

What Does the Bible Say about a Christian's Moral Responsibility in the Culture? Pastor Edward D. Seely, Ph.D.

1. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines moral as, “of or relating to principles of right and wrong in behavior.”
2. Thus, the first philosophical question my topic raises, and it's crucial, is the epistemological question: How do you know, i.e., on what basis do you believe what is right and wrong and what the moral responsibilities of Christians are? What authoritative base do you have?
 - a. Is the law of the land your authority?
 - Generally, yes, though it's not the highest authority. (Romans 13:1-5)
 - But what do you do when a law conflicts with the Bible? In fact the problem here is that many people determine what is right and wrong primarily by the law of the land. The law is a teacher. The law (a human document made by people whose nature has been corrupted by the disobedience of our first ancestors, Adam and Eve) becomes their standard; they fail to discern that some laws are unjust when contrasted with the highest standard, the Bible, believed by the people of God throughout all time to be His Word.
 - We often hear lawmakers in Washington and elsewhere say upon passage of a bill, “Well it's not a perfect law, but...” as they try to justify compromising the truth for political gain.
 - For example, as soon as Roe v. Wade was upheld in the U.S. Supreme Court, an explosion of abortions occurred and continues; many if not most people who agree with abortion conclude that “abortion must be OK since it's the law.” They fail to see that there is a higher, moral, law above the law of the land, which even many non-Christians admit, because it is rooted in a natural law that observant people can see and will be judged by. (Romans 1:18-32; 2:12-16; 1 Corinthians 5:1)
 - b. Since for a Christian the Bible is our highest authority, we need to be guided in our answer to the question of what is right and wrong by Scripture. Many denominations also have derived a treasure trove of historic Christian theology drawn from the Bible that can also be used, but with the time constraints before us this evening, I need to stick with the Bible as the basis of my observations. The rest of what I have prepared on this subject is in this document and its updates and other postings on my Web site: www.fromacorntoak12.com.
 - c. The Bible, the Word of God to humankind, is our standard and authoritative guide as to what is moral, what is right and wrong, in human affairs. Since God called some 40 humans to write what he spoke, since those writers came from several cultures, and since God is sovereign over all people and cultures throughout the world, all that the Bible says is for all people and their cultures.
 - d. Thus, when a government policy (e.g., in Daniel 1) or law (e.g., in Daniel 6) conflicts with the Word of God, we obey God's Word, as the prophet did.

- Regarding governmental policy, obeying God may be done, as Daniel did, by asking the governmental authority to change the policy. (Daniel 1:1-21, esp. vss. 3-5, 8-9, 15-21)
 - Regarding a law of the land, obeying God may be done in the following ways:
 - We can ask the government to change the law, as, e.g., in the U. S. by contacting our representatives and asking them to put a bill through the legislative process that either amends or replaces the unjust law. (Cf. the wise, skillful, and courageous way Esther asked King Xerxes [Hebrew, Ahasuerus] to undo an unjust law the King had been tricked into signing. (Esther 3-10. See the texts which affirm speaking up instead of remaining silent for the good of the people. [4:14; 10:3]) If that doesn't produce the desired results, we try to elect officials who will make the required changes.
 - In the meantime, we can obey God, as Daniel did, by refusing to comply with the unjust law that opposes God's will. (Daniel 6:1-28, esp. vss. 3, 10-14, 21-28)
 - Of course, as God's Word teaches, civil disobedience can bring punishment. (Daniel 6:15-16; Romans 13:2,3)
 - Yet when we are obedient to God, he will bless us for our faithfulness. (Daniel 6:19-28) Notice in v. 22 we read that God saw Daniel as innocent in disobeying the law that contradicted God's will. Daniel said, "My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight."
3. The Christian's calling is to proclaim God's truth. "Speak the truth in love." (Ephesians 4:15) Jesus said, "If [his disciples] keep quiet, the stones will cry out." (Luke 19:40) This is our *raison d'être*, our reason for being; we are not called to be silent. And, the Scripture says, as we are faithful we will be mistreated, though not all the time, but the Holy Spirit will give us what we need to overcome that mistreatment and persevere. This is not heaven...that's coming for Christ's faithful followers. God simply calls us to be faithful in word and in deed. Recall the words of the great old hymn, "Trust and obey." God has called the church to be his mouthpiece, and it is through the church that he is primarily working to redeem his creation.
- a. Don't worry about someone disliking you or disliking what you are saying. Jesus said,
 - "Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man." (Luke 6:22 NIV)
 - To be universally liked is not a worthy goal: Jesus also said, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets." (Luke 6:26 NIV)
 - b. When tempted to not do or say anything, let us consider what our society will be like for our children and grandchildren if the issue about which we are concerned goes on as is without our saying anything.
 - In Deuteronomy 16:20 (NRSV) we read, "Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue...."
 - Further, the Holy Spirit will give us what we need to overcome that mistreatment and persevere. (Matthew 10:16-42)

- Recall also the comforting and encouraging words of Psalm 23, especially, in regard to the matter before us, verses 4-6:

[4] Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death [Hebrew: deep darkness], I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

[5] You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

[6] Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

4. Where in the Bible do we see God's people engaged in bringing his truth into their culture? We see such engagement throughout the Bible; look carefully at the following:
 - a. Exodus 3:7-10
 - b. Deuteronomy 10:17-22
 - c. Deuteronomy 16:18-20
 - d. Deuteronomy 18:9
 - e. Esther 4:1-17, esp. vss. 12-16; 10:1-3
 - f. Proverbs 15:1, 18
 - g. Proverbs 16:21, 24
 - h. Proverbs 28:5
 - i. Proverbs 29:2
 - j. Isaiah 5:8-13a, 15-16, 22-24
 - k. Jeremiah 18:5-10
 - l. Jeremiah 29:1-7
 - m. Ezekiel 22:1-3, 6-12, 15-16
 - n. Daniel 1:1-21, esp. vss. 3-5, 8-9, 15-21
 - o. Daniel 6:1-28, esp. vss. 3, 10-14, 21-28
 - p. Amos 5:21-24
 - q. Micah: 3:1-12
 - r. Micah 6:8
 - s. Matthew 5:13-20
 - t. Matthew 7:15-21
 - u. Matthew 10:16-42
 - v. Matthew 22:15-22
 - w. John 14:6
 - x. Acts 16:37-38; 22:25-29
 - y. Romans 13:1-7; see also vss. 8-14
 - z. Ephesians 2:8-10; esp. v. 10
 - aa. Ephesians 4:13-15
 - bb. Philippians 2:6-7
 - cc. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5a
 - dd. 1 Timothy 2:2
 - ee. 1 Peter 2:9-25
 - ff. 1 Peter 3:15
 - gg. Revelation 18:1-3, 9-15

5. Consider Jeremiah 29:1-7, God's Word to his people whom he was sending into exile due to their disobedience and sin, actually an act of love (Proverbs 3:11-12; Hebrews 12:1-13; John 3:16, 21) and a learning experience equipping them for the work he called them to do in order to effectively facilitate God's plan of redemption of the world through them. Similarly, we cannot lose sight of who we are and what God has called us to do in this context: the context of our Biblical roots (e.g., Galatians 3:26-29) and the context of Loveland, CO in the 21st century A. D. and wherever else God leads us.

