

# *Christians in Parliament*

By Andrew McColl, 2015

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*Hopefully I can energize young people, a new generation, to say that the role of government has to be different than this. You can't run a welfare state and you shouldn't be in all these wars. And they have to decide what the role should be. And whether or not the government should just be there to protect liberty or is it supposed to regulate your life and regulate the economy and police the world? If they want that they'll just change dictators and it'll be miserable. But I'm hopeful that--I see signs, you know, because of what's happening on the internet and different places, I see positive signs, but it's not gonna be easy (Ron Paul, former US Republican Senator, October 2015).*

I take a great interest in people who profess to be believers when they enter Parliament. Sometimes it ends up well, but frequently these people become an embarrassment.

Why is that? Naïve Christians entering Parliament can get trapped between the electorate's high hopes for what political leaders can provide, and the realities of what government can actually deliver, which is not much.

It always goes back to what the church believes, what the community believes, and what M.P's believe. What is the role of the Parliament, and what should be the role of a Christian in the Parliament? Does the Bible speak of this? And if it does, will we take any notice of it?

There have been some positive examples, and I think Margaret Thatcher was one of them. Over the course of her Prime Ministership, she confronted the unions, the IRA, and the Argentinians, and she didn't back down. She had the courage to stand by her convictions, even when assailed by attack and ridicule. Some good in Britain was achieved by her.

People entering Parliament generally know this much: this is not a place where the gloves are kept on, where all members are committed to speaking in a kindly way to each another. When issues come up for public debate, people have their careers and their beliefs on the line. Sometimes there are vested interests involved, or criminality. So, people entering Parliament had better be prepared to be handled roughly, because public life is no tea-party.

But that's just the beginning. Christians who want to enter Parliament had better have a whole lot more than a thick skin. They will need a healthy measure of Biblical literacy, a rare commodity in the modern era.

And they won't get it in church today, because the Bible is used sparingly in most churches. They'll have to go looking elsewhere, away from church. They'll have to do their own study and preparation, for a task that requires an eternal perspective. You won't find that in a newspaper, or a political party's statements of beliefs. You will find it in scripture.

Whatever field of endeavour they are applying themselves to, Christians should always begin with the law of God. God spoke to Joshua this way:

*Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that*

*you may have success wherever you go. This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success (Joshua 1:7-8).*

When God spoke to Joshua in this way in 1,500 BC, it was in relation to the promised land. Today, the Great Commission (Mat.28:18-20) explains that this was just a prelude. Now, we are sent into the whole earth.

Rushdoony put it well:

*Laws grounded on the Bible do not attempt to save man or to usher in a brave new world, a great society, world peace, a poverty-free world, or any other such idea. The purpose of Biblical law, and all law grounded on a Biblical faith, is to punish and restrain evil, and to protect life and property, to provide justice for all people. It is not the purpose of the state and its law to change or reform men: this is a spiritual matter and a task for religion. Man can be changed only by the grace of God through the ministry of the word...*

*Only when we return to a Biblical foundation for law shall we again have a return to justice and order under law. 'Unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain that build it.'*<sup>1</sup>

#### Conclusion:

Christians running for Parliament must begin with an objective sense of what is required of them, from scripture. It must be a whole lot more than something that seems like a good idea at the time. It must be rooted in a love for God's Word, a willingness to serve God in the public sphere, and a capacity to implement and defend policies that have their roots in scripture, as opposed to re-heated humanism.

This requires people with courage cut from a different cloth, to what we've commonly seen.

## 2.

*Christians must confront the fact that God requires them to impose His law for the state upon all men, whether men like it or not. The universe is not a democracy, but a Kingdom. If Christians do not impose God's laws upon non-Christians, then non-Christians will impose man's laws upon Christians... The law of man bares its fangs of iron increasingly against the righteous.*<sup>2</sup>

There is not a person on the face of the earth who is religiously neutral. Every one of us is born a sinner "in Adam," the Bible says. All men are sinners, but all men want law, and when men are rebels against God, they most certainly don't want His law.

It's not likely that society will want God's law, until a greater proportion of the community is Christian. And even then, the great majority of Christians today are most ambivalent about the law of

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<sup>1</sup> Rousas Rushdoony, "Law and Liberty," 1984, p.5-7.

<sup>2</sup> James Jordan, "The Law of the Covenant," p.29.

God being used in the community. This requires that there be willing teachers in the body of Christ, and a massive change of attitude in the Christian community in relation to God's law.

This will take time and effort, and there are few good things in a community that take place overnight. We believers have to be prepared to be tireless workers. The church in the West has got to its low level, not over months, years or decades, but many generations. And if it requires generations for there to be long-lasting positive changes in the West, so be it. The high-point of Protestantism in the West that was represented by Puritanism, was preceded by steady growth in the church.

