

Devotional Thoughts :: Politics, Activism, and the Gospel by John MacArthur

Politics, Activism, and the Gospel by John MacArthur - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2008/10/27 10:28

Politics, Activism, and the Gospel

(By John MacArthur, October 19th, 2008)

With the nation focused on the November elections, we thought a post on politics might be appropriate. The point of this article is not that we should abstain from any participation in the political process, but rather that we must keep our priorities straight as Christians. After all, the gospel, not politics, is the only true solution to our nation's moral crisis.

We can't protect or expand the cause of Christ by human political and social activism, no matter how great or sincere the efforts. Ours is a spiritual battle waged against worldly ideologies and dogmas arrayed against God, and we achieve victory over them only with the weapon of Scripture. The apostle Paul writes: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

We must reject all that is ungodly and false and never compromise God's standards of righteousness. We can do that in part by desiring the improvement of society's moral standards and by approving of measures that would conform government more toward righteousness. We do grieve over the rampant indecency, vulgarity, lack of courtesy and respect for others, deceitfulness, self-indulgent materialism, and violence that is corroding society. But in our efforts to support what is good and wholesome, reject what is evil and corrupt, and make a profoundly positive impact on our culture, we must use God's methods and maintain scriptural priorities.

God is not calling us to wage a culture war that would seek to transform our countries into "Christian nations." To devote all, or even most, of our time, energy, money, and strategy to putting a facade of morality on the world or over our governmental and political institutions is to badly misunderstand our roles as Christians in a spiritually lost world.

God has above all else called the church to bring sinful people to salvation through Jesus Christ. Even as the apostle Paul described his mission to unbelievers, so it is the primary task of all Christians to reach out to the lost "to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me" (Acts 26:18; cf. Ex. 19:6; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9).

If we do not evangelize the lost and make disciples of new converts, nothing else we do for people--no matter how beneficial it seems--is of any eternal consequence. Whether a person is an atheist or a theist, a criminal or a model citizen, sexually promiscuous and perverse or strictly moral and virtuous, a greedy materialist or a gracious philanthropist--if he does not have a saving relationship to Christ, he is going to hell. It makes no difference if an unsaved person is for or against abortion, a political liberal or a conservative, a prostitute or a police officer, he will spend eternity apart from God unless he repents and believes the gospel.

When the church takes a stance that emphasizes political activism and social moralizing, it always diverts energy and resources away from evangelization. Such an antagonistic position toward the established secular culture invariably leads believers to feel hostile not only to unsaved government leaders with whom they disagree, but also antagonistic toward the unsaved residents of that culture--neighbors and fellow citizens they ought to love, pray for, and share the gospel with. To me it is unthinkable that we become enemies of the very people we seek to win to Christ, our potential brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Author John Seel pens words that apply in principle to Christians everywhere and summarize well the believer's perspective on political involvement:

A politicized faith not only blurs our priorities, but weakens our loyalties. Our primary citizenship is not on earth but in heaven. "... Though few evangelicals would deny this truth in theory, the language of our spiritual citizenship frequently gets wrapped in the red, white and blue. Rather than acting as resident aliens of a heavenly kingdom, too often we sound like resident apologists for a Christian America. ... Unless we reject the false reliance on the illusion of Christian Am

erica, evangelicalism will continue to distort the gospel and thwart a genuine biblical identity.....

American evangelicalism is now covered by layers and layers of historically shaped attitudes that obscure our original biblical core. (The Evangelical Pulpit , 106-7)

By means of faithful preaching and godly living, believers are to be the conscience of whatever nation they reside in. You can confront the culture not with the political and social activism of man's wisdom, but with the spiritual power of God's Word. Using temporal methods to promote legislative and judicial change, and resorting to external efforts of lobbying and intimidation to achieve some sort of "Christian morality" in society is not our calling--and has no eternal value. Only the gospel rescues sinners from sin, death, and hell.

Re: Politics, Activism, and the Gospel by John MacArthur, on: 2008/10/27 13:17

Excellent post. I could not agree more with the sentiments of John MacArthur. May God bless his message.....Frank

Re: Politics, Activism, and the Gospel by John MacArthur - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2008/10/27 17:59

Quote:
-----We can't protect or expand the cause of Christ by human political and social activism, no matter how great or sincere the efforts. Ours is a spiritual battle waged against worldly ideologies and dogmas arrayed against God, **and we achieve victory over them only with the weapon of Scripture.**

(emphasis added)

'September 11, 1777

- The Continental Congress recommended and approved that the Committee of Commerce "import 20,000 Bibles from Holland, Scotland, or elsewhere," because of the great shortage of Bibles created by the Revolutionary War's interruption of trade with England.'

the quote above was taken from a pamphlet titled *FASTFACTS Americas's Christian Heritage* from Coral Ridge Ministries.

Re: Politics, Activism, and the Gospel by John MacArthur - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2008/10/27 19:28

Quote:
-----We can't protect or expand the cause of Christ by human political and social activism, no matter how great or sincere the efforts. Ours is a spiritual battle waged against worldly ideologies and dogmas arrayed against God, **and we achieve victory over them only with the weapon of Scripture.**

(emphasis added)

"U.S. Supreme Court
Stone v. Graham, 449 U.S. 39 (1980)
Stone v. Graham

No. 80-321

Decided November 17, 1980

449 U.S. 39

ON PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE
SUPREME COURT OF KENTUCKY

Syllabus

Held: A Kentucky statute requiring the posting of a copy of the Ten Commandments, purchased with private contributions, on the wall of each public school classroom in the State has no secular legislative purpose, and therefore is unconstitutional as violating the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. While the state legislature required the notation in small print at the bottom of each display that

"the secular application of the Ten Commandments is clearly seen in its adoption as the fundamental legal code of Western Civilization and the Common Law of the United States,"

such an "avowed" secular purpose is not sufficient to avoid conflict with the First Amendment. The preeminent purpose of posting the Ten Commandments, which do not confine themselves to arguably secular matters, is plainly religious in nature, and the posting serves no constitutional educational function. Cf. *Abington School District v. Schempp*, 374 U. S. 203. That the posted copies are financed by voluntary private contributions is immaterial, for the mere posting under the auspices of the legislature provides the official support of the state government that the Establishment Clause prohibits. Nor is it significant that the Ten Commandments are merely posted, rather than read aloud, for it is no defense to urge that the religious practices may be relatively minor encroachments on the First Amendment"

the following was taken from

(<http://supreme.justia.com/us/449/39/case.html>) <http://supreme.justia.com/us/449/39/case.html>

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/10/27 19:38

Quote:
-----By means of faithful preaching and godly living, believers are to be the conscience of whatever nation they reside in. You can confront the culture not with the political and social activism of man's wisdom, but with the spiritual power of God's Word. Using temporal methods to promote legislative and judicial change, and resorting to external efforts of lobbying and intimidation to achieve some sort of "Christian morality" in society is not our calling--and has no eternal value. Only the gospel rescues sinners from sin, death, and hell.