¹ This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.

² (This was after King Jehoiachin and the queen mother, the court officials and the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen and the artisans had gone into exile from Jerusalem.)

³ He entrusted the letter to Elasah son of Shaphan and to Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. It said:

⁴ This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon:

⁵ "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce.

⁶ Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease.

- [As we read elsewhere in God's Word, such marriage was to be with fellow believers. It was very important then, as it still is, that believers marry fellow believers (and they should be demonstrating maturity in Christ.)

⁷ Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." (Jeremiah 29:1-7)

This passage provides a clear example of how God desires his people to engage and transform the culture in which they are living. Here and elsewhere throughout the Bible we see God calling his people to actively participate with him as he redeems his creation that is currently groaning in travail. (Romans 8:22) As Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world." (Matthew 5:13-14)

6. Our calling is to serve God in two dimensions, on two planes:
- a. Individually
 - 1) As an end in itself: evangelism and Christian witness is essential, not only for individuals to enter the Kingdom of God and have eternal salvation,
 - 2) but also as a means to an end: so they can experience the new nature and the power of the Holy Spirit to equip them for corporately partnering with God through whom he will work to accomplish his redemptive purposes.
 - Thus, personal evangelism and witness is both an end and a means. We cannot stop with helping an individual come to Christ.
 - b. Corporately
 - We are saved to serve. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

- We also need to be nurtured so we can mature into Christ-likeness in order to serve more effectively. (Ephesians 4:13-14)

7. Consider also Jeremiah 18:5-10 (NIV)

[5] Then the word of the LORD came to me...

[7] If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed,

[8] and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned.

[9] And if at another time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted,

[10] and if it does evil in my sight and does not obey me, then I will reconsider the good I had intended to do for it.

Some questions come to mind:

- In which of these two directions (in Jeremiah 18:5-10) is the United States headed?
 - Do the public worship services in your congregation include a prayer of confession (preferably early in the service, immediately accompanied by an assurance of pardon)?
 - Which of the candidates running for office on all levels in 2013 and 2014 are most likely to oppose evil and facilitate that which is good?
 - What mature, wise, honest, knowledgeable, righteous and courageous person(s) do you know who should be encouraged to run for public office, including the school boards, in years to come?
8. What can I learn from God's Word about what to do, how to become involved in exercising my moral responsibility in our culture?
- Most important point to actually do first: **Pray regularly.**
 - Pray for God to extend and nurture his Kingdom throughout this country and the rest of the world as well. This is our ONLY HOPE. Better trained teachers, more well written curricula, more sophisticated technology, more laws are not going to change human nature's inclination to sin and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23); we need his help.
 - The meaning of the Kingdom of God
 - Let us pray daily (I do) for God to extend and nurture the number of people in his Kingdom, primarily referring to his rule in human hearts and minds regenerated in Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit, throughout this country. As Christ's ambassadors, who've been given the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17-21), let's include in our prayers the rest of the world as well, the whole universe, which is "groaning...[while eagerly awaiting]...redemption." (Romans 8:22-23)
 - We remember that the whole world belongs to Christ by whom it was created. (Colossians 1:16) This reality was graphically described by a still oft-quoted

statement of one of Europe's greatest Christian theologians, Abraham Kuyper, who also served as premier of The Netherlands from 1901-1905:

- “There is not one square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, ‘Mine!’”
- c) Thus, God has called us to participate with him in his redemption of his creation in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. The only hope for our country, and for every other, is to repent of its evil and believe in and obey the one true God—Father, only-begotten Son Christ Jesus, and Holy Spirit—three distinct persons who share one essence from everlasting to everlasting.
 - d) Extending his Kingdom refers to the combined work of Christians and the Holy Spirit: our communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the resultant regeneration, rebirth, of those who believe by the operation of the Holy Spirit on their minds and hearts, thus changing their very nature and making possible their relationship with and service of God.
 - e) Nurturing refers to facilitating maturity in Christ. Let's not make the mistake, and poor witness, of those who may be regenerated, have the new nature, but are not growing and are stuck in elementary levels of progressive sanctification, the life-long process of growing in Christ-likeness. To use an analogy, in the process of growing from acorn to oaks of righteousness (Isaiah 61:3), some spiritual infants function in the acorn or no more than the seedling stage of sanctification. Let's keep growing in Christ and not unnecessarily act like nuts to even pagans to whom God has given an extra measure of His common grace. (Matthew 5:45)
- 3) Pray also that God calls fine candidates who would please him to run for each public office and that they are elected. Then support them, e. g., through prayer, voting, showing up at their speeches, a letter to the editor, and as able calling in to talk shows, and donations of time and money.
 - 4) Pray for God to lead the electorate in voting wisely, and rightly in his sight, regarding the proposals as well as the candidates on the ballot.
 - 5) Pray that God guides the governmental and school authorities to know what is best in His sight and to function accordingly, even at times when they personally don't want to do so but should, and can with God's intervention, because it is best for the country and their constituency in particular. (1 Timothy 2:2)
 - 6) Remember that God does answer the prayers of the righteous. (James 5:16-18)
 - a) Abraham pled for Sodom. (Genesis 18:16-32)
 - b) God answered prayer on behalf of the land and the plague was stopped. (2 Samuel 24:25)
 - c) God answered Elijah's prayers on behalf of the land. (1 Kings 18:41-45; James 5:16-18)
- b. Don't be afraid of criticism; it is part of walking in obedience to the Lord in this age.