For how long? For a century after the Reformation commenced.

Jesus explained this to us:

*First the blade, then the head, then the mature grain in the head (Mk.4:28).*

Every one of us needs to know the place of God's calling, and political service is certainly a legitimate place of Christian service. But we must be warned: humanists believe in salvation by politics, something the Bible has no time for.

Why is that? There is no political solution for sin. It's only remedy is the grace of God, through the blood of Jesus.

When the crowds saw the signs that Jesus performed, their response was immediate:

*...They said, "this is truly the prophet who is to come into the world." So Jesus, perceiving that they were intending to come and take Him by force and make Him king, withdrew again to the mountain by Himself alone (Jn.6:14-15).*

Jesus would have nothing to do with political solutions for Israel. Of course, Israel had its political problems, just as every nation does. But like all other nations, its political problems were a result of its spiritual state, which was awful. It needs cleansing from the inside out, and that was precisely what Jesus was going to bring. But in that too, Israel rejected Him.

The quick-fixers deny the Bible. They resent its teaching that all men are sinners, and that Biblical law has a place within modern society. Thus they believe that there are political answers to social problems, which history shows is just ludicrous. The would-be political messiahs keep turning up, and foolish people keep choosing and voting for them, with painful results.

For the sinner's solution for political problems is inevitably more sin, because he cannot deny his own nature. This means that Christians must develop a balanced approach to political life, which accepts the legitimacy of political representation, but keeps it in proper perspective.

What is that?

All of society needs the leavening of the kingdom of God, from the bottom up. Christianity, especially when embraced amongst the middle class- the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker, the grass roots of the community, will lead to lasting community change. When Christians are functioning in their place of God's purpose in the community, that's where they will be most effective.

Most commonly, this means their vocation- their place of work. Christians ought to be people who are gainfully employed. And out of their faithfulness and productivity, they can accomplish much.

Paul hinted at this. He said

*This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men...our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful (Titus 3:8,14).*

Conclusion:

Every society needs Christians working from the grass-roots to effect change, and some of that change will inevitably be political.

Our work amongst the grass-roots may seem unrewarding and slow, but the promises of God is sure: “Who has despised the day of small things?” (Zech.4:10). Patiently working and leavening our sphere in society is what we’re called to do. And as this takes place through the efforts of a multitude of Christians throughout society, steady social change really is possible.

Is that what you’re ready for?

### 3.

*Jesus reminded the devil of the requirement for maintaining the kingdom grant: obedience. Prosperity is not a matter of power; it is a matter of covenantal obedience. His power over the stones was unquestioned. The devil did not suggest otherwise. In fact, the temptation rested on the presupposition that Jesus possessed such power. The nature of this temptation was an appeal to power. This was one more example of the power religion vs. the dominion religion. Jesus refused to invoke power rather than ethics.<sup>3</sup>*

Almost inevitably in human history, the getting of power leads to the abuse of it. We don’t need to go to the conventional text-books of history to discover that: it’s in the Bible. Before David became king of Israel, he essentially had charge of hundreds of armed men.

On one occasion when a deputation from him to a wealthy landowner seeking assistance was offensively rejected, he very nearly abused his power in vengeance (see I Samuel 25). The fact was he had military power, and only the intervention of a shrewd and wise woman in the person of Abigail, prevented him from murdering the innocent.

The abuse of power, and even the threat of it, is commonplace in the modern world. Presently, US Presidential candidates are regularly being interviewed. The Republican candidate Ben Carson had this to say recently about his views on defence:

*... if we get defense wrong, nothing else matters, because we live in a hostile world. So you’re going to see our military capabilities improve quite substantially... Recognizing that we have a 14 percent decrease in people applying for our volunteer military. That’s going to hurt us badly in the long run.*

*You’re going to see us beef up our cyber capabilities substantially, you’re going to see us respond to people who attack us in a way that they will never forget.*

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<sup>3</sup>Gary North, “Priorities and Dominion,” 2000, ch.1.

*You're going to see much more proactive stance towards someone like Putin, you know, we're going to be much more active throughout the whole Baltic basin area, Eastern Europe, we're going to reestablish missile defense program, we're going to have more than one or two armored brigades in that area. We're gonna stand up to him, every place in the Middle East, we're not gonna back down.*<sup>4</sup>

Ben Carson doesn't know it, but the Middle East is reeling from the abuse of power by the US, over generations. The last thing it needs is more US meddling and warmongering; more "armored brigades" in the area. The best thing for the US would be to leave the Middle East alone.

Pride of heart in an individual is what leads to the abuse of power. This was Uzziah's sin, when he foolishly entered the temple and tried to usurp to himself the role of a priest (II Chron.26:16-22). God judged him with leprosy.

