



DOES GOD BELONG IN CIVIL GOVERNMENT?

A Biblical Perspective

By: Charles P. Beall

This essay is not an attempt to convince non-believers that God's Word, the Bible, is the ultimate source of truth and righteous power by which all legitimate government authority on earth has been established. My purpose here is two-fold: I intend to illuminate the irrefutable fact that America's history is a Providential history. And, that it was God's Word that most inspired America's founders in their vigilant quest for freedom over 225 years ago.

America's founders clearly understood and accepted God's design and purpose for civil government, and were willing to sacrifice everything to live free in their own country. They established a Constitutional Republic that recognized the unalienable rights of all men to their lives, their liberty and their property, with minimal government interference. Thus, America was conceived as a magnificent experiment in freedom that was unique in the annals of human history. And while the journey was tumultuous at times, the freedom won by our forefathers was ultimately extended to all citizens regardless of race, color, religion or national origin---a testament to who we are as Americans, and what we truly stand for, as "One Nation, Under God".

It is with the firm conviction that God's Word is complete and without error, that I humbly offer the following words for the consideration of those Americans who revere the truth, and who have the capacity and inclination to do their own thinking:

"....There is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. For he is God's servant to do you good.For he is God's minister, an avenger to execute God's wrath on him who practices evil, so be afraid...for he does not bear the sword in vain. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing..."

Romans 13: 1-6

According to His-story, the Bible, all authority on earth, including government authority, flows directly from God. He established civil government to be His servant and His minister of justice. He gave the civil authorities the sword, so they might serve and protect His people. God cannot be separated from His creation. Therefore, any claim of authority by the government, the church or any

other earthly institution, must conform to His Word, or it is counterfeit and void. The question we must ask ourselves as Americans is this: does our nation's government today conform to God's design and purpose?

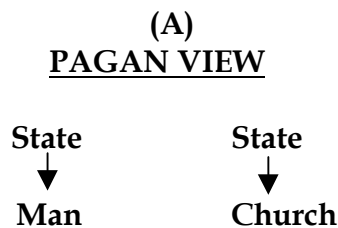
God's Word gives us a blueprint of the proper structure and function of every earthly institution, including marriage, family, church and government. This biblical blueprint represents His plan for mankind's existence on earth. According to His plan, there are limits to the jurisdiction of each institution established under His ultimate authority. For instance, God's word teaches us that we are to render "to Caesar (the State), the things that are Caesar's, and to God, the things that are God's" (Matt. 22: 17-21). The Bible instructs that one thing that belongs to the State and not the Church is the use of the sword to protect the citizenry. Likewise, there are certain things that belong to God and not the State such our worship of God (the Church), our children, and our own consciences and lives. In these matters, the State has no authority and should not interfere. God teaches us that lawful taxation by "His servant and minister of justice" (the State), is "to do us good", and is a proper function of civil government. He also teaches us to try to settle disputes before going to court, and that we must resist the tyranny of unjust rulers.

What kind of government do we have in America today? Is it a government that functions as God's servant and minister of justice "to do us good", or is it a government that has attempted to separate God from His creation by removing Him from our schools, our government institutions, our courts, and our daily lives? Does our federal government function according to God's design and purpose, or according to the will of men? Do our federal, state and local government officials defend and protect the most vulnerable among us from evil and injustice, or do they conspire to expand their power and deny the American people of their rightful liberties? Are the majority of our highest elected officials and government leaders in Washington honest, honorable and loyal Americans who can be trusted to protect and defend our Constitution, or have most of them betrayed their oaths to God and Country? Is our income tax system the creation and instrument of God's "servants and ministers of justice", or of power hungry politicians and irresponsible bureaucrats who squander the fruits of our labor and arrogantly refuse to be accountable to the American people? Do our judges acknowledge God's ultimate authority over our nation and our nation's laws, or do they kneel at a different altar?