- 1) In addition to what was observed above, remember the many passages of the Bible that address this matter, including 2 Timothy 3:12, “In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted....”
 - People will say and do unkind things, but that’s life in this age, especially for those of us who identify with Christ.
 - The apostle Peter added, “If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.” (1 Peter 4:14)
 - 2) Also keep in mind, and be comforted by, this thought: *Whose opinion counts most?* Don’t we care most about what God’s thinks and what his will is? Always keep God in the picture and remember also that he’s not only in the picture but he’s holding the picture! *His opinion counts infinitely more than all human opinions.* As the apostle Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, “...we make it our goal to please him,” i.e., the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:9)
 - 3) Remember and be comforted by the apostle Paul’s explanation of the realities in which we are engaged—those we see and those we don’t see that are behind and perpetrating those we see—as he wrote in Ephesians 6:10-18. Cf. Revelation 1-11 and 12-20, noting the significant turning point in chapter 12.
- c. Take More Action
- 1) Begin where you are comfortable, even if at first only in your family or with your best friend or by writing a letter to a public servant. Then, as the Holy Spirit gives you strength and encouragement directly and through others, you can do more.
 - 2) Talk
 - a) With family
 - b) With neighbors
 - c) With friends, starting with your best friends and others with whom you are most comfortable
 - d) Over lunch at work
 - e) At town hall meetings—in the plenary session or 1-1 after adjournment
 - f) Speak up in conversations
 - 1- If you have concerns about not knowing enough, tell what you do know. At least some of it is most likely unknown to the one(s) with whom you’re speaking. Further, if someone has heard what you’re saying, it is always good to have a reminder.
 - Consult the resources listed below for more information.
 - 2- If you still have concerns about not knowing enough, raise questions. Questions are powerful motivators. Propositional statements can be easily blown off; questions linger until resolution. (Social science and brain research indicate why this is true. Recall how often Jesus used questions to teach.) Questions to the heart of a matter often bring down a house built of cards.
 - g) Call an incumbent who is doing well.
 - 1- Thank him or her for his or her good work.

- 2- Before an election, when you are doing your homework to prepare how you will vote on issues and to decide on the candidates for whom you will vote, ask the incumbent who is doing well whom he or she would like to have elected for further support, e.g., on the school board, on the city council, or in the legislature.
 - h) Call in to radio talk shows and voice your opinion; provide factual information on subjects under discussion.
 - i) Call into the anonymous phone line of your local newspaper, e.g., “RH Line” of the *Reporter-Herald*, and other news media.
- 3) Write
- a) Letters to the Editor
 - b) E-mail, including to our representatives
 - c) E-mail, include friends
 - d) Use social media, for example
 - 1- Facebook
 - 2- Twitter
 - 3- Blog
- 4) Vote
- a) It has been well-established and frequently observed that one of the reasons we have many of the problems we do in the United States today is that far too many Christians do not vote, typically less than 50%! (*Voter Resource Guide*, Kenyn Cureton, p. 24. <http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF11D06.pdf>) Think about how much improved our country would be if Christians would become well-informed on the issues and vote!
 - 1- This reluctance of Christians to engage in political matters is not limited to the United States. Nigerian professor Dr. James B. Kantiok has written,

Many Christians will not participate in politics....They regard politics as a dirty game that Christians should avoid. This attitude is rooted in our colonial history and in a failure to distinguish between party politics and political participation. Political participation includes exercising one’s rights to vote and be voted for, speaking out against any wrong doing by those in power and holding leaders accountable for their actions....

While Christians tend to avoid political participation, Muslims understand its importance. Consequently, they control political power in many African states, even those where they are a minority. Unlike Christians, they do not believe in the separation of church and state because it encourages secularism.

Jesus, took did not separate religion and politics In his mission statement in Luke 4:18-19 he declared that his ministry was to those suffering various forms of bondage

and oppression, including economic oppression (poverty), physical oppression (diseases and disabilities), political oppression (injustice and oppressive rule) and demonic oppression (various forms of occult practices). These same evils plague Africa [and the United States] today....

Throughout history, the common people have turned to the church in times of need. It has followed Christ in recognizing their suffering and giving them a voice to speak out against injustice and oppression. Moral bankruptcy, corruption, poverty, disease and ignorance: all clearly call for Christian participation in politics.

...Christian leaders...have, however, disappointed their fellow Christians by their actions or lack of action regarding corruption in high places. One reason for their failure may be that they lacked support from fellow Christians and were thus exposed to the corrupting influence of non-Christians.

African [and American] Christians need to understand that the destinies of their nations rest on their political participation. As the Bible says, 'When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan' (Proverbs 29:2). Good people can enjoy life when the righteous are in authority, but people will always suffer under wicked regimes. (James B. Kantiok, "Christians and Politics" in the *Africa Bible Commentary: A One-Volume Commentary Written by 70 African Scholars*, Tokunboh Adeyemo, General Editor [Nairobi, Kenya: WordAlive Publishers, 2006], p. 1001.)

- 2- Thus, strong Biblical evidence exists that not only permits but requires God's people to engage the public square. At election time, begin by becoming well-informed on the issues, the candidates and what they stand for, have done, and are likely to do, and the propositions being put forth in elections, and **then vote as to which are most in accord with God's Word.** If you have any doubts about such matters, ask well-informed Christians in your church and/or your pastor for assistance.
- b) Vote for the candidate who will serve the country or the jurisdiction best. Ideally, as John Jay, the first U. S. Supreme Court Chief Justice, said, "...it is the duty—as well as the privilege and interest—of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers." (William Jay, *The Life of John Jay* [New York: J. & J. Harper, 1833], Vol. II, p. 376, to John Murray, Jr., October 12, 1816 quoted in David Barton, *America's Godly Heritage* [Aledo,

TX: WallBuilder Press, 1993], p. 21.) Billy Graham warned that “If America is to survive, we must elect more God-centered men and women to public office; individuals who will seek Divine guidance in the affairs of state.” (Quoted in *Voter Resource Guide*, Kenyn Cureton, p. 24)

- c) However, if the choice is between two candidates, neither of whom is a Christian, or the candidate who would do best is not a Christian, do not stay home on Election Day. Further, keep in mind that occasionally some candidates who claim to be Christians are either just pretending to be so or, if they truly are Christians, they are very immature; in either of those cases they may not be the best person for the office they are seeking. Your vote, or refusal to vote, is not a Christian statement. No one knows how you voted or that you did not vote, but failing to vote has negative, and sometimes grave, consequences for our society. For the good of the country, and for God, vote for the person who will function best in that office. **ALSO**, work actively to raise up the best candidate in the upcoming elections.
 - d) Don't try to punish a political party for what they've done wrong by voting for a poor candidate (unless the other is worse). Use more productive means to influence the party's choice of its candidates. Remember that for the first three centuries A.D., and in many countries today, Christians lived and still live in countries where the leader is not a Christian, nor is most of the population.
- 5) Sign petitions
 - a) Online petitions
 - b) Hardcopy petitions around town, e.g., in shopping areas, and petitions brought to your door
 - 6) Participate in special events that promote your cause
 - a) Rallies
 - b) Marches
 - c) If you are healthy, walk-a-thons and other fundraisers such as those involving bicycling
 - 7) Support organizations which engage and defend attacks on our Biblical and Constitutional foundations and traditions.
 - a) One such organization is the **American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ)**.