There is one thing that can keep a political leader from the abuse of power: the law of God. When God instructed Israel concerning the legitimacy of it choosing a king, He gave specific conditions for this (see Deut.17:14-20). He commanded that when this man became king, he

*Shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, by carefully observing the words of this law and these statutes, so that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen... (Deut.17:18-20).*

This was the difference shown by Jesus when He was tempted by the devil. The scripture shows (Mat.4:1-11) that His first recourse was the law of God. In response to temptation, He quoted from Deuteronomy.

Power never corrupted anyone. Power merely reveals what's in people. When corrupt people are given power, they very quickly manifest their true nature.

If a leader really wants to do people no harm, his first recourse should be the law of God. Why? Because it will be a restraining influence. It will confront any tendencies he has to think too highly of himself. The Bible promises,

*How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers (Ps.1:1-3).*

Consider Joseph. He'd already shown he'd be faithful to God under pressure, and he never made expansive claims of his own abilities. When he was brought before Pharaoh, who had heard he could interpret dreams, he immediately acknowledged, "...It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer" (Gen.41:16).

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Laurence Vance, "Ben Carson: Welfare/Warfare Statist," ([www.lewrockwell.com](http://www.lewrockwell.com)), 20/10/2015.

Joseph knew he didn't personally have the solutions to Pharaoh's difficulties. He was merely a communicator of God's truth to Pharaoh, which is just what every believer ought to be. He had to pass on the facts of life as defined by God. As a result, Pharaoh promoted him.

Conclusion:

You really want to serve God from political office? There's nothing wrong with that. But there will be a lot wrong with that, if you don't read the law of God, every day of your life.

#### 4.

*It is not the fundamentals of government that have let Australia down. It is the structure of practice; our failure to give honest application to the principles by which we claim to live; our tolerance of mediocrity in government and public administration; our disinclination to regard politics and public administration as proper employments of our finest talents; our naïve belief that, despite poor government, we will nevertheless prosper...*<sup>5</sup>

Jesus made it clear in Matthew 13:33: He expects the leaven of the kingdom of God to be at work in the communities of the world, through His people and the gospel. When that leaven is not present, the cooking process of the bread continues without it, and the bread finishes up entirely different.

We should not be surprised that a process of steady deterioration is taking place in the nation of Australia, and right across the world. Why? Because the leaven of the kingdom is rarely present. God's people rarely have anything to say of merit about public affairs, frequently because they have a false belief about a supposed dichotomy: "The church and politics don't mix."

The church and almost anything won't mix, when God's people have learned to do without His Word as their first principle of faith and practice in all spheres of life. Is it any wonder we are considered irrelevant? Our problem has been that we are.

But it hasn't got to be this way. 2,700 years ago, a little girl from Israel knew she could make a difference.

*Now Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man with his master, and highly respected, because by him the Lord had given victory to Aram. The man was also a valiant warrior, but he was a leper. Now the Arameans had gone out in bands and taken captive a little girl from the land of Israel; and she waited on Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would cure him of his leprosy." Naaman went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus spoke the girl who is from the land of Israel" (II Kings 5:1-4).*

This little girl had something to say to her master's wife. Her master took note of this, went and saw the prophet, took his advice and was healed. How easy was that?

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<sup>5</sup> J.W.C. Cumes, "A Bunch of Amateurs," 1988, p.188.

This should show us this fact: the God of the Bible has the solutions to personal, family, community and national problems. When God's people will go to His Word to find those solutions, He will reveal them. And this has reference to the totality of life: education, health, welfare, government, foreign affairs, economics, defence. The Bible speaks of all these things.

Jesus said to the Sadducees, "You are mistaken, not understanding the scriptures or the power of God (Mat.22:29). If we don't understand the scriptures, of course we'll be ignorant.

This means that we'll have to go back to square one, and find God's solutions to all these issues. It will require humility and a willingness to be taught.

*Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O Lord, and whom You teach out of Your law; that You may grant him relief from the days of adversity, until a pit is dug for the wicked. For the Lord will not abandon His people, now will He forsake His inheritance. For judgment will again be righteous, and all the upright in heart will follow it (Ps.94:12-15).*

Are you ready for this?

## 5.

One of the biggest mistakes Christians can make in Parliament, is to over-estimate what they can accomplish. This always causes disillusionment, because people expect their political leaders to do or accomplish what they promised.

