass better laws, repeal bad laws, reduce government size, restore morality and common sense in our policies, and protect all human life from conception to the grave — if we, as followers of Christ, will stand up, speak up, and vote according to the values we profess to believe.

The time is now. Does the American Church realize that nationally, this November, we are choosing between a Constitutional Republic or an atheistic Marxist ideology cloaked under the name of Socialism? We cannot and must not sit idly by and think we can simply “hold on ‘til Jesus comes.”

Let’s be wise and make strategic “chess moves” in the earthly realm as we corporately humble ourselves before our God, who sits enthroned in the heavenly realms and promises to hear us, forgive us, and heal our land when we come to Him on His terms. The Church can impact the political and governmental landscape by being engaged, and most importantly, she is essential in ushering in the Presence of God, our ultimate need and only sure hope today.

We must not stay silent and inactive at this hour, for “who knows but that (we) have come to (our) position for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14).

Check these out: MyFaithVotes.org works to bring Christians to the polls. Also, Pastor Gary Hamrick preached an excellent “Election Sermon” on Sept. 15 which I posted on our Facebook page: Tri-County Christian Center, Assembly of God. I will preach one on Sunday, Oct. 6, likely before this is published.