[As of the date of this post], one of the most recent successes of the ACLJ is the decision on September 10, 2013 in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York in which a case to eliminate the words “In God We Trust” from U. S. coins, filed by atheists, was thrown out of court for no cause. The court's rationale is informative and instructive. The ACLJ explains:

[Victory: In God We Still Trust](#)

By: CeCe Heil



[View this article on ACLJ.org](#)

On Tuesday, Judge Harold Baer of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York [dismissed](#) a case in which eleven individuals, self-identified as Atheists and Secular Humanists, along with two associations, New York City Atheists and the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), alleged that the national motto, “In God We Trust,” is unconstitutional. The plaintiffs’ sought to “strip the national motto from our Nation’s currency.”

Prior to Judge Baer’s order, we filed an [amicus brief](#) in support of The United States’ motion to have the case dismissed. Our brief was also filed on behalf of 41 United States Congressmen, The American Catholic Lawyers Association, and over 87,500 concerned Americans. In our brief we argued that “[i]t is commonly understood that our government, its Constitution, and its laws are founded on a belief in God.” Moreover,

the inscription of the national motto . . . on the nation’s currency does not violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. The national motto simply echoes the principle found in the Declaration of Independence that our freedoms come from God and not the state.

Our brief also noted that the national motto serves as a reminder that the “source of inalienable rights [is found] in a Creator rather than the government precisely so that such rights cannot be stripped away by government.”

Judge Baer accurately pointed out that prior decisions upholding the motto’s placement on currency, as well as the history and context of that placement cannot be ignored. [Stating](#) that,

[t]o do so would be to disregard the dicta from the Supreme Court, which this Circuit has instructed me to follow, and as well the reasoning in *Lemon* and its progeny. Taken together, they support only one conclusion: the inclusion of the motto on U.S. currency satisfies the purpose and effect tests enunciated in *Lemon*, and does not violate the Establishment Clause.

In light of increasingly extreme interpretations of the First Amendment's Establishment Clause, the dismissal of this case is welcome. It reaffirms the understanding that the Establishment Clause does not require the government to ignore the religious principles upon which this nation was founded.

We will continue to defend the First Amendment and the liberties that it protects and are pleased with the outcome of this case.

https://apps.facebook.com/aclj-social/american-heritage/victory-in-god-we-still-trust?code=AQBkt2ttdg2CZJ6uiAWKgy7Tyqbxr_oipRAi5sJwD6AGQWlgb_-KpYR9-CGdBRHa2z17uUoxxF77mFPWGanxrHHz7NjMsiZViX8oItF9npQGvFkq8EloPrJ0Vppzgthe955NumAYNZjqZsWIhTpYae9YUTbM0Nm97IWwPzfHzV6hVkYPCTM1aKOVy5QVcWxDzZ14CYwuQU9LmxB8bWTRmcpveoB4tPhrK3w_-bxHjHEP0g1QIoW_uaKPmNOGFMKssxPmQ4D4q8ajzb7_rXZTpPxb3vzjRyzkIMS9O_eQSifulg2kg9RwDpxz4dGzsu8oY#_
(Accessed 09/13/13)

b) Another such organization is the **Alliance for Protecting Freedom**.

In addition to its many other activities, the organization sponsors “Pulpit Freedom Sunday,” (more below) based on Ephesians 6:19-20, “that I may open my mouth boldly..., as I ought to speak.” (KJV) Pastors should seriously consider participating in this effort to assure freedom to speak the truth on any subject from the pulpit, which has been done throughout the history of the United States, including during the colonial period. The Alliance explains more about who they are, what they have done, and what they do on their Web site:

Alliance Defending Freedom is an alliance-building legal organization that advocates for the right of people to freely live out their faith. Over the past 19 years, Alliance Defending Freedom has **built alliances** with thousands of Christian attorneys and hundreds of like-minded organizations to keep the door open for the spread of the Gospel. Together, we work tirelessly to accomplish what none of us can do alone: protect and **defend YOUR religious freedom**.

For Faith. For Justice.

The enduring mission of Alliance Defending Freedom is to gain justice for those whose faith has been unconstitutionally denied in the areas of religious liberty, the sanctity of life, and marriage and family.

For more information logon to the Alliance Defending Freedom Web site at:

http://www.alliancedefendingfreedom.org/Home/Detail/7924?referral=I2015GENB0&utm_source=GOOGLE&utm_medium=cpc&utm_term=Alliance+Defending+Freedom&utm_campaign=Branded (Accessed 12/13/14)

Pastors and other elders: Consider participating in Pulpit Freedom Sunday. The IRS and other governmental agencies have misled pastors and other church leaders to think they cannot speak the truth from the pulpit or in other aspects of the life and work of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ concerning political issues and candidates. That misunderstanding and false impression, which stems from an unconstitutional 1954 amendment to the § 501(c)(3) tax exemption for charitable organizations that then Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson inserted to thwart his Republican challengers in Texas, is being successfully tested by the Alliance Defending Freedom.

On Pulpit Freedom Sunday sermons address political issues and candidates and then are sent to the Federal Government. This has been done since September 28, 2008 when 33 pastors joined in the effort that has been growing steadily. The Web site states that in 2012 (the last figures mentioned) 1621 participants submitted sermons, and to this date the government has not challenged a single sermon. Of possible causes the government has not attempted to take a church to court for such proclamation, the most likely is its awareness of the unconstitutionality of the Lyndon Johnson amendment that is the basis of the threat of losing tax exempt status. The Alliance is prepared to legally defend any church against any government threat to end the tax exempt status of the church for such sermons.

For more information on Pulpit Freedom Sunday, see the following and other information at this URL:

<http://www.alliancedefendingfreedom.org/content/docs/issues/church/Pulpit-Freedom-Sunday-FAQ.pdf> (Accessed 12/13/14)

- d. In the above ways, as you have opportunities, advocate that our governmental officials do what is right for as long as they can without fear of losing their elected position. Encourage them to stand for what is morally right and take the unwarranted heat that comes. Remind them that they can not only expect but value such opposition as a badge of recognition that they are taking the high road. For those who are Christians, remind them of God's Word that

prepares us for persecution when we are standing up for the Lord. For just two examples refer to the following:

In fact everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. (2 Timothy 3:12-13 NIV)

Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering.

Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated...

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him."

But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved. (Hebrews 10:32-33; 35-39 NIV)

Urge them to think of their elected job as the first elected officials in our country did: not a full-time life-long position. Such a perspective frees them to prioritize and do what is morally right over self-serving motivations. Encourage them further by reminding them that you and others will affirm their votes and other morally upright work with your votes and in other ways. Also let them know that if they are voted out of office for stands they take, God has other ways for them to serve and that he'll right all wrongs sooner or later. In the meantime the elected official's main goal is to do what is right in God's sight and not worry about reelection.