William Gladstone, Prime Minister three times in the Victorian era in England, was fully aware of this. He wrote,

*We live at a time when there is a disposition to think that the Government ought to do this and that and that the Government ought to do everything. There are things which the Government ought to do, I have no doubt. In former periods the Government have neglected much, and possibly even now they neglect something; but there is a danger on the other side. If the Government takes into its hands that which the man ought to do for himself it will inflict upon him greater mischiefs than all the benefits he will have received or all the advantages that would accrue from them.*

Yes, it's hard to explain to people that less government is better, because we've all grown up with so much government intrusion. The modern expectation in the West is that wherever you go, there will be some arm of government (Federal, State or local), there that you can call on for help. It doesn't matter that it will cost us an arm and a leg, mind you. We're supposed to be used to Big Government, and the regular intrusions of some bureaucracy.

*This is our world. A top-down social-democratic state where elites are patronised, competition is controlled, where private initiative is stifled, free speech is abridged and*

*where the electorate is increasingly state dependent. Here, big government colludes with big labour and big business to socialise losses at taxpayer expense.<sup>6</sup>*

But all this will have to change. Our addictions to Big Government and the high taxes required to feed the monstrosity need to be brought to an end, and the people of God are those that have to take the responsibility for this.

The most important place for this to commence, is the home and family. Parents need to know that it is their task, not the State's, to raise, educate and care for children. This requires educational action by parents, pulling their children out of school, and home schooling them.

Parents need to care for their children's health, themselves. Don't expect the Department of Health to take it over. It's a taxpayer funded bureaucracy: self-serving, like all bureaucracies.

Parents need to be self-taught about diet, exercise, nutrition and hygiene, and be communicating their knowledge to their children.

Families need to be responsible for welfare. What about Grandma and Grandpa? Who is caring for them? Who should be caring for them? The best people to care for Grandma and Grandpa is their family; never a Department.

All of these things take time, work, money and responsibility, and the great bulk of it begins with the family; this is what responsible families can do well.

The next level of institutional responsibility is the church, and it has a massive task, to both teach the community about the fundamentals, and to practically care as well, firstly for its own people.

*So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith (Gal.6:10).*

#### Conclusion:

*Rearranging the chairs and parties in DC will not change anything. No major advance for conservative or Christian values has occurred in federal politics for decades with the sole exception of corporate tax rates. We need radically to decentralize power, loose the strings of federal and state grants, privatize the school systems, privatize money, banking, markets, health care and old age insurance, as well as everything else except an elected court and jury system.<sup>7</sup>*

You want to live in a Christian nation, where God is honoured? Good. It doesn't begin with the Parliament, but with the individual, the family and the church, all taking up their respective responsibilities in serving the Lord. Then, we may really see,

*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance (Ps.33:12).*

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<sup>6</sup> Maurice Newman, 'Malcolm Turnbull's Agile Nation must Avoid Politics of Envy,' "The Australian," 11/11/2015.

<sup>7</sup> Joel McDurmon, 'America's Greatest Fear (and Greatest Failure),' American Vision website, 10/11/2015.

## 6.

*The twentieth century has witnessed the beginning, development, and end of the most tragic experiment in human history: socialism. The experiment resulted in tremendous human losses, destruction of potentially rich economies, and colossal ecological disasters. The experiment has ended, but the devastation will affect the lives and health of generations to come.*

*The real tragedy of this experiment is that Ludwig von Mises and his followers -- among the best economic minds of this century -- had exposed the truth about socialism in 1920, yet their warnings went unheeded. -- Yuri Maltsev (1990).*

The next decade is likely to be one when the West in particular, has to endure painful economic lessons. Our experiments with government largesse which have been taking place now for generations, especially with the Club Med nations, but in other places as well, are going to end in pain. They've brought pain already: just go to Greece.

And what will need to happen then? Nations will need sound economic leadership. When there are too many hands going into the cookie jar, it gets depleted. What do we do about it?

We will have to re-think economics, and we'll have to re-think charity and care of the needy in the community. And that's only the beginning.

Serious economic constraints and growing poverty, have a way of challenging people's attitudes. The poor person wants a change of circumstances. But how can this come about?

This experience will be painful, but in the long-term, it will be good. We will have to seriously re-evaluate what government really can do, in the best interests of the community.

*The liberal believes in something like political salvation. He believes in political healing of every area of life. He believes that federal power, coupled with federal money, can make society better. Therefore, he is active in politics, he puts faith in politics, and he puts a whole lot of money in politics. He sees political mobilization is the heart of social transformation.<sup>8</sup>*

Change will necessitate grass-roots involvement. The church will have the opportunity to speak, and influence the nations of the world.

Up till now, we haven't been good at this. We haven't been good at it, because our focus has been so far removed from the Bible. And the nations of the world have suffered as a result. What do we have?

*Mist in the pulpit- fog in the pew.*

Today, it is common to speak of "the compassionate society." Society should be compassionate towards its needy people, but it should be a private matter for individuals, families and private institutions. Why is that?

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<sup>8</sup> Gary North, "Why Conservatives have lost the Political Battle for America's Soul," 23/4/2012.