Although I greatly admire John MacArthur and believe in repentance preaching and do, we have to be careful that we realize that the enemy has taken hold of society in a greater way than ever before because so-called Christians stood by and did nothing. a fool can see you can't evangelize the world through politics, but we are also called to be salt and light in this world. We are responsible for the influence that God affords us in this life. To say that I am a preacher therefore I have nothing to say in a political process is to shirk my responsibility to take a stand when afforded opportunity.

As the enemy succeeds in stripping away every vestige of God, filling our classrooms with lies that impress upon young minds with brainwash tactics deceptions unthwarted, shall we sit by and say nothing? Until the average child on the streets has no concept that every vice under heaven is wrong because they believed the devilish teachers they trusted? So that we as preachers and teachers spend the whole of our ministry trying to undo a twisted mass of folly and damnable doctrines?

Every inch of ground we surrender to the enemy puts another impressionable mind in danger of *ultimate* damnation. The reason is is that they are being brainwashed to counter every negative feeling- every pricking of conscience- every idea that some thing that is sin is not really sin- until their conscience is utterly seared and the whole world has lost even the ki

ndest affection for their neighbor. When iniquity is allowed to abound- when we change the definition of good and evil- civil governments no longer function as the ministers of God for good - but as agents of satan for perdition.

God will call us to account for every opportunity we had to stay the hand of our enemy when afforded opportunity.

Re:, on: 2008/10/27 21:57

Hi Robert...could you be more precise as to what exactly you disagree with what was written? You gave us a quote but then did not address the quote. If I read you right, and perhaps I do not, you are saying that John said we should do nothing. I did not read that in the piece. Far from doing nothing, he claims we should evangelize the country. I have often heard this criticism, that "when good men do nothing, evil triumphs." Yet nowhere did John say that we should do nothing, unless preaching the Gospel for all its worth is considered doing nothing. I know for a fact you do not mean that Robert.....brother Frank

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2008/10/27 23:15

Is this article written by the same man that appears on Larry King and confronts the mayor of San Francisco for supporting gay marriage?

I think this issue of 'political involvement' needs some clarification. Some seem to be saying that the Christian can't discuss anything in public except the plan of salvation.

The original idea of separation of church and state was actually a biblical one. It is rooted in the idea that the secular sphere of government should mind its place, recognizing that there is a higher divine sphere that no secular government should presume to usurp.

Yet, of course it does usurp. The modern socialist state is claiming every sphere of life under its authority. Now, everytime we see the state forcing a young foster child to become adopted by Homosexual men, or the state becoming "family planners" we are intimidated to say nothing because we accept the state's claim of authority on these issues.

Even our own children are becoming "political issues". I suppose we'll have to shrug our shoulders there too, saying we aren't 'called to politics'.

My point here is that it isn't the church who is intruding where it ought not, but the state.

In light of this trend, and not with indifference to it, I think MacArthur was simply reminding us that we must not lose our public witness for Christ by becoming absorbed into angry hateful partisanship, but to abide in prayerful love for our world. In short, he was reminding us that the Church is called to affirm the Word of God in word and deed; not with political power that comes from biting and devouring, but with spiritual power that comes from godliness.

On these things we can readily and most heartily agree...but I hardly think he means that Christians have to be absolutely silent on the moral, social, and even political issues of our day.

Maybe we can call in and ask him during his next appearance on Larry King live.

MC

(Edit: I want to add that I think John MacArthur is one of the most honorable and courageous public men of God in our nation today. His intelligent, respectful, unapologetic stance for God's word in the face of ridicule is an example for Christians.)

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/10/28 0:00

Specifically I was referring earlier to:

Quote:
-----Using temporal methods to promote legislative and judicial change, and resorting to external efforts of lobbying and intimidation to achieve some sort of "Christian morality" in society is not our calling--and has no eternal value

This attitude prevailed at a critical time in our nations history and because good men did nothing the Devil seized the strategic opportunity and the cup of iniquity in our lands has filled at unprecedented speed.

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn. (Proverbs 29:2)

The suffering that is caused when wicked men rip the moral fabric of society is lamentable and horrific. It is obvious that morality can never be legislated, but have we no responsibility to stand in the gap to preserve what basic civilized boundaries are left? Or shall we surrender the whole market place of influence and policy making to the wicked?

Judges matter. Legislators matter. Mayors and presidents matter. School board officials matter. The devil will take every square inch we give him because he knows what is at stake. If he can influence a judge to unloose the restraining influence of law or a school board can uproot the restraining influence of God's Divine order in society *he will*. Has he not already taken all we have given him? He has done what he does and he will continue to do it so long as we are content leave the position filling and the policy making to *him*.

Re:, on: 2008/10/28 0:23

Compton writes"but I hardly think he means that Christians have to be absolutely silent on the moral, social, and even political issues of our day."

Who does think that Compton? I hear that all the time, yet I have never hear anyone actually advocate that. It seems like it is a "straw man," argument.

This may come as a surprise to many, but there are more than two ways to look at any issue. One does not have to be a Democrat if one raises questions about Republicans. If one raises doubts about Capitalism, that does not mean the one raising questions about that particular worldly system is a socialist. I think that MacArthur is writing, not in a vacuum, but in the context and reality of what actually goes on in American society.