- e. Model Christ-likeness. Especially those of us who are believers in and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ must speak, write, and act in all ways in LOVE (as per 1 Corinthians 13:4-7). For example:
- 1) The Bible teaches that God created humankind good and acceptable to him but that the first humans, from which all of us have descended, disobeyed and corrupted our nature such that as Paul writes in Romans 3:23, "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," and thus no one by him or herself can enter the presence of God who is not only holy but holy, holy, holy, the Hebrew language's way of saying Most Holy, and the only one of God's characteristics that is repeated three times. (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8)
 - 2) Yet since he is loving to the core of his being, he is unwilling to destroy us, so he sent Christ and the Holy Spirit to change our being and provide the way to enter God's presence. (John 14:6)
 - 3) God calls his people with the new nature to mature in and become more and more like Jesus Christ in order to serve God effectively.
 - As one wise pastor said, "You cannot attract anyone to Christ if you are living your life in the gutter."

- People are watching us, and they can tell if we are genuine or phony, real or hypocrite. They are longing to see someone truly Christ-like. (Cf. 1 Peter 2:9-12. Note that the Greek word translated “see” in v. 12 [NIV] actually means a careful observation over an extended period of time; the value the pagans’ place on our lifestyles is not formed from a snap judgment.) We don’t have enough time now to examine all of Christ’s characteristics, but let’s look at a few.
- 1- Jesus obeyed God the Father.
 - a- God expects us to live in obedience to his will, which he has put forth in his Word, the Bible.
 - b- One example regarding morality is in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5a, “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified, that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust...” Take a moment to picture how much better life here on earth would be if even just this verse were put into practice?
 - 2- Jesus loved people.
 - What is this love? The English word love translates the original New Testament Greek word agape, the word that describes Jesus and the love he commands that we demonstrate in order that people know we are his disciples (John 13:34-35), even loving our enemies (Matthew 5:44). The apostle Paul defines that word, love, in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and includes in that definition that we are to be patient, kind, not envious or boastful, not arrogant or rude.

f. Be patient: Listen.

- 1) Most likely the other person isn’t all wrong. Hear him or her out and thereby “Earn the right to be heard.” Don’t interrupt; it’s rude and counterproductive, even if the other person is using that tactic to try to monopolize the conversation and prohibit you from making your point(s). Those who do such filibustering frequently fail, forgetting that because you have silenced someone, doesn’t mean you have persuaded him (or her).
 - a- After an appropriate time, say something like: “OK, let me see if I understand you; here’s what I hear you saying.” and then summarize the other’s main points. Then say, “Now have you thought about this...?”
 - b- People want to know you’ve heard them and understand their position. Such a statement is engaging and disarming. The other person knows you know what he or she is trying to say and then may be willing to hear what you want to say. Such an approach also tends to facilitate a more relaxed conversation.
- 2) Speak briefly to the point(s) the other has made that are the most important ones on which you have information.

g. Be kind: Don’t become angry (it’s not a motivator) or put the other person down or attack him or her in any way. Remember the basic laws of logic, in this case *argumentum ad hominem*, attacking the person, does not discredit his or her argument.

- 1) Secular proverb my dad taught me: “You catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar.”
 - 2) More valuable Biblical wisdom he also taught me (from the Book of Proverbs):
 - “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” (15:1)
 - “A hot-tempered man stirs up dissension, but a patient man calms a quarrel.” (15:18)
 - “The wise in heart are called discerning, and pleasant words promote instruction.” (16:21)
 - “Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.” (16:24)
 - Evil men don't understand the importance of justice, but those who follow the Lord are much concerned about it. (28:5)
9. The Founders cited the Bible more than any other source in the shaping of our country including the ideas they put into the Constitution. David Barton writes:

America’s system of government was deliberately and intentionally built upon religion and morality; it has subsequently enjoyed unprecedented success. America is now the world’s longest on-going constitutional republic, and to exist more than two centuries under the same governing document is an accomplishment unknown among contemporary nations. [Barton here cites the fact that while the United States has had just one government, France has had fifteen; and in just the twentieth century alone Russia has had four; Afghanistan five; and Poland, seven.]

Significantly, each nation had access to the same body of political philosophies and writings when forming their governments; yet our Founding Fathers evidently selected ideas that the other nations chose not to accept. What were the sources of the Founders’ successful ideas?

Political science professors believed that this question could be answered by examining a broad spectrum of writings from the Founding Era with the goal of identifying the sources cited in those writings. The researchers assembled 15,000 representative writings from that period and isolated 3,154 direct quotes in those writings. At the end of ten years, they had traced the quotes back to their original sources, thereby identifying the most frequently-cited sources of the Founding Era. (The results of that study may be found in the book *The Origins of American Constitutionalism*.)

The individual who was cited most often in the writings of the Founding Era was political philosopher Charles Montesquieu, with 8.3 percent of the quotes being taken from his writings. Legal scholar William Blackstone was next, with 7.9 percent of the quotes; and political philosopher and theologian John Locke was third, with 2.9 percent. These were the three most frequently-cited individuals during the Founding Era, but the single

most-cited source was the Bible, with 34 percent of the quotes coming from the Scriptures.

Significantly, that percentage is even higher when the source of the ideas used by individuals such as Montesquieu, Blackstone, and Locke are identified and included....Therefore, while thirty-four percent of the quotes in the representative writings of the Founding Era came directly from the Bible, many of the other quotes were taken from writers who, like Blackstone, had used the Bible to help arrive at their own conclusions. The Bible was far and away the most influential source of ideas in the Founding Era.

Consequently, it is not surprising that the Constitution reflects many Biblical principles. For example, Isaiah 33:22 sets forth three distinct branches of government; the logic for the separation of powers was based on teachings derived from Jeremiah 17:9; the basis of tax exemptions for churches (exemptions originated by the Founding Fathers) can be found in Ezra 7:24; and there are many other examples of American government applying Biblical patterns and precedents.

The Biblical underpinnings of America were so obvious to previous generations that in 1892, even the U. S. Supreme court had no difficulty in rendering a unanimous decision declaring:

[N]o purpose of action against religion can be imputed to any legislation, state or national, because this is a religious people.... [T]his is a Christian nation. (In a footnote Barton cites *Church of the Holy Trinity v. U. S.* 243 U.S. 457, 465, 471 [1982])

(David Barton, *America's Godly Heritage* (Aledo, TX: WallBuilder Press, 1993), pp. 22-25. This small book is a valuable resource for information that will equip you to answer many questions about the Biblical basis of our nation and its Constitution. It is also available on DVD.