The Bible makes no case for governments hand-outs for the needy. It does make a case for smaller government, less tax, and more freedom (see I Samuel 8). Jesus' story of The Good Samaritan (Luke 10) was about a compassionate individual with an animal, time, bandages, wine, oil and money, who chose to help a needy person. But, he wasn't compelled to.

*This was selfless assistance. The Samaritan had no guarantee of repayment. Still, he helped the man. Why? Because he understood that the man was his neighbour. They were both on the same road, facing the same risks. They shared a common environment. They were therefore neighbours. The Samaritan understood Jesus' ethical principle, which we call the golden rule: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:31).<sup>9</sup>*

What has happened now for generations, is that communities have become addicted to welfare, and the recipients of welfare always want more. And as a consequence, the Welfare State has grown immeasurably. Its foundations were always wrong and seriously flawed, and now it's become a monstrosity based on the politics of redistribution, requiring vast sums of our taxes (along with debt) to maintain. We've dug ourselves into a hole.

Christians must identify these facts:

a) The days of the welfare state are numbered.

Real charity has always been a grass-roots thing. It has nothing to do with governments, or bureaucracy. All they can do is forcibly confiscate money from some people in the community, and distribute it to others. Well, Robin Hood apparently knew something about that, too. But do we think his was the best way?

If it wasn't the best way, why do we continue with it today, calling it Social Security? The one political mechanism around the world more than any, that has brought nations of the West to the edge of an economic abyss.

What can we learn from this? When charity becomes politicised, it's no longer charity, just theft and redistribution, under a cloak of legitimacy.

b) We must be those who are getting about the business of raising up viable, Biblical solutions.

### Conclusion:

Now is the time for the grass-roots to begin to get ready. We'll have to think about the ideology of true Biblical charity, it's very distinct roots in the law of God, and how it must be implemented in the modern era.

You think it can't be done?

It has to be done, by the church. If we leave it in the hands of the politicians and bureaucrats to solve our problems, we will simply get more of the same. And is that what we really want, all over again? When what you've done has got you into a hole, it's time to quit digging and change your plans.

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<sup>9</sup> Gary North, "Treasure and Dominion," 2000, ch.20: "The Good Samaritan and the Concept of Neighbour."

It's time to prepare, time to act. God's glory requires it. Let's roll up our sleeves, pray and plan. Before long, we'll be needed-desperately.

## 7.

There are a lot of people who want to get into Parliament, and their motives vary considerably. Of course, people will talk about their desire to serve the community, which is laudable and acceptable to all. But history shows us that "all that glitters isn't gold."

The Bible speaks about the kind of people who want to govern. I think everyone interested in this ought to be familiar with the parable that Jotham told, in Judges 9. (To get the context, you really need to read the whole chapter).

The point is, some people really do have ulterior motives. Because of original sin, secret and devious motives are normal to fallen men. Of course, people can say they want to serve the community by being in government, but as the Bible says, "...the inward thought and the heart of a man are deep" (Ps. 64:6).

As Jordan wrote,

*The point of the parable [of Judges 9:7-21] is that good men do not desire to lord it over others. Good men are happy being productive for God and for their fellowmen. They realize that the road to greatness is the way of the servant, as their Lord taught (Mk.10:42-45). The only kind of men who desire political authority for its own sake are bramble men — unproductive men who seek to attain fame and fortune by taking it from others who are productive...*

*The bramble is not oriented toward productive work. Rather, he is oriented toward tyrannical rule. He represents the ungodly man who builds up a society based on taking what other people have laboured to produce. His is a socialistic society, based on massive confiscation of the wealth of other people, their hard earned savings and capital. His is an imperialistic society, based on the conquest of weaker people and of their production. His is a slave society, based on the forced labour of other people. The bramble society is indeed the society of the curse.*

*Those who greatly desire to be kings are usually the least qualified for the post. Far wiser government generally comes from those who only reluctantly shoulder the heavy burdens of office. The good, wise trees were reluctant; the bramble was anxious to rule.<sup>10</sup>*

You don't have to look too hard in the history of the twentieth century to find bramble rulers, whose pattern of rule was destructive. Before he and his fellow Nazis attained power, Joseph Goebbels wrote,

*One should not believe that parliamentarianism will be our Damascus... we come as enemies! Like the wolf tearing into a flock of sheep, that is how we will come.<sup>11</sup>*

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<sup>10</sup> James Jordan, "Judges: God's War on Humanism," 1985, p.165-166.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in M. Cohen and J. Major (Editors), "History of Quotations," 2006, p.753.