You can stand for truth, in love, without being involved in politics. Jesus spoke the truth and "feared no one." MacArthur and others have spoken on this issue because countless millions of professing Christians, actually put their faith and their trust in the system to change things. Should you use a vote that you may have to influence society for good, of course, that would seem like common sense. MacArthur writes"God is not calling us to wage a culture war that would seek to transform our countries into "Christian nations." To devote all, or even most, of our time, energy, money, and strategy to putting a facade of morality on the world or over our governmental and political institutions is to badly misunderstand our roles as Christians in a spiritually lost world."

Everyday I hear Christians talk about a "culture war." They listen to guys like Rush Limbaugh and Bill O'Reilly who does not even know that the Book of Revelation is in the New Testament. Again MacArthur says....

"When the church takes a stance that emphasizes political activism and social moralizing, it always diverts energy and resources away from evangelization. Such an antagonistic position toward the established secular culture invariably leads believers to feel hostile not only to unsaved government leaders with whom they disagree, but also antagonistic toward the unsaved residents of that culture--neighbors and fellow citizens they ought to love, pray for, and share the gospel with. To me it is unthinkable that we become enemies of the very people we seek to win to Christ, our potential brothers and sisters in the Lord."

You have to be living in a bubble not to recognize what MacArthur is saying here in this quote. There is so much hostility, from Christians towards "Liberals, socialists, Democrats," any number of groups. One of the reasons that Obama is pr

obably going to win is because the country is exhausted with partisan politics and the politis of wedge issues, designed t o divide society for the sake of gaining or hanging on to power. And a large part of the "Christian community," have been right there with the politicians. Much of the unsaved , unchurched world now just see the Christian community as a mout hpiece for the Republican party. There should be three groups of people in this country. Republicans, Democrats and C hristians. We should always speak the truth in love, no matter the cost. They should come to us. We should be an exam ple of how to live with honor and dignity and respect. If any Christian happens to be a politician, he should run the most positive campaign, he should be a shining example, people should be able to look at them and say "see, that is the way one should conduct themselves."

Brother snd sisters, we have been called, not to be a sub-culture, but to be a counter culture. Christianity should trancse nd bitter partisan politics. Christianity should transcend racism. Christinaity should transcend class warfare. The world, a nd the countries in which we live, should look to us as a city set on a hill. In the darkness of this world, we should be the light. Here is a newsflash :) This is gonna be a shocker now :) THE WORLD IS WICKED. It has always been wicked. It i s what it is by the very nature of its emnity towards God. It cannot be otherwise. If the world in which we live, or the coun try in which we live is more wicked than it was, then this is not a reflection of the world, this is a reflection of the state of t he Church. This is exactly what Paul Washer was preaching on. No where in the New Testament is the world condemne d. In fact Jesus said that He has come to seek and to save the lost. Joh 3:17 For God did not send His Son into the wor ld to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him.

"2Ch 7:14 if My people, who are called by My name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek My face, and turn fro m their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.'

If the state of the country is very bad right now, then let us look to ourselves. Do not blame the wicked world, for they are acting according to their nature and only the Holy Spirit can convict them. How will He convict them? Does our righteous ness bring conviction? Or are we so like the world we constantly seek to condemn that the Holy Spirit cannot use us?.... brother Frank

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2008/10/28 0:50

Quote:
-----Compton writes"but I hardly think he means that Christians have to be absolutely silent on the moral, social, and even political is sues of our day."

Who does think that Compton? I hear that all the time, yet I have never hear anyone actually advocate that.

I think that was worth clarifying.

For what it's worth, I do understand and appreciate your other points brother. You express some good and helpful thoug hts.

Blessings,

MC

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/10/28 8:03

Hi Frank,

The major points you make we agree upon and I think we have discussed them before in part. However, we have to balance this a bit. The world *has* always been wicked, but we have yet to see what this world system is capable of. We a re already seeing things not even spoken of in the scriptures. Not even Sodom is said to have 'married' men and men. N ot even Sodom is said to have aborted millions of its unborn, etc.

The only known video of Billy Sunday preaching is an open air message against the legalization of alcohol. He is open air preaching prohibition. Preachers *used* to be known for preaching against such things so as to rally the people and effect change upon society. But today preachers fear losing their 501c3 and won't say anything. So we have bowed the knee to Mammon and it has had a major effect.

We have watched here in Missouri as bingo halls gave way to lottery tickets. Kansas then opened a dog track across the border to draw people there. Missouri countered with 'gambling boats' with gambler loss limits for the day. All in the name of 'schools' getting more funding. The voters had to permit all this. *Now*, the problem is people are not typically told the truth on these things. They get half truths and then make decisions based on lies. We as the people of God surely have a responsibility to in some way get involved to speak truth to these issues. That is what Billy Sunday was doing.

We have proposition A on the ballot in a few weeks. It will remove the loss restriction as it now exists to increase revenues. Where are the Billy Sunday's? What do we suppose these old timers would have done if these issues had come up in 'their' time? I can say with some certainty that much of what we have casually allowed would turn them in their graves. It is a sad day when James Dobson has the sense to try to lead in the fight against iniquity while so-called ministers hide behind their 501c3 and act as if it is spiritual.

Re:, on: 2008/10/28 8:49

Hi Robert...yes we have discussed these issues before and I am glad that we are in agreement on most of the points that I raised. I think we may simply have to disagree on the role of the preacher or the layperson in society at large. Most of the Christians that I knew voted against the dog-track and the gambling boats. Problem? The world wanted them. Am I surprised? No. Should we now condemn the world for wanting to gamble or for wanting to drink? If I was in the world I would drink and gamble. And I think that the world, who have rejected Christ, should eat and drink and be merry, for tomorrow they die, they die eternally. And it is this eternal death that concerns me more than their drinking and gambling. As you know, Christ can deliver anyone from drinking and gambling, in fact I am living proof of that. What they cannot be delivered from is eternal death for those who reject Christ. That is why the religious man, Dr Dobson, will focus on these issues, while ministers of God will focus on the state of a man's soul.

As for prohibition, surely that speaks for itself?.....brother Frank

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/10/28 9:13

Quote:

-----Most of the Christians that I knew voted against the dog-track and the gambling boats. Problem? The world wanted them.

I understand. But someone has to be a voice of reason. Alcohol, gambling, etc. has brought great suffering to our society and has opened additional means of the enemy enslaving people. This, as I recall, was practically predicted by Billy Sunday in his open air sermons.