10. When it comes to government, we cannot lose sight of the reality that God is sovereign over all, that government's authority is derived from God (which is acknowledged in the first two paragraphs of the U. S. Declaration of Independence), and that all people, corporately (including governments) and individually, are accountable to God. Governmental authority is derivative and not self-authorized. Without that understanding human freedom (which is part of the core of our being made in God's image) is in jeopardy of being restricted and suppressed, for governments that seek to rule without a sense of accountability to God and his will are led by their own human nature which is corrupt and inclined toward evil. (cf. e.g., Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23; 7:18-25) Then, not only will such a government treat its people unjustly, but it will keep restricting their freedom, not only in order to control evil or what it perceives as being evil but also what it perceives as being a threat to its purposes. This outcome is not only the logical extension of Biblical theology; we know of such occurrences when we take time to remember or read history and to look around the world yet today. We must forthrightly, diligently, and vigorously oppose all who try to ignore God, his Word, and his will, individually and in the government of our land. Proactively, we must be his witnesses as he has called us to be in Christ.

Resources for Further Reading and Support: (The paragraphs following a citation are direct quotes from the book or Web site. Numbers in parentheses are page numbers.)

1. *10 Ways to Put a "Child-Safety Cap" on a Hostile Culture* by Charles A. Donovan (Family Research Council, 1993) The Family Research Council in Washington, D.C. also has many other very helpful resources on numerous issues, including being one of the organizations where you can obtain updated facts consistent with the Bible on those issues. Contact them at <http://www.frc.org/> and also by phone at 1 (800) 225-4008. Global research provides evidence of the contribution to society, such as a significant reduction in crime, where the church is present and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For other examples,

Religious commitment reduces the incidence of suicide in a community; in particular, in one study, church attendance predicts a community's suicide rate more accurately than any other factor, including unemployment. [Eleven] out of 12 studies reviewed by psychiatrist Dr. David Larson of the National Institute of Mental Health show that the religiously committed had far lower rates of drug abuse. Larson has also noted, "Statistics show that those young black males who get out of the ghetto are church attenders." Rates of adolescent sexual activity, pregnancy and abortion are much lower among young people who attend church and are religiously motivated. (12)

2. *Christian Ethics: Sources of the Living Tradition*, eds. Waldo Beach and H. Richard Niebuhr (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1955)

In political ethics...Luther, never forgetting the greatness of the monastic virtue of obedience and alarmed by the prospects of anarchy in the breaking up of the medieval

system, insisted especially on the importance of yielding to authority. He qualified the principle of obedience to human authorities, however, in the same way that Calvin did, and the latter's teachings upon the subject...largely represent a systematization of Luther's unsystematic thought. The qualifying idea for him, as for all Christians, was contained in the statement, "We must obey God rather than men." (243)

3. *Christian Life and Character of the Civil Institutions of the United States* by Benjamin Franklin Morris
4. *Citizen Link* and *Citizen Magazine* at <http://www.citizenlink.com/>.
5. Colorado Family Institute, which can be reached at <http://www.cofamily.org/>.

Mission

Colorado Family Institute (CFI) is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 research and educational organization committed to strengthening the family. CFI's mission is to restore and defend traditional moral principles by educating and equipping churches and citizens on important issues that affect marriage, life and the family, in an effort to re-shape public opinion on these issues. By informing and motivating the citizens, we will seize the opportunity, to make a positive change in the state of Colorado.

Marriage and the Family

The family is the fundamental building block of all human civilizations. It is the original form of government from which all others come about either by choice or by force. Marriage holds all of society together through the socialization of men, the protection of women and the nurturing and education of children. The health of our culture, its citizens and their children are intimately linked to the wellbeing of marriage.

Life

We hold to the truth that life begins at conception and should end only at natural death. The protection of life is one of the primary purposes of free government. It is our belief that the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision runs counter to the principles of liberty for all individuals. Protection for individuals at the end of life is equally important. Therefore we oppose euthanasia and other methods of ending life before it would otherwise naturally end.

Religious Freedom

Free exercise of religion is the first and most fundamental right of Americans protected in the Bill of Rights. It is our belief that religious liberty and expression should be unhindered by government regulation or judicial dictate. Religious expression should be protected from governmental and judicial control in all society including in the workplace, government, public schools and all other public and private institutions.

The Role of the Judiciary

The collision between faith and culture is never more apparent than when lawmakers and courts decide how the moral issues of our day will be addressed in our laws and

court decisions. Americans often look to the courts as a tool for solving the controversial issues of the day; but is this the proper role of the courts? We believe the role given to judges is to interpret law, not to make it.

Education

We believe that parents are the primary educators of children. Many connected with the government education system believe that parental roles are secondary in the education of children. We disagree, and instead encourage the reform of the education system through school choice and greater parental involvement.

6. *Cry Justice: The Bible on Hunger and Poverty*, ed. Ronald J. Sider (New York: Paulist Press, 1980)
7. *Ethics: Approaching Moral Decisions*, Arthur E. Holmes (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984)

The kingdom of God is with us now only in a small way; it is yet to come in its fullness. Only then will the law of God become the law of every land with equal justice for all and with full social consent. Until then we are to be the salt of the earth, a pervasive influence for righteousness, both public and private. (106)

8. *Healing the Culture: A Commonsense Philosophy of Happiness, Freedom, and the Life Issues*, by Fr. Robert Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002)

The book addresses two life issues in detail, abortion and euthanasia, and according to the author, they are “an integral part of the culture’s increasing advocacy of metaphysical materialism.” The author shows how abortion and euthanasia have accelerated the view in our culture that “intangibles (such as love, justice, and rights)” are less real and of lesser value, and as such “have opened a moral Pandora’s box that will negatively affect our view of issues such as poverty, oppression, war, and even care of the environment.” He shows throughout the book how “our view of the reality and value of the intangibles underlies every moral and cultural issue upon which the quality of our individual and communal life depends.” He maintains that “To the extent that abortion and euthanasia accelerate the demise of the intangibles, they also accelerate the demise of every other ethical foundation and agency within the culture.” (20) Related subjects included are “Suffering Well: Transforming Suffering from a Negative to a Positive Experience;” “Ethics and Freedom;” “Virtues and Vices;” “Norms Pertaining to Right and Wrong Conduct;” “Relationship between Person, Rights, and the Common Good;” “Universality of the State’s Protection of Inalienable Rights;” “Redefinition of ‘Person’ in the Attempt to Justify Abortion;” “Negative Effects of Euthanasia on Individuals;” “Negative Effects of Euthanasia on the Culture.”

9. *Human Rights & Human Wrongs: Major Issues for a New Century*, John Stott (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999)

Better than the extremes of imposition and laissez-faire is the strategy of persuasion by argument. This is the way the Christian mind advocates, for it arises naturally from the biblical doctrines of God and human beings.