Just who are we as Americans? What are the underlying values and moral principles that constitute the foundation of our common identity? From what source do we derive our concepts of truth, justice and equality? Do our laws and government policies in America reflect a common understanding of moral truth—as given to us by our Creator—or do they reflect the flawed reasoning of

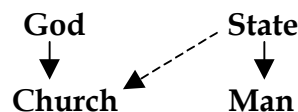
imperfect men? Have we become so dumbed-down by our government schools, mass media and religious “leaders”, that we no longer care if our “public servants” lie, cheat, steal and betrays our trust? Our nation’s founders believed that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”. Do we still hold these truths to be self-evident?

In America today there are essentially three views of the Church-State relationship. They are represented by the following diagrams:**



Here, the State is sovereign over man and the Church, and dictates in civil and religious matters. This relationship structure represents the secular humanistic and socialist world-view.

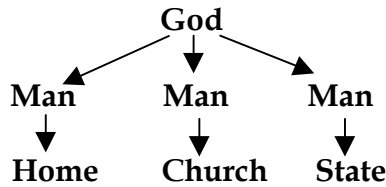
(B)
MODERN “CHRISTIAN” VIEW



Modern Christians have allowed the federal government to take control of the Church in America. Today, the vast majority of our churches, either directly or through their various conventions and associations, have incorporated and voluntarily become government regulated 501(c)3 tax exempt organizations. The IRS regulates the speech of our pastors, and requires that our churches report on the most personal and private financial activities of their members. The 501(c)3 government controlled church is fundamentally incompatible with the sacred principles of free speech and religious freedom upon which our great nation was founded.

Many Christians today acknowledge that God is Sovereign over the (spiritual) Church, but do not believe He has anything to do with the State. They believe that God is separated by an impregnable wall from civil government.

(C)
BIBLICAL VIEW



God is sovereign over man. Through man, God exercises authority over the government (the state), the church and the home. Each institution has separate jurisdiction and must be kept separate. The Biblical View of the Church-State relationship represents God's plan for the structure and order of human society. Listen to God's Word on the subject:

"Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the People, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work that they must do. Moreover, you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such men over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be that every great matter they shall bring to you (Moses), but every small matter they themselves shall judge....so Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people: rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. So they judged the people at all times; the hard cases they brought to Moses, but they judged every small case themselves". Exodus 18: 19-26 (note: The above Scripture outlines the role of civil government as God's servant and minister of justice on earth. According to His design and plan, we are to appoint able men who fear God, men of truth, men who hate dishonest gain as our earthly rulers. Do we follow this standard to selecting our government leaders in America today?)

"God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings". Acts 17: 24-26

"Do you not know that the Christians will one day judge and govern the world? And if the world be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the

smallest matters? Do you know that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life? (the Apostle Paul then rebukes the Christians for their apathy and irresponsibility that allowed non-Christians to be in control): "If then you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the Church to judge? I say this to your shame..." I Corinthians 6: 2-5

This "shameful" situation has become a reality in America today. The battle for God's earth is being lost mainly because Christians have forgotten, or ignored, God's design and purpose for His earthly institutions.

The Reverend Charles G. Finney wrote: "The church must take right ground in regard to politics...the time has come that Christians must vote for honest men, and take consistent ground in politics, or the Lord will curse them. God cannot sustain this free and blessed country, which we love and pray for, unless the church will take right ground. Politics are a part of religion in such a country as this, and Christians must do their duty to the Country, as part of their duty to God....He will bless or curse this nation, according to the course they (Christians) take".

Historian Jonathan Trumbull wrote that during the 50 years leading up to the American Revolution, "colonial pastors used every opportunity possible to educate the people in the principles of liberty".

Historian Alice Baldwin said, "the Constitutional Convention and the written Constitution were the children of the pulpit".

Before and during the time of the Revolution, hundreds of colonial pastors were courageous, resolute defenders of God's sovereign authority over civil government. John Witherspoon was a minister and President of Princeton College. He trained James Madison, the chief architect of the Constitution. Rev. Witherspoon had this to say: "God grant that in America true religion and civil liberty may be inseparable".