Many other areas we have abandoned to the enemy. We are on the fast track now. Preaching has not stepped up to match the highhandedness of our times. And I don't think it is a one or the other thing (preach the Gospel or preach and promote righteousness) I believe it is *both*.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2008/10/28 9:22

Robert,

I agree with you that we have to keep a balance and it seems that many Christians have gone to extremes on these issues.

The Republican party or removing all of the liberals from office is not going to bring in the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of God coming into the political arena can certainly change things for the better.

As Christians we are to be salt and light. If Christians are not letting their lights shine, the darkness will surely come in. If Christians are not being salt, corruption is the result.

In the early days of America many of the preachers stood up in the pulpits and addressed the moral issues that were affecting our society. It should be the same way today.

Mike

Re:, on: 2008/10/28 9:40

Hi Robert

I appreciate or discourse. I think we have already established that simply because a Christian does not support the notion that solutions are not to be found in politics, does not mean inversely that he advocates "doing nothing." That is simply preposterous and lacks any real depth and breadth of discussing the issues, I know that is not you. Can I suggest that the preaching of morality in the this country at the turn of the century was more a reflection on a persons upbringing and personal philosophy. How many sermons do we have from preachers , traveling through the South, roundly condemning racism ? True courage, always speaks the truth in love despite the consequences. Any preacher at any time can preach anything he wants either from his pulpit or in the public square. Its the price that he does not want to pay that is the problem. So you may lose your tax status, so what? If God speaks to a man and tells him to speak up, then he should speak up. I am tired of people complaining that they do not have freedom to speak and so on. Also, the notion that Christians today have it worse than the early Christians from a more wicked world is also preposterous. How many of us have been dipped in tar and set alight? How many of us have been fed to the lions? Burned at the stake? For Christians in the dark ages who dared to stand against the Catholic church, the very first thing that happened to them was that they lost everything that they owned, and then it went downhill from there. So, if you are a Christian out there, or a preacher, and you feel led to speak out against any number of issues, stop whining and speak out :) Be as bold as you are led and let the chips fall where they may.....brother Frank

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/10/28 10:21

Quote:

-----I appreciate or discourse.

Always good to talk these things out. I think were on the same page. As one brother says, *If you haven't changed your mind lately how do you know you still have one. :-)*

I guess to summarize my whole point going back to the beginning, I strongly disagree with John on the point that I quoted because it tends to suggest to Christians not to waste time and resources on present issues by getting involved in the political process because they have no eternal value. I do not see it as a waste of resources, but an obligation to do whatever we reasonably can, when opportunity arises to influence policy. The effect it has on eternity is greater than we think, I believe.

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2008/10/28 10:45

I live in Louisiana, and as many of you know this state has had a long history of corrupt politicians, and one of the former governors is now incarcerated at the Federal Detention Center in Oakdale La.

As a direct result of prayer, we now have a Christian governor that has brought ethics reform to our state. He has upset a lot of the "good ole boy" politicians in our state, and we have now gone from being last in the nation to first in ethics reform. This new governor is a man of integrity, and things have changed in our state because of righteous men in our government and intercessors that have consistently and persistently prayed for our state.

Mike

Re: - posted by rbanks, on: 2008/10/28 10:54

I was kind of following along and thought of the scripture below and was wondering how it should be interpreted.

2 Timothy 2:4 (KJV)

4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

2 Timothy 2:4 (NIV)

4 No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs--he wants to please his commanding officer.

2 Timothy 2:4 (NKJV)

4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/10/28 12:16

I thought of this passage about our leaders.

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; (1 Timothy 2)

Quote:

-----2 Timothy 2:4 (KJV)

4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

2 Timothy 2:4 (NIV)

4 No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs--he wants to please his commanding officer.

2 Timothy 2:4 (NKJV)

4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

I think that the picture here is a distinction between spiritual and worldly pursuits (civilian vs. soldier). We cannot allow ourselves to come under the influence of this world to *please* those that are of this world. You cannot serve God and Mammon- type thing. Our loyalty has to be absolutely to Christ, first. We have to obey God rather than men.

Re:, on: 2008/10/28 13:10

Brother Robert(a man I respect and have ate BBQ with:) states..

"We cannot allow ourselves to come under the influence of this world to please those that are of this world. You cannot serve God and Mammon- type thing. Our loyalty has to be absolutely to Christ, first. We have to obey God rather than men."

Amen brother, now there is something we can completely agree on :) Here are some of the reasons why I think that it is not possible for Christians to be effectively involved in Politics.

1. Who amongst us would take a job where we would have to deny that Jesus was the one and only way to heaven and that all other religions lead to eternal death? If President Bush or any elected official ever said that they would never have been elected in the first place. If Sarah Palin said that right now, she would be finished.

2. What if it was part of your job to say what a fine faith the Muslim faith was? President Bush said that shortly after 9/11. What a slap in the face to our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus.

3. What about going to the Pope's funeral and pronouncing to the world that he was was one of the finest Christians?

These statements are beyond compromise. They give false comfort to , not millions, but Billions.

4. What about making the statement that there would not be a litmus test for Supreme court judges in the abortion issues? Again, they have to say that, they have to compromise for political expediency. Have we been called to a life of com

promise? You show me a politician who would boldly and proudly say that Jesus is the one and only way to heaven and I will show you a politician I would vote for :) You show me a politician with the courage of his or her convictions and who would boldly say that, if elected, there would absolutely be a litmus test for Supreme court judges and I would cast my vote for that person. I think in the very rare occasions you do have someone that is actually used by God in politics, that someone would be someone like William Wilberforce. His sole purpose for being in politics was for the eradication of slavery. I would have cast my vote for William :)

In 1890 a new Louisiana law required railroads to provide "equal but separate accommodations for the white, and colored, races." Outraged, the black community in New Orleans decided to test the rule.

On June 7, 1892, Homer Plessy agreed to be arrested for refusing to move from a seat reserved for whites. Judge John H. Ferguson upheld the law, and the case of Plessy v. Ferguson slowly moved up to the Supreme Court. On May 18, 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court, with only one dissenting vote, ruled that segregation in America was constitutional.

