

Christian Action Ministry Newsletter

Involving the Christian in Community Action

May—June, 2004 ☆ Vol. 14, Number 3

Inside

America & Christian Faith

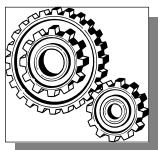
Part I

By
Dick Trudell

America and Christian Faith

A two-part article pertinent to the current election year
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If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please call 655-0280, email, or contact our website



In the Works

Candidate questionnaire Presentation materials Voter Registration

Are you interested in becoming involved? CAM is looking for interested and active people to act as liaisons to their church, helping to keep the Christian community informed. Contact CAM at 372-6442.

As we enter another political season, it is time to reflect on the Christian's place in society — more particularly about a Christian's place in American government. I will address some basic questions in this and upcoming newsletters. In this issue we will discuss four questions. The first two are...

“Should we as Christian men and women become involved in our government?”

Is there any scriptural basis for involvement?”

First of all, let me state that I was brought up thinking politics was a dirty word, and I still don't like the idea of taking up my free time getting involved. But I found out that politics is just another way of saying government — and that is something that affects us all. Can we, as Christian men and women, really mix our religious beliefs with society's laws that govern us? I wonder what our forefathers would have thought about that? Do you want to know what Noah Webster said?

“The moral principles and precepts contained in the Scriptures ought to form the basis of all civil constitutions and laws. All the miseries and evils which men suffer from: vice, crime, ambition, injustice, oppression, slavery, and war, proceed from their despising or neglecting the precepts contained in the Bible.”



Not bad! And he went on further to say...

“The principles of all genuine liberty, and of wise laws and administrations are to be drawn from the Bible and sustained by its authority.”

A reporter once asked a question, “Do you know what the two greatest problems in America are?” A man responded, “I don't know and I don't care.” The reporter answered, “You got both of them!” I was in that same boat once, not really caring what the government did — after all, what could I do about it? Besides, I had plenty of other things to worry about.

As a Christian community, we have been guilty of collectively ignoring what we can do about it. The result is evident in our society today. We have not insisted that Christian ideals guide our policy-making and our laws. I've had men and women in my own church tell me they don't vote and aren't interested! Sadly, the majority of Christians in this country don't vote. Nor do they bring their morals to the voting booth and help elect moral men and women to office. To draw once again from

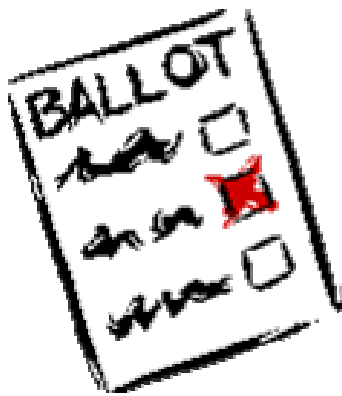
“If we ever forget that we are One Nation Under God, then we will be a Nation gone under.” - Ronald Reagan, 1984

(Continued from page 1)

Noah Webster...

“...The Christian religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children, under a free government ought to be instructed...No truth is more evident...than that the Christian religion must be the basis of any government intended to secure the rights and privileges of a free people.”

What is the biblical basis for us, as Christians, to be involved in our government? A clear-cut example in Deuteronomy 17:15 reads...



“...be sure to appoint over you the king the Lord chooses. He must be from your own brothers. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother Israelite.”

What does that really mean? “Be sure to appoint over you the king...” We don’t have a king, but that admonishment includes your selectmen, coun-

cilmen, mayor, representatives, senators, governor and president. We appoint them when they are elected to office.

What about the phrase “...the king the Lord chooses.” Does that mean that God will appoint them and we don’t have to do anything? I don’t think so! What it means is that God will place a burden on the hearts of some Christian men and women to seek public office. We have to search for those godly men and women, support them both with efforts and finances, and vote for them.

The scripture continues, “He must be from your own brothers.” Is the person you are voting for a Christian? Or if not, does he stand up for Christian ideals? I don’t think it is necessary to vote only for Christians, but you shouldn’t vote for someone who doesn’t believe in the same principles you do! Does the person you are considering support abortion? Are they in favor of same-sex marriage? What is their stand on pornography? Do they want to see the state take control of your children? These are questions you must ask yourself.

The answer lies in the rest of that scripture, “Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother Israelite.” If a candidate supports abortion or same-sex marriage, pornography, or wants to replace the family with the state, that candidate is a foreigner and not

your brother. If you say, “Oh, I can overlook those issues because he promises me free health care,” you are abrogating your biblical responsibility to appoint your brother.

Where it becomes a little more difficult is when you are faced with candidates that don’t fully support a Christian agenda, but one may be closer than the other. Neither can be considered your brother; both are foreigners.

Is a little righteousness better than none? It is likely that you will have to make this decision in several races. If I closely read Deuteronomy 17:15, I am undecided whether or not to support the lesser of two evils. In the bigger picture however, I may have already abrogated my responsibility by not ensuring that there was a candidate whom I could fully support. However, taking ground little by little has a long history in the Bible.