A nation in rebellion against God won't want to be ruled by the godly; just the opposite. The further a people departs from God, the more likely it is that they will choose bramble rulers. When Israel was in rebellion against God, it was reflected in who they wanted to lead them. When he was confronted by Moses over the matter of the golden calf, Aaron claimed that the people said to him,

*Make a god for us who will go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him (Ex.32:23).*

Hundreds of years later, speaking through Hosea concerning Israel, God said that

*They will not return to Egypt, but Assyria-he will be their king because they have refused to listen to Me. The sword will whirl against their cities, and will demolish their gate bars and consume them because of their counsels. So My people are bent on turning from Me... (Hos.11:5-7).*

Conclusion:

Fallen men are consistent: they behave as fallen men, and they want their leaders to do so, too. They do not readily welcome into their ranks those whose lives testify against them, and won't seek such as their leaders. This creates problems for believers who are enthusiastic about representation.

## 8.

*For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this (Isa.9:6-7).*

This Messianic promise given through Isaiah, some 700 years before Christ, began to have its fulfilment at the birth of Jesus Christ. It contains some of the definitions of godly government: a government of peace, upheld with justice and righteousness.

It is important to recognise that almost everyone believes in these terms. Peace, justice and righteousness are laudable ideals for all people. But here's the problem. Humanists want to re-define the terms according to their own definitions, while those of the Islamic faith want to re-define them too, according to their own.

What's to be done?

We have to stay within Biblical guidelines, being governed by God's law. The Bible tells us that "...Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne" (Ps.97:2). We have to let Biblical standards guide us, or suffer the consequences. We are suffering those, today.

Let's be blunt. Murder is a capital crime according to scripture, punishable by death. There are no exceptions. This originated in Noah's day, and is reaffirmed in the Mosaic law. God said to Noah,

*Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man (Gen.9:6).*

Murder is the deliberate taking of an innocent life. The abortionist is a murderer, because they are taking the life of an innocent person, even when it's in a hospital. The woman who asks for an abortion, is a murderer too. Western governments today sanction the murder of babies in the womb, in the same way that Pharaoh ordered the Hebrew babies to be murdered in Moses' era (Ex.1:15-22), and the Nazis sanctioned the killing of Jews, 70 years ago. Thus our nations are no less guilty before God, today.

There are no excuses for the murder of the innocent, and the Biblical language is both clear and strong:

*There are six things which the Lord hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood... (Prov.6:16-17).*

Dropping bombs on civilians or machine-gunning them is murder. These are innocent people, not engaged in warfare, and as such are to be protected from harm. There are US Presidents and military officers alive today, who could and should be charged with murder. Innocent people perished because of their orders. We might find the brash, abusive and unwarranted invasions and attacks around the world suddenly stopped, and people were left alone.

No one is exempt from Biblical law, including kings and political leaders: "The same law shall apply to the native as to the stranger who sojourns among you" (Ex.12:49).

Humanistic law structures since before Pharaoh, have been always authoritarian, oppressive and abusive. As nations have turned from God, that is how their law structures have deteriorated. Consider France today, 226 years after the French Revolution. That was an evil and oppressive revolution that quickly degenerated into a blood-bath.

France's biggest earners today pay 85% tax. You earned \$1 million last year? Pay \$850,000 in taxation. Could you blame the big earners of France for getting out?

Every society that rejects God's law degenerates into oppression, and while that nation refuses to repent, it worsens every generation.

Why? Because the spiritual, social and legal seeds of regeneration, found in God, His law and the Gospel, are consistently rejected; thus there is no possibility for real improvement. The scripture says that "You rebuke the arrogant, the cursed, who wander from Your commandments" (Ps.119:21).

### Conclusion:

When the church takes God's law seriously again, and His law is taught in church as being godly, normal and best for society, rather than abnormal, we will begin to make progress- we'll begin to have authority in the nations of the world.

But all that takes time, faithfulness and obedience, beginning in the church. The church will have to take Biblical law seriously, as the Psalmist did:

*I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts. I will also speak of Your testimonies before kings and shall not be ashamed (Ps.119:45-46).*

Is that what you're ready for?

## 9.

*"Here I am; bear witness against me before the Lord and his anointed. Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? I will restore it to you." They said, "You have not defrauded us or oppressed us or taken anything from any man's hand" (I Sam.12:3-4).*

Samuel was sensitive about oppression. He was clearly an authoritative leader and prophet in Israel, but as a servant of God, he wanted to be a faithful servant. The idea that he could line his own pockets while he served the Lord was abhorrent to him.

His approach to his service as a prophet was similar to Nehemiah, a later governor of Judah. He wrote that

*Moreover, from the day that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, for twelve years, neither I nor my kinsman have eaten the governor's food allowance. But the former governors who were before me laid burdens on the people and took from them bread and wine besides forty shekels of silver; even their servants domineered the people. But I did not do so because of the fear of God (Neh.5:14-15).*

Both of these faithful servants of God understood something of the potential for the abuse of power by leaders: political, religious or any other kind. And they would have nothing to do with it.