Now, here is a practical way that Christians can change their environment. I have used this example before but it bears repeating because it quashes the notion that by not being involved in politics you are advocating "doing nothing." If you were a Christian man in downtown Alabama who owned a Restaurant, in 1923 say, and along comes a black man and walks in your store and sits down in the "White section." The Lord whispers in your heart "do not ask that man to move, serve him." Now, you have a choice to make. If it is known that you have or do serve black men, you will probably lose your business, your friends, your church membership and your place in society. What do you do? You see, this is social justice, this is cutting edge Christianity, this requires supreme faith and courage. It was not the politicians, they had already spoken, it's your job to do what is right and let the chips fall where they may. This to me is real courage. Way more courage than to stand up and talk about the evils of drink or gambling. This kind of act would bring about conviction (Thank the Lord that there were courageous Christian men)

And so, as always, Christians must always be vigilant in not allowing themselves to become political pawns in power struggles. We have seen this happen all too often and it has not brought glory to the church, whether it was the issues of manifest destiny (preached all through the land) or civil rights or any other issue. If we are called upon to be "single issue voters," then is it too much to ask for "single issue Politicians?"brother Frank

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/10/28 13:37

Hi Bro. Frank,

BBQ... yes. Perhaps we should do that again sometime?

Quote:
-----And so, as always, Christians must always be vigilant in not allowing themselves to become political pawns in power struggles.

This is indeed the challenge.

Re:, on: 2008/10/28 13:46

Robert, let's do it before you go to Scotland. I will PM my Cell#.....brother Frank

P.S Anyone else who lives near KC, MO is welcome to eat BBQ with us :)

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiisss (), on: 2008/10/28 14:10

Hi Robert...

I am worried that this could be a straw man too. For instance, consider these statements:

Quote:
-----1. Who amongst us would take a job where we would have to deny that Jesus was the one and only way to heaven and that all other religions lead to eternal death? If President Bush or any elected official ever said that they would never have been elected in the first place. If Sarah Palin said that right now, she would be finished.

Do you work a "secular" job? I don't know about you, but I am not supposed to use work as the means to proclaim my faith

faith. Yes, I can answer questions when asked. I can also share my faith in subtle (or even apparent) ways that are non-offensive. It doesn't matter if you are the President -- or the janitor at Wal-Mart, but your job is a place to work. We should pray about everything that we say. We shouldn't be surprised if we are fired for preaching while we are supposed to be working. Of course, the President has publicly shared his faith on several occasions. And most of us don't know what goes on outside the lens or recording of news cameras, thus making such a statement conjecture (at best).

Quote:
-----2. What if it was part of your job to say what a fine faith the Muslim faith was? President Bush said that shortly after 9/11. What a slap in the face to our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus.

It seems that your problem is with a comment made by the President. I wonder: Did you attempt to contact him or question him about it? Does this single statement negate his faith in Christ? Was he trying to live peacefully with all men by recognizing the zeal of some Muslims -- only to be attacked by those who profess to be "nonresistant?"

Quote:
-----3. What about going to the Pope's funeral and pronouncing to the world that he was one of the finest Christians?

Is this a direct quote or a paraphrase? Besides, I am strongly opposed to the tenants of the Roman cult -- yet I think that John Paul II probably stuck to his beliefs more than many real Christians.

Quote:
-----4. What about making the statement that there would not be a litmus test for Supreme court judges in the abortion issues? Again, they have to say that, they have to compromise for political expediency. Have we been called to a life of compromise? You show me a politician who would boldly and proudly say that Jesus is the one and only way to heaven and I will show you a politician I would vote for :) You show me a politician with the courage of his or her convictions and who would boldly say that, if elected, there would absolutely be a litmus test for Supreme court judges and I would cast my vote for that person.

Really? There are a lot of people who say this, but they don't really follow through. Anyone remember Pat Robertson? He ran for President in 1988 -- and even won a couple of primaries! Of course, I disagree with Pat Robertson on any number of doctrines. But the man publicly proclaimed the faith! Did you vote for him?

Besides, abortion IS a litmus test for me -- since it is one of the greatest sins of this nation. It is a holocaust by which most other holocausts and wars pale in comparison. More children were murdered by their parents this year than in the entire war in Iraq (on all sides). In fact, more people were killed by abortion this year in America than were killed during the entire Korean or Vietnam wars (between 1950-1974).

I simply disagree with those who say that my Christianity must be confined to my physical voice. My faith in and relationship with Christ follows me everywhere. I wake up thinking about and speaking to our Lord, go through my day thinking about and speaking with Him and go to sleep talking to Him. He is with me and influences me on the job, at home and, yes, even in the voting booth as I choose what I think to be the better direction for myself, my family, my neighbors and this nation. I don't believe that God and His people are restricted or confined from such things. I also believe that God can use the systems of this world to promote the Gospel (exemplified by Paul using the Roman legal system to "appeal unto Caesar) or even the direction of the world. God uses ordinary things -- including governments and empires -- as instruments in world history. Is God guilty of concerning Himself with the affairs of this world? Is abortion a terrible evil?

I respect the views of those who hold to nonresistance. I agree with many aspects of nonresistance. However, I disagree with the extent of the application. I resist the starvation of my wife, so I work (and, in doing so, prevent myself from being "worse than an infidel"). I would push an unsuspecting stranger out of the way of a bus. I would yank a man from the path of an approaching train. I would tackle a man who was attempting to rape or kill my wife or future children. I would plead with my sister to not leave her husband and child for another man. I would vote to prevent men or women from entering office who promised to promote the destruction of society through abortion. I do not see this as "meddling" in the affairs of this world. This is the *prevention* of harm out of love for those who are so affected.

This is not about "single issues." I weigh the issues in the balances of my mind through prayer and contemplation and then vote accordingly.

*P.S. - Ohhhh, that BBQ sounds great! Too bad I live in California. However, I do make a very good and tender BBQ brisket! It would be great to entertain believers over here -- breaking physical and spiritual bread!

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/10/28 14:24

Quote:

-----I am worried that this could be a straw man too.

Well, with all these straw men we could build quite a BBQ bonfire. ;-)

All of the points are well taken.