Bringing the government closer to Godly principles appears by history to be a wise choice. George Washington said this...

“It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.”

George Washington set an example that led America into 200 years of unprecedented political and national prosperity.

I clearly think we can draw the conclusion that, “Yes, we have to be involved and there is a scriptural basis for it.”

Let’s look at the last two questions.

“Isn’t politics a dirty business that Christians should stay away from?”

and

“Shouldn’t we only be concerned with saving souls?”

When we look at the question about politics being a dirty business, the usual argument that is put forward for non-involvement is found in Mark 12 – “Render to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”

Well, what is Caesar’s? Is it just our taxes? No, it is also our abilities and our duty to serve. Remember that God instituted government for us. One of our duties should be a willingness to conduct our governmental affairs in a manner pleasing to God. Our nation was founded on this. James Madison said...



**“Stand with anybody that stands right.
Stand with him while he is right,
and part with him when he goes wrong.
Abraham Lincoln**

“We have staked the whole future of American civilization, not upon the power of government, far from it. We have staked the future of our political institutions ... upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God.”



This country was founded by and for moral, religious people. Try this one from John Adams...

“We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion ... Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It

is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

He further said...

“Statesmen ... may plan and speculate for liberty, but it is religion and morality alone which can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand. The only foundation of a free constitution is pure virtue.”

It doesn't sound like our founders thought politics was a dirty word, or that we ought not to mix the two. Let's look at the second part of the question.

What about concentrating on saving souls? Isn't that what the Great Commission says? Yes - the first part. But look at all of Matthew 28:19-20 ...

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

How can we teach others to obey God's commands if we allow the laws that govern us to become ungodly? How can God's Word be spread if we have a government that sup-

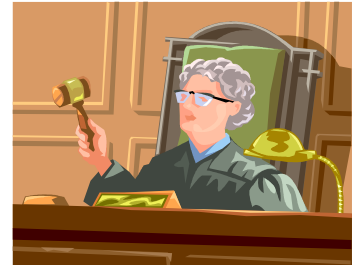
presses it or ridicules it? If part of our commission is to teach others to obey God's law, doesn't it follow that we have to be involved in the lawmaking to ensure that man's laws follow God's design? Follow this line of thought by the Supreme Court of South Carolina in 1846:

“...What constitutes the standard of good morals? Is it not Christianity? There certainly is none other. Say that it cannot be appealed to, and ... what would be good morals? The day of moral virtue in which we live would, in an instant, if that standard were abolished, lapse into the dark and murky night of ... immorality.”

Lately we have been subjected to the court's decisions on displaying the Ten Commandments. Do you want to hear what a former Senate Judiciary Committee had to say in 1853?

“...Religion...must be considered as the foundation on which the whole structure rests...In this age there can be no substitute for Christianity...the great conservative element on which we must rely for the purity and permanence of free institutions.”

“...The great vital and conservative element in our system is the belief of our people in the pure doctrines and divine truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ...”



That doesn't sound like our current courts, does it?

As Christian men and women we have to be concerned not only with saving souls, but we have to disciple and ensure a godly society in which to live. That means getting involved in our own governmental affairs.

In our next newsletter I will address the following questions. *“Isn't there a separation between the Church and the State outlined in our Constitution?”* and *“If, as everyone says, you can't legislate morality, why try?”* □

Dick Trudell is a Board member of the Christian Action Ministry Network and a member of Community Bible Church in South Burlington.



“Ours was the first revolution in the history of mankind that truly reversed the course of government, and with three little words; ‘We the people.’ ‘We the people’ tell the government what to do, it doesn't tell us. ‘We the people’ are the driver, the government is the car. And we decide where it should go, and by what route, and how fast. Almost all the world's constitutions are documents in which governments tell the people what their privileges are. Our Constitution is a document in which ‘We the people’ tell the government what it is allowed to do. ‘We the people’ are free.

Ronald Reagan

What can I do?



Faith without works is dead
James 2:17

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www.christianactionministry.com

As we start our summer season in Vermont, it is important to note that issues affecting us as Christians do not take a long summer vacation. We have same-sex marriage working its way through our courts against the will of the people, elected officials performing illegal same-sex marriages, and Supreme Court hearings on taking out “under God” from our Pledge of Allegiance.

And, of course, the political season is underway. Take the time to find good candidates and support them, not only with your money, but with your time. If we truly want to be blessed by God, we have to ensure that our government acts in a godly manner.

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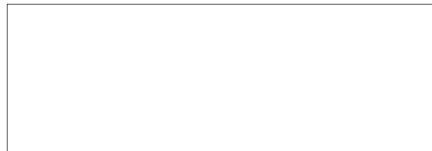
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Next Meetings

*May 3, 7:00 pm
No. Ave. Alliance Church
Burlington, Vt.
June 7, 7:00 pm
Maranatha Christian Church
Williston, Vt.*

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in
Vermont!**



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