This is the Biblical norm. When Daniel began to distinguish himself because of his extraordinary abilities, others were envious, and wanted to find grounds of accusation against him. But the Bible says,

*they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him (Dan.6:4).*

These three Biblical examples show us how good administration functions: no shady deals, no broken promises, no cash filled brown envelopes, no oppression of the people, no partiality. And all based on one thing: faithful adherence to the law of God.

The Messianic promises relating to Jesus Christ continue this theme:

*And He will delight in the fear of the Lord, and He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make a decision by what his ears hear, but with righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; and He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips He will slay the wicked (Isa.11:3-4).*

## 10.

*The Bible, thus, sets forth special punishments for the man of power who oppresses the poor. He is abusing his God-given office and power, and his punishment is especially severe. The powerful man who uses his power to steal and destroy something belonging to a poor man should be required to make four-fold restitution.<sup>12</sup>*

Despite Lord Acton's often quoted saying from 150 years ago, that "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely," the problem with power is not its presence, but its abuse.

How can I say this?

In any society at any given time, there are always powerful people, who have ways and means of getting things done. This is not wrong. It is wrong, when that power is used unethically; not according to God's law.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Jethro, Boaz and Job, were clearly powerful men in their society. Abraham had men at his disposal numbering hundreds (Gen.14:14), as did Job (Job 1:3; 42:12). The key to their ethics? They understood and observed God's law.

As Rushdoony wrote,

*Power is inescapable in any social order: it can either be concentrated in the state, or it can be allowed to flourish wherever ability makes it possible among the people. This decentralized wealth means also decentralised and independent power. Instead of a concentration of power in the state, there is instead a decentralization of power which moves in terms of varying and independent goals... in a free economy, property is freed from the restrictions of the state because it is under the restrictions of the family and of a religiously oriented community.<sup>13</sup>*

The critical issue concerning power is its ethical use, not its elimination from society. The Ten Commandments are not there for a joke. This is why we have Constitutions, for governments (as much as individuals), have been prone to abuse their power. Constitutions have their origins in a Biblical view of man.

Even before Israel entered the promised land and had chosen a king, God put limits on what he'd be allowed to do (see Deut.17:14-20). When they did decide to have a king, God warned them through Samuel what he'd be like (I Samuel 8), and then when he was invested (I Sam.11), "Samuel told the people the ordinances of the kingdom, and wrote them in a book" (v.25). There had to be a source of authority over and apart from the king, and that authority was God's law.

Saul was an evil-doer and an abuser of his power, just as God said he would be. His successor David also abused his power. He stole Uriah's wife, and when she fell pregnant to David, he

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<sup>12</sup> James Jordan, "The Law of the Covenant," 1984, p.271.

<sup>13</sup> Rousas Rushdoony, "The Politics of Guilt and Pity," 1995, p.237.

hatched a scheme through Joab and had him murdered through the Ammonites who Israel was fighting against (II Sam.11:14-26), and then married her.

God judged him severely. He sent the prophet Nathan to him to confront him in his evil, and predict what the outcome would be (II Sam.12:1-15). Not only did the child of their adultery die (II Sam.12:14-18), but over time, three of David's other sons died violently: Amnon (II Sam.13), Absalom (II Sam.18), and Adonijah (I Kings 2).

David repented and escaped with his life, but God extracted four-fold restitution, nonetheless.

His example serves as a warning for anyone in high office: don't abuse your power, for God Who never changes (see Heb.13:8), will come after you, and it won't be funny.

This fact should direct us back to the parable that Nathan told David, in his confrontational trap (II Sam.12:1-7). Nathan indirectly likened David to a rich sheep owner, who "had a great many flocks and herds" (v.2), but stole a "little ewe lamb" (v.3) from a poor man. Thus in Nathan's parable, it wasn't just theft that David had perpetuated, but theft perpetuated through the gross abuse of power. When David responded to the parable's alleged injustice, he exclaimed to Nathan,

*As the Lord lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die. He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion (II Sam.12:5-6),*

Nathan had him trapped. David had incriminated himself.

Is there a New Testament correlation to this? Yes, there is.

Zaccheus was a tax-collector; a person who though despised, had considerable power in Israel in Jesus' day. When he was converted, he said,

*Behold Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much (Luke 19:8).*

#### Conclusion:

The use of power isn't wrong of itself. It is wrong when it is not used in accordance with God's law, and God promises to judge those who from positions of power, abuse the innocent, just as David did.