BTW, I have been going through John MacArthur's *Battle For the Beginning* series. It is 10 sermons long. Very good for those that study apologetics and creationism.

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2008/10/28 14:26

Hi Frank,

Quote:

-----If you were a Christian man in downtown Alabama who owned a Restaraunt, in 1923 say, and along comes a black man and walks in your store and sits down in the "White section." The lord whispers in your heart "do not ask that man to move, serve him." Now, you have a choice to make. If it is known that you have or do serve black men, you will probably lose your business, your friends, your church membership and your place in society. What do you do? You see, this is social justice, this is cutting edge Christianity, this requires supreme faith and courage.

Again, I'm glad you are clarifying things here. I think it is important to clarify, define and differentiate the various responses a Christian might have to evil. Words like "political" and "activism" mean different things to different people. For instance, for many people, defying the segregation law by publicly serving an african american man in 1923 could be viewed as 'activism'. For you this act is a dramatization of faith, courage, and obedience to the voice of the Lord.

So apparently we are saying that there is a kind of Christian response to evil that is acceptable and proper. Perhaps where the controversy lies is in the merit and wisdom of the differing responses that historically Christians have opted to use. For instance, forming political coalitions is one type of reaction, defying Jim Crow is another type of reaction.

When we say the Church shouldn't be involved in "politics" or "activism", we are saying that the Church should not become formally and organizationally partnered with or formed into a political organization. What we are not saying, is that Christians should avoid public influence on spiritual and moral issues just because these issues have become politicalized. Both the former and the latter can make the Christian irrelevant to society.

I remember reading here on SI a couple years ago about an hispanic congregation in New York city that seemed to balance this tension very well. First off this inner city communion of saints was emphatically rooted on the premise that a Christian must be born again, and that they must come out from this world in order to witness to the world which is headed for divine judgement. Yet, it was this very separation, indeed even sectarianism, that allowed them to form a remarkable bond from which to help carry one another's social burdens and in the process becoming a witness to their community. Drug addicts had support groups, young men were told to repent of idleness, to work hard or to go to school, single mothers and widows were being taken care of, and many other wonderful activities of both spiritual and societal value were reported.

Once they were approached by a local politician wanting to obtain their influence over the community hispanic vote. He promised to provide for them many useful things for their ministry. However, the leadership of the church wisely declined the faustian bargain, telling the politician that political partnerships are fraught with unacceptable compromise.

MC

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2008/10/28 15:20

Well put MC. I think that about summarizes it.

Re:, on: 2008/10/28 16:17

MC writes....

"Once they were approached by a local politician wanting to obtain their influence over the community hispanic vote. He promised to provide for them many useful things for their ministry. However, the leadership of the church wisely declined the faustian bargain, telling the politician that political partnerships are fraught with unacceptable compromise."

I can say amen to your summary brother. Here are a couple of quotes from one of my favorite preachers, Tozer.

'Any form of human government, however lofty, deals with the citizen only as long as he lives. At the graveside it bids him adieu. It may have made his journey a little easier, and, if so, all lovers of the human race will thank God for that. But in the cool earth, slaves and free men lie down together. Then what matter the talk and the turmoil? Who was right and who was wrong in this or that political squabble doesn't matter to the dead. Judgment and sin and heaven and hell are all that matter then.

—Tozer Topical Reader

"Of all the books in the world, the one most quoted, most misunderstood and most misapplied is the Bible....

Adlai Stevenson, former governor of Illinois, when going through the throes of deciding whether or not he should let his name stand for nomination for the presidency, reportedly had a deep indisposition for the office. He was quoted as having repeated the words of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." Now it is remotely possible that a true saint of God, in a moment of awful and heart-searching prayer, might in hushed reverence quote these words of the Savior and apply them to his or her own case. But their use at a political convention came as a dash of cold water in the face of some who heard. In the midst of endless billows of hoarse shouting, grandiose and unsupported claims of achievements, bitter and abusive denunciations of others who did not agree with them, senseless and moronic acts of childish demonstrating, "snake dancing" and horn blowing, obsequious flattering and downright lying, it is hard to see how the spirit of our Lord's solemn and tender words could have a place. All political conventions are alike, regardless of party, and should Christ appear at one of them and demand that His Lordship be acknowledged and His commandments be obeyed, He would be forthrightly shouted down and led from the room by the sergeant at arms. Yet His words are quoted as if they had a place there—surely a painful misapplication of Scripture."

—Tozer Topical Reader

Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2008/10/28 17:05

Not a reply to anyone in particular.

I have been enjoying this thread and thought I would post the complete article by John MacArthur.

Christians and Politics Part 1
John MacArthur

As Christians in the United States, it's easy to get caught up in all the political fervor. It can even be tempting to think that legislation is the key to solving the moral problems that plague American society. But is that a right perspective? John MacArthur addresses this important issue and underscores the biblical response.

There was a time (in the days of our Puritan forefathers), when almost every soul in America acknowledged the Ten Commandments as the cornerstone of ethics and morality. Today most Americans can't even name three of the Ten.

There was also a time (not so long ago) when Americans universally disapproved of homosexuality, adultery, and divorce; they believed sexual promiscuity is absolutely wrong; they regarded obscene language as inappropriate; they

saw abortion as unthinkable; and they held public officials to high moral and ethical standards. Nowadays, most of the behavior society once deemed immoral is defended as an inalienable civil right.

How times and the culture have changed! The strong Christian influence and scriptural standards that shaped Western culture and American society through the end of the nineteenth century have given way to practical atheism and moral relativism. The few vestiges of Christianity in our culture are at best weak and compromising, and to an increasingly pagan society they are cultic and bizarre.

In less than fifty years' time, our nation's political leaders, legislative bodies, and courts have adopted a distinctly anti-Christian attitude and agenda. The country has swept away the Christian worldview and its principles in the name of equal rights, political correctness, tolerance, and strict separation of church and state. Gross immorality--including homosexuality, abortion, pornography, and other evils--has been sanctioned not only by society in general but in effect by the government as well. A portion of our tax dollars are now used to fund programs and government agencies that actively engage in blatant advocacy of various immoral practices.

What are Christians to do about it?