The living God of the biblical revelation, who created and sustains the universe, intended the human beings he made to live in loving community. Moreover, his righteousness is an essential expression of his love. He loves justice and hates oppression. He champions the cause of the poor, the alien, widow, and the orphan. He feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, heals the sick, finds the lost. He wants all humankind to be saved and to come to know the truth in his Son Jesus Christ. Now this biblical vision of God profoundly affects our attitude to society, since God's concerns inevitably become his people's too. We also will respect men and women made in God's image, seek justice, hate injustice, care for the needy, guard the dignity of work, recognize the necessity of rest, maintain the sanctity of marriage, be zealous for the honor of Jesus Christ, and long that every knee will do homage to him and every tongue confess him. Why? Because all these are God's concerns. How can we acquiesce in things which passionately displease him, or be nonchalant about things that he is strongly committed to? (68-69)

According to Gallup polls conducted in 1994 and 1996, 96 percent of Americans said they believed in "God or a universal spirit," 28 percent attended church or synagogue at least once a week, 59 percent called themselves Protestant, and 41 percent said they would describe themselves as "born again" or "evangelical." Why then has this great army of Christian soldiers not been more successful in beating back the forces of evil? This is American futurologist Tom Sine's explanation: "We have been remarkably effective at diluting his [Christ's] extremist teaching and truncating his radical gospel. That explains why we...make such an embarrassingly little difference in the morality of our society." More important than mere numbers of professing disciples are both the quality of their discipleship (maintaining of Christ's standards without compromise) and their strategic deployment (capturing positions of influence for Christ.)

Our Christian habit is to bewail the world's deteriorating standards with an air of rather self-righteous dismay. We criticize its violence, dishonesty, immorality, disregard for human life, and materialistic greed. "The world is going down the drain," we say with a shrug. But whose fault is it? Who is to blame? Let me put it like this. If the house is dark when nightfall comes, there is no sense in blaming the house; that is what happens when the sun goes down. The question to ask is "Where is the light?" Similarly, if the meat goes bad and becomes inedible, there is no sense in blaming the meat; that is what happens when bacteria are left alone to breed. The question to ask is "Where is the salt?" Just so, if society deteriorates and its standards decline, until it becomes like a dark night or stinking fish, there is no sense in blaming society; that is what happens when fallen men and women are left to themselves, and human selfishness is unchecked. The question to ask is "Where is the Church? Why are the salt and light of Jesus Christ not permeating and changing our society?" It is sheer hypocrisy on our part to raise our eyebrows, shrug our shoulders, or wring our

hands. The Lord Jesus told us to be the world's salt and light. If therefore darkness and rottenness abound, it is largely our fault and we must accept the blame.

...Christians must retain their Christian distinctiveness. If salt does not retain its saltiness, it is good for nothing. If light does not retain its brightness, it becomes ineffective. So we who claim to be Christ's followers have to fulfill two conditions if we are to do any good for him. On the one hand, we have to permeate non-Christian society, and immerse ourselves in the life of the world. On the other, while doing so, we have to avoid becoming assimilated to the world. We must retain our Christian convictions, values, standards, and lifestyle...the "double identity" of the Church. (83-84)

Christians are called to provide [a] moral compass. The nature of human rights depends on the nature of the human beings whose rights they are. Fundamental, therefore, to human rights is the question of what it means to be human. Since the Bible focuses on the divine purpose for human beings, it has much to say on this topic. Three words seem to summarize it—"dignity," "equality," and "responsibility."

The dignity of human beings is asserted in three successive sentences in Genesis 1:27-28.... First, "God created man in his own image." Second, "Male and female he created them." Third, "God blessed them and said to them, '...fill the earth and subdue it.'" Human dignity is here seen to consist of three unique relationships which God established for us by creation, which together constitute a large part of our humanness and which the Fall distorted but did not destroy... (171)

The equality of human beings is clearly expressed [in the many Bible texts that show] we must show "no partiality" (NIV) in our attitude to other people, and give no special deference to some because they are rich, famous, or influential... (174)

The Bible says much about defending other people's rights, but little about defending our own. On the contrary, when it addresses us, it emphasizes our responsibilities, not our rights. (176)

Of this responsible renunciation of rights Jesus Christ is the supreme model. Although eternally "in very nature God," he "did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness." (Philippians 2:6-7) (176)

10. Illinois Family Institute (IFI) <http://illinoisfamily.org/about>

The Illinois Family Institute (IFI) is an independent 501c(3) non-profit ministry dedicated to upholding and re-affirming marriage, family, life and liberty in Illinois. Since 1992, IFI has worked to advance public policy initiatives consistent with Judeo-Christian teachings and traditions, educating citizens so that they can better influence their local communities and the state. IFI does not participate in, or intervene in any

political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. (See IFI's [Political Campaign Policy](#).)

IFI works within the state of Illinois to promote and defend Biblical truths to foster an environment where families can thrive and reach their full God-given potential to serve and glorify Him—making the most of the opportunities afforded to each of us by His gift of life and liberty.

To accomplish this goal, IFI works to educate Christians and the general public on matters of moral concern; to initiate, promote, encourage and coordinate activity designed to safeguard and advance public morality consistent with Biblical Christianity. While we are financially independent, our efforts are reinforced by our affiliation with the American Family Association (AFA) and our working relationship with other Christian ministries like the Liberty Council and the Alliance Defending Freedom as well as similar nationally and state-based ministries and organizations across the United States.

Social advocacy is a natural partner of evangelism. Christians are to be “Christ-like,” and are to speak the truth in love. Scripture compels us to be transformed into His likeness. Since Jesus went about “teaching and preaching” and “doing good and healing,” we should do likewise. A Biblical view of compassion for our neighbor demands it of us.

British theologian **John Stott** said, “Therefore if we truly love our neighbors, and because of their worth desire to serve them, we shall be concerned for their total welfare, the well-being of the soul, their body and the community. And our concern shall lead to practical programs....”

An overwhelming number of research studies over the past decade have proven that strong families composed of a mother and father in the home produce a healthier society. Similarly, a large body of social science data points to family decline as a major contributing factor behind of some of the most serious problems confronting Illinois and the nation.

IFI works to reduce these factors that threaten family stability and strives to create a political and social environment where families can thrive and prosper.