People who profess His name when acting from a position of power, had better ensure there is consistency between their words and their actions, or else they will bring God's Name into disrepute. And our confidence is always:

*This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success (Joshua 1:8).*

*“The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me, ‘He who rules over men righteously, who rules in the fear of God, is as the light of the morning when the sun rises, a morning without clouds, when the tender grass springs out of the earth, through sunshine after rain’ ” (II Sam.23:2-4).*

This passage makes it clear. Godly leaders will be perceived as being a blessing and a relief by those they lead. This places them in direct contrast to the Pharisees of Jesus’ day. Jesus said about them, “they tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger” (Mat.23:4).

Godly government will not be oppressive, but liberating. The government of Jesus Christ promises good news to the afflicted and the broken-hearted, and will mean liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners (Isa.61:1).

And this liberty will have direct economic application to individuals, families and churches, for if we take I Samuel 8 seriously, the overall taxation levels of a godly government will be under 10%.

This may seem joyful to many people, and indeed it should be. But there cannot be lasting liberty in a nation without individual responsibility, and this must always begin in the church. It is a contradiction and a folly to think that there can be godly government apart from a godly nation, for people always chooses leaders who are like themselves; a sobering thought.

If I want my nation to be godly, I must be tithing to my local church, taking responsibility for my children’s education, health and welfare, and not leaving these things to “professionals,” and bureaucrats, playing an active part in my church and contributing to its well-being by whatever means are necessary, caring for the elderly in my family (if they are still present), and laying aside monies for my own latter years, along with my own children and grandchildren (Prov.13:22).

When this is embraced by a core group who will lead the way, it can lead to great changes, leading to a significant level of decentralisation within a nation. Power no longer centrally utilised politically, but spread throughout the community in countless local institutions, beginning with individuals, families, churches and businesses. The role of civil government thus is markedly reduced, as the roles it has assumed today (to our shame and detriment), are steadily taken up through the community where decisions are made locally, and carried out.

Will this means massive changes? Of course. But they won’t be impositions from the top down. They can only be implemented amongst the grass-roots of the community, beginning in the church, which is “...the pillar and support of the truth” (I Tim.3:15). Wesley’s preaching in England changed England, from the grass-roots up.

This is exciting to consider, but is all predicated on individual, family and church responsibility. Someone, sometime has to do the heavy lifting, which for generations we’ve left with civil government.

Perhaps the greatest encouragement we should receive in this, is that God is with the responsible and obedient, who will accept His challenges and move forth accordingly.

Are you ready?

It begins and ends with the law of God, and being faithful to it. Roll up your sleeves and get started.

## 12.

*Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your son, and also your son's son, for you have delivered us from the hand of Midian." But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the Lord shall rule over you" (Judges 8:22-23).*

Gideon was not thrilled by the idea of having the political leadership of Israel gifted to him and his sons. Why? He'd just had God grant him the task of temporary military leadership of Israel, and though he'd tasted success, he was hardly ambitious for more. To seek political leadership in Israel's state, would be like asking for a poisoned chalice.

I can hear him saying,

*Political leader of Israel? Well, wouldn't that be a joy! Didn't you hear about what happened at Succoth and Penuel? (Judges 8:4-8). I was hastening after the invaders of the nation, and the locals wouldn't even give me and my men any bread! We were being invaded then. What would it be like to lead Israel, if we were at peace?*

Gideon's military experience showed him that political leadership of Israel would be no cakewalk, given its religious state. He'd had a first-hand taste of the state of the nation, and it wasn't good. What sensible person would want to lead it, in its present situation? Frankly, none.

This is why we have to be ruthlessly realistic about Christians involving themselves in politics. What really matters is the religious state of the nation-any nation. When Israel was in apostasy before Saul, it was intent on making a dreadful choice for a political leader. The priesthood was corrupt under Eli, and so the nation was corrupt. It wanted a king to centralise authority, and he proved to be a disaster.

If a nation is in rebellion against God (as all of the West is today), a Christian being given leadership has a very challenging task. He has to lead a nation whose religious views (and bear in mind: all law is religious in orientation) are fundamentally different to his. Most people would be opposed to him.

It would be harder than the task Moses had, leading the children of Israel.

What the nations of the world need to do, is to seek first the kingdom of God, and bow the knee to Jesus Christ. That is what Gideon was really implying, in an Old Testament context.

II Chronicles 7:14 begins with the responsibilities of "My people," and ends with God promising to "...heal their land." It makes no mention of political leaders. So far as God is concerned, the buck stops with the people of God, and no one else. They are the ones who are to have the leavening influence in the nations of the world, and if the nations of the world are in decline, it is because the church's leavening influence has gone.

Conclusion:

So where does true reform have to begin? Not with politics, but with “My people,” God’s people. And that will be a long-term process, beginning with individuals, families and churches that set their hearts to seek and obey God.

Is that what we are really ready for?