Many think this is a political problem that will not be solved without a political strategy. During the past twenty-five years, well-meaning Christians have founded a number of evangelical activist organizations and sunk millions of dollars into them in an effort to use the apparatus of politics--lobbying, legislation, demonstration, and boycott--to counteract the moral decline of American culture. They pour their energy and other resources into efforts to drum up a "Christian" political movement that will fight back against the prevailing anti-Christian culture.

But is that a proper perspective? I believe not. America's moral decline is a spiritual problem, not a political one, and its solution is the gospel, not partisan politics.

Christians and Politics, Part 2
John MacArthur

In yesterday's post, John MacArthur asked whether or not politics and legislation can provide the answer to America's moral decline. His conclusion was that "America's moral decline is a spiritual problem, not a political one, and its solution is the gospel, not partisan politics." Today's article expands on that thought, looking through history to see if political involvement has ever produced lasting transformation.

LESSONS FROM HISTORY

This is a lesson evangelicals ought to know from church history. Whenever the church has focused on evangelism and preaching the gospel, her influence has increased. When she has sought power by political, cultural, or military activism, she has damaged or spoiled her testimony.

The Crusades during the Middle Ages were waged for the purpose of regaining Christian control of the Holy Lands. Few believers today would argue that those efforts were fruitful. Even when the crusaders enjoyed military success, the church grew spiritually weaker and more worldly. Other religious wars and campaigns tinged with political motivation (such as the Thirty Years' War in Europe, Cromwell's revolution in England, and other skirmishes during the Reformation era) are all viewed with disapproval, or at best curiosity, by Christians today. And rightly so. The military and political ambitions of some of the Reformers turned out to be a weakness, and ultimately an impediment to the Reformation. On the other hand, the strength of the Reformation, and its enduring legacy, was derived from the fact that Reformation theology shone a bright spotlight on the way of salvation and brought clarity to the gospel.

Throughout Protestant history, those segments of the visible church that have turned their attention to social and political issues have also compromised sound doctrine and quickly declined in influence. Early modernists, for example, explicitly argued that social work and moral reform were more important than doctrinal precision, and their movement soon abandoned any semblance of Christianity whatsoever.

Today's evangelical political activists seem to be unaware of how much their methodology parallels that of liberal Christians at the start of the twentieth century. Like those misguided idealists, contemporary evangelicals have become enamored with temporal issues at the expense of eternal values. Evangelical activists in essence are simply preaching a politically conservative version of the old social gospel, emphasizing social and cultural concerns above spiritual ones.

That kind of thinking fosters the view that government is either our ally (if it supports our special agenda) or our enemy (if it remains opposed or unresponsive to our voice). The political strategy becomes the focus of everything, as if the spiritual fortunes of God's people rise or fall depending on who is in office. But the truth is that no human government can ultimately do anything either to advance or to thwart God's kingdom. And the worst, most despotic worldly government in the end cannot halt the power of the Holy Spirit or the spread of God's Word.

To gain a thoroughly biblical and Christian perspective on political involvement, we should take to heart the words of the British theologian Robert L. Ottley, delivered at Oxford University more than one hundred years ago:

The Old Testament may be studied. . . as an instructor in social righteousness. It exhibits the moral government of God as attested in his dealings with nations rather than with individuals; and it was their consciousness of the action and presence of God in history that made the prophets preachers, not merely to their countrymen, but to the world at large. . . There is indeed significance in the fact that in spite of their ardent zeal for social reform they did not as a rule take part in political life or demand political reforms. They desired. . . not better institutions but better men. (Aspects of the Old Testament. The Bampton Lectures, 1897 , 430-31)

Christians and Politics, Part 3
John MacArthur

LESSONS FROM SCRIPTURE

My point is not that Christians should remain totally uninvolved in politics or civic activities and causes. They ought to express their political beliefs in the voting booth, and it is appropriate to support legitimate measures designed to correct a glaring social or political wrong. Complete noninvolvement would be contrary to what God's Word says about doing good in society: "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10; cf. Titus 3:1-2). It would also display a lack of gratitude for whatever amount of religious freedom the government allows us to enjoy. Furthermore, such pious apathy toward government and politics would reveal a lack of appreciation for the many appropriate legal remedies believers in democracies have for maintaining or improving the civil order. A certain amount of healthy and balanced concern with current trends in government and the community is acceptable, as long as we realize that that interest is not vital to our spiritual growth, our righteous testimony, or the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. Above all, the believer's political involvement should never displace the priority of preaching and teaching the gospel.

There is certainly no prohibition on believers being directly involved in government as civil servants, as some notable examples in the Old and New Testaments illustrate. Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon are two excellent models of servants God used in top governmental positions to further His kingdom. The centurion's servant (Matt. 8:5-13), Zaccheus the tax collector (Luke 19:1-10), and Cornelius the centurion (Acts 10) all continued in public service even after they experienced the healing or saving power of Christ. (As far as we know, the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus also remained in office after he was converted.)

The issue again is one of priority. The greatest temporal good we can accomplish through political involvement cannot compare to what the Lord can accomplish through us in the eternal work of His kingdom. Just as God called ancient Israel (Ex. 19:6), He has called the church to be a kingdom of priests, not a kingdom of political activists. The apostle Peter instructs us, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).

Jesus, as we would expect, perfectly maintained His Father's perspective on these matters even though He lived in a society that was every bit as pagan and corrupt as today's culture. In many ways it was much worse than any of us in Western nations has ever faced. Cruel tyrants and dictators ruled throughout the region, the institution of slavery was firmly entrenched--everything was the antithesis of democracy. King Herod, the Idumean vassal of Rome who ruled Samaria and Judea, epitomized the godless kind of autocratic rule: "Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under" (Matt. 2:16).

Few of us have experienced the sort of economic and legal oppression that the Romans applied to the Jews of Jesus' day. Tax rates were exorbitant and additional government-sanctioned abuses by the tax collectors exacerbated the financial burden on the people. The Jews in Palestine were afforded almost no civil rights and were treated as an underprivileged

ed minority that could not make an appeal against legal injustices. As a result, some Jews were in constant outward rebellion against Rome.