EDUCATE: Serving as a reliable source of information and analysis on issues that affect the family and traditional values

INSPIRE: Promoting the pro-family agenda in local councils, school boards, the media and Illinois General Assembly

ADVOCATE: Building strategic alliances and networks that promote programs and policies consistent with our mission

11. *On God and Political Duty*, John Calvin (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1956)

In comments on 1 Peter 2:17 and Daniel, Calvin shows how it is in the government's best interests to not only allow but to facilitate people adhering to Biblical teaching. "Fear God, honor the king" (1 Peter 2:17; cf. Jeremiah 29:7). The two commands are connected together, and cannot be separated from one another. The fear of God ought to precede, that kings may obtain their authority. For if anyone begins his reverence of an earthly prince by rejecting that of God, he will act preposterously, since this is a complete perversion of the order of nature. Then let God be feared in the first place, and earthly princes will obtain their authority, if only God shines forth....For earthly princes lay aside all their power when they rise up against God, and are unworthy of being reckoned in the number of mankind. (102)

12. *Natural Knowledge of God: In Christian Confession & Christian Witness, The* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2013), p. 50. (A report of The Commission on Theology and Church Relations, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, April 2013)

Freed from the curse of the law by Christ's fulfillment of it (Gal. 3:13), the Christian need not fearfully attempt to suppress his or her knowledge of the law; indeed, enlightened and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, the Christian recognizes the law to be 'holy and righteous and good' (Rom. 7:12) and so can delight in it (Rom. 7:22). Further, acknowledging the divine inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture, the Christian can there find the law much more clearly and plainly revealed than it might otherwise be to reason and conscience alone. As a result, the Christian's high regard for the law, and clearer understanding of its demands, uniquely motivates as well as equips him or her to make especially beneficial contributions to the public discussion of public life and the public good—even if doing so without explicit reference to what might be dismissed as 'private' religious beliefs.

- Footnote to the above excerpt: For the manner in which this might be done with respect to the controversial issue of abortion, see, e.g., Peter Kreeft, *The Unaborted Socrates* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1983), and Corey D. Maas, "Natural Science, Natural Rights, and Natural Law: Abortion in Historical Perspective," in *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal*, ed. Robert C. Baker (St. Louis: Concordia, 2011), 221-234. With respect to the similarly contentious issue of same-sex marriage, see, e.g., Sherif Girgis, Robert George, and Ryan T. Anderson, "What is Marriage?" *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* 34 (2010), 245-287, and their expanded argument in *What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense* (New York: Encounter, 2012).
- On Page 48: *The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology* (eighth edition)—"On page 15 Moore and Persaud write, 'human development begins at fertilization,' and that this 'marked the beginning of each of us as a unique individual.' That's not a religious view, but a scientific one—and a nearly unanimous scientific one.... The very title of another textbook...Harrison's, Golbus's, and Filly's *The Unborn Patient: Prenatal Diagnosis and Treatment*,

just about says it all...first chapter...they write that ‘the fetus is a patient, and individual.’ Because this actually is the medical consensus, even someone like Princeton’s Peter Singer, who openly advocates for abortion, admits in his own textbook on *Practical Ethics* that ‘there is no doubt that from the first moments of its existence an embryo conceived from human sperm and egg is a human being.’”

13. *Politics for Evangelicals*, Paul B. Henry (Valley Forge, Judson Press, 1974)

We conveniently forget that the Old Testament prophets called down God’s judgment upon entire nations for their rebellion against God’s ordinances—obviously, holding the entire societies responsible before God. For example, God’s punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah was placed upon the entire communities—not just the unrighteous individuals within them. God held the “righteous” individuals in those societies responsible for the iniquity which abounded in their communities. And we fail to recognize that the New Testament paradigm for God’s people is the new “city” of God established amidst cities of men. Hence, we address the deity as “*Our Father* which art in heaven...” And John’s Revelation judges the seven churches of Asia as collective entities, not simply in terms of the individuals of which they are composed.

...The status of a nation’s spiritual health projects a moral climate which fundamentally affects the public policies a nation pursues. (36)

14. www.ivotevalues.org (A Web site containing much information on elections, voting matters, and facilitating commitment to vote and helping others to do so.)

Resources for Church Education Groups:

1. *26 Vital Issues: Jesus’ Answers to Life’s Urgent Questions*, LeRoy Koopman (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978) For each of 26 contemporary issues Bible texts, interpretive comments, and discussion questions are provided. Issues include helping the needy, obeying the government, forgiveness, spending money.
2. *Creative Questions on Christian Living: A Guidebook for Group Discussion*, Ralph Heynen (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967) The book contains many discussion questions for 103 still contemporary concerns and issues that include: being in the minority, parenting, making good choices, courage, attitudes toward work, learning self-control, taking a positive attitude, handling control by others and other things, Christian mercy, making excuses, tolerance, adjustments in marriage, respect for authority, the art of forgetting, learning to be patient, decision-making, controlling our tongues, Should a Christian try to be popular?
3. *Facing the Issues: Contemporary Discussion Series* (Volume 1), William J. Krutza and Phillip Di Cicco (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969) A chapter on each of 13 still contemporary issues contains a brief section identifying and explaining the problem, a section identifying key and relevant Bible passages, and many discussion

questions. Issues included: Are the “haves” responsible for the “have-nots?” Therapeutic abortion: right or wrong? Civil disobedience; How much clothing can we take off? Does the Christian have any problems in today’s business world? Our country: right or wrong?

4. *Facing the Issues: Contemporary Discussion Series* (Volume 2), William J. Krutza and Phillip Di Cicco (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969) In addition to a section on how to lead a profitable discussion, a chapter on each of 13 still contemporary issues contains a brief section identifying and explaining the problem, a section identifying key and relevant Bible passages, and many discussion questions. Issues included: Is it right to tax churches? Life or death—who decides? How should Christians react to our sex-oriented society? Divorce; Is total abstinence necessary today? Can we ever condone violence?
5. *Facing the Issues: Contemporary Discussion Series* (Volume 3), William J. Krutza and Phillip Di Cicco (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970) In addition to a section on how to lead a profitable discussion, a chapter on each of 13 still contemporary issues contains a brief section identifying and explaining the problem, a section identifying key and relevant Bible passages, and many discussion questions. Issues included: Should science tamper with human genes? How free are we to “do our own thing?” Is your church responsible for crime prevention?” Sex education; Drugs; Are demons real today? More leisure—how should we use it? Are “Christian” funerals Christian?
6. *Facing the Issues: Contemporary Discussion Series* (Volume 4), William J. Krutza and Phillip Di Cicco (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971) In addition to a section on how to lead a profitable discussion, a chapter on each of 13 still contemporary issues contains a brief section identifying and explaining the problem, a section identifying key and relevant Bible passages, and many discussion questions. Issues included: Should Christians condone war? Mixing ecology and theology; What can Christians do about obscenity? Should the Church speak on political issues? How should society punish criminals? Is television warping our values? Do Christians value human rights? Is population control a Christian concern? Should we base morality on “situations?”
7. *Small Catechism on Human Life, A*, John T. Pleiss (St. Louis: LCMS Ministries, 2006) This book examines abortion, bioethics, end-of-life, and sexuality issues through the Biblical eyeglasses of Luther’s Small Catechism. Thorough but lay-friendly, each chapter is followed by thoughtful discussion questions and Bible references. The beautiful hardback edition has historic woodcut illustrations throughout.