James Madison wrote: "To preserve the Republic, it is in the hands of the people. We have staked the whole future of American civilization not upon the power of government, far from it. We have staked the future of all of our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self-government; upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments".

John Adams wrote: "The Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other".

In a Christian nation, the people make the laws, but the Church makes the people. When the Church fails to bring the necessary moral influence, the "letter" of the law will not work.

Samuel Adams, one of our country's greatest patriots and the "Father of the American Revolution", in his widely circulated letter to the Colonists in 1772 wrote: "The Supreme Power (British Parliament) cannot justly take from any man any part of his property, without his consent. The natural rights of the Colonists are these: First, a right to life; Second, a right to liberty; Third, to property; together with the right to support and defend them in the best manner they can. The rights of the Colonist as Christians may be best understood by reading and carefully studying the institutes of the Great Law Giver and Head of the Christian Church, which are to be found clearly written and promulgated in the New Testament".

Samuel Adams and the overwhelming majority of America's Founders were guided by a deep faith in Divine Providence, and it was their understanding of Biblical truth and justice that shaped the development of their concepts regarding the proper structure and function of civil government. This is America's true heritage, and God's blessing to our nation and our people, if we choose to keep it.

In 1952, Justice William O. Douglas wrote for the Supreme Court that "we find no constitutional requirement...for government to be hostile to religion and to throw its weight against efforts to widen the effective scope of religious influence".

In 1984, the Supreme Court surprisingly stated in *Lynch v. Donnelly*:
"The Constitution does not require complete separation of church and state; it affirmatively mandates accommodation, not mere tolerance, of all religions, and forbids hostility toward any...anything less would require the 'callous indifference' we have said was never intended by the Establishment Clause...Indeed, we have observed such hostility would bring us into war with our national tradition as embodied in the First Amendment's guarantee of the free exercise of religion."

Patrick Henry stated:

"It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians, not on religions but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ! For this very reason peoples of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship here."

The Christian faith, Christian virtues, and a Biblical world-view are the "Spirit of the Constitution" ---the power behind our form of government in America.

Do you believe that our nation was established with God's blessing, and that "all authority in heaven and on earth" belongs to Him? Do you believe that our Constitution is a sacred document written by godly men with noble intentions? Do you believe that every American citizen is entitled to the unalienable rights of life, liberty and property? Do you believe that the federal government should be accountable to the people and made to comply with the United States Constitution? Do you believe that America has lost its moral compass, and drifted far from our founding principles of liberty and justice? Do you believe that our government has the moral authority to prosecute wars against nations that represent no legitimate threat to our Country?

Unlike most politicians--who seldom fight the wars they start--those of us who have honorably served our nation in uniform have a special duty to protect America's future generations from the deception and political exploitation of false patriots in our government. There is no honor in the slaughter of innocent, helpless civilians for any political end. Our forefathers intended America to serve as an example of strength, justice and liberty to the world. We must recognize that the powerful political and economic interests that have dragged America into war after senseless war over the past 50 years, have betrayed the ideals, the honor and the values of our forefathers, and have compromised the sovereignty and independence of our great Nation. Their perfidious conduct is repugnant to our Constitution and the principles upon which we stand as a Nation. For over 225 years, America has stood as a beacon of light and hope for the world. People of all nations, creeds and religions have come to our shores yearning to be free. The cause of enduring freedom belongs to all Americans, not just Christians. But, now we must stand and be counted together, as one nation under God. We must demand honest, just and accountable government, or we cannot hope for God's continued blessing upon our Country.

Please review the attached letter entitled "[Why Have Our Churches Been Silenced](#)" and share it with pastors and religious leaders across our nation. Also, please visit the web site www.givemeliberty.org for information on We The People Foundation and how you can help restore America's Constitution and Bill of Rights.

**** Selected text from America's Providential History, by Mark A. Beliles and Stephen K. McDowell, Providence Foundation, Charlottesville, Virginia**