Fanatical nationalists, known as Zealots, ignored their tax obligations and violently opposed the government. They believed that even recognizing a Gentile ruler was wrong (see Deuteronomy 17:15, "You may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother"). Many Zealots became assassins, performing acts of terrorism and violence against both the Romans and other Jews whom they viewed as traitors.

It is also true that the Roman social system was built on slavery. The reality of serious abuses of slaves is part of the historical record. Yet neither Jesus nor any of the apostles attempted to abolish slavery. Instead, they commanded slaves to be obedient and used slavery as a metaphor for believers who were to submit to their Lord and Master.

Jesus' earthly ministry took place right in the midst of that difficult social and political atmosphere. Many of His followers, including the Twelve, to varying degrees expected Him to free them from Rome's oppressive rule. But our Lord did not come as a political deliverer or social reformer. He never issued a call for such changes, even by peaceful means. Unlike many late twentieth-century evangelicals, Jesus did not rally supporters to some grandiose attempt to "capture the culture" for biblical morality or greater political and religious freedoms.

Christ, however, was not devoid of care and concern for the daily pain and hardships people endured in their personal lives. The Gospels record His great empathy and compassion for sinners. He applied those attitudes in a tangible, practical way by healing thousands of people of every kind of disease and affliction, often at great personal sacrifice to Himself.

Still, as beneficial and appreciated as His ministry to others' physical needs was, it was not Jesus' first priority. His divine calling was to speak to the hearts and souls of individual men and women. He proclaimed the good news of redemption that could reconcile them to the Father and grant them eternal life. That message far surpasses any agenda for political, social, or economic reform that can preoccupy us. Christ did not come to promote some new social agenda or establish a new moral order. He did come to establish a new spiritual order, the body of believers from throughout the ages that constitutes His church. He did not come to earth to make the old creation moral through social and governmental reform, but to make new creatures holy through the saving power of the gospel and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. And our Lord and Savior has commanded us to continue His ministry, with His supreme priorities in view, with the goal that we might advance His kingdom: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:18-20).

In the truest sense, the moral, social, and political state of a people is irrelevant to the advance of the gospel. Jesus said that His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36).

Christians and Politics, Part 4
John MacArthur

THE REAL BATTLE

We can't protect or expand the cause of Christ by human political and social activism, no matter how great or sincere the efforts. Ours is a spiritual battle waged against worldly ideologies and dogmas arrayed against God, and we achieve victory over them only with the weapon of Scripture. The apostle Paul writes: "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

We must reject all that is ungodly and false and never compromise God's standards of righteousness. We can do that in part by desiring the improvement of society's moral standards and by approving of measures that would conform government more toward righteousness. We do grieve over the rampant indecency, vulgarity, lack of courtesy and respect for others, deceitfulness, self-indulgent materialism, and violence that is corroding society. But in our efforts to support what is good and wholesome, reject what is evil and corrupt, and make a profoundly positive impact on our culture, we must use God's methods and maintain scriptural priorities.

God is not calling us to wage a culture war that would seek to transform our countries into "Christian nations." To devote all, or even most, of our time, energy, money, and strategy to putting a façade of morality on the world or over our governmental and political institutions is to badly misunderstand our roles as Christians in a spiritually lost world.

God has above all else called the church to bring sinful people to salvation through Jesus Christ. Even as the apostle Paul described his mission to unbelievers, so it is the primary task of all Christians to reach out to the lost "to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me" (Acts 26:18; cf. Ex. 19:6; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9). If we do not evangelize the lost and make disciples of new converts, nothing else we do for people--no matter how beneficial it seems--is of any eternal consequence. Whether a person is an atheist or a theist, a criminal or a model citizen, sexually promiscuous and perverse or strictly moral and virtuous, a greedy materialist or a gracious philanthropist--if he does not have a saving relationship to Christ, he is going to hell. It makes no difference if an unsaved person is for or against abortion, a political liberal or a conservative, a prostitute or a police officer, he will spend eternity apart from God unless he repents and believes the gospel.

When the church takes a stance that emphasizes political activism and social moralizing, it always diverts energy and resources away from evangelization. Such an antagonistic position toward the established secular culture invariably leads believers to feel hostile not only to unsaved government leaders with whom they disagree, but also antagonistic toward the unsaved residents of that culture--neighbors and fellow citizens they ought to love, pray for, and share the gospel with. To me it is unthinkable that we become enemies of the very people we seek to win to Christ, our potential brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Author John Seel pens words that apply in principle to Christians everywhere and summarize well the believer's perspective on political involvement:

A politicized faith not only blurs our priorities, but weakens our loyalties. Our primary citizenship is not on earth but in heaven. ... Though few evangelicals would deny this truth in theory, the language of our spiritual citizenship frequently gets wrapped in the red, white and blue. Rather than acting as resident aliens of a heavenly kingdom, too often we sound like resident apologists for a Christian America. ... Unless we reject the false reliance on the illusion of Christian America, evangelicalism will continue to distort the gospel and thwart a genuine biblical identity.....

American evangelicalism is now covered by layers and layers of historically shaped attitudes that obscure our original biblical core. (The Evangelical Pulpit, 106-7)

By means of faithful preaching and godly living, believers are to be the conscience of whatever nation they reside in. You can confront the culture not with the political and social activism of man's wisdom, but with the spiritual power of God's Word. Using temporal methods to promote legislative and judicial change, and resorting to external efforts of lobbying and intimidation to achieve some sort of "Christian morality" in society is not our calling--and has no eternal value. Only the gospel rescues sinners from sin, death, and hell.

Re: - posted by InHisGrace, on: 2008/10/28 17:17

As Paul Harvey would say

Now for the rest of the story

It's what came to mind after watching this Post being debated and then the article in full put uphelps to have the whole article don't you thinkwhen you are debating a man's opinion?

:~)

Re: no eternal value - posted by ChrisJD (), on: 2008/10/28 20:01

Hi again everyone,

Quote:
-----The greatest temporal good we can accomplish through political involvement cannot compare to what the Lord can accomplish through us in the eternal work of His kingdom.

But how exactly is this to be judged (1 Co 4:5)? And who determines the value of our actions here and where exactly the boundaries are of influence of the Kingdom of Heaven?

Do people somehow enter into the Kingdom of God in some sort of spiritual vacuum closed off from any contact or involvement with this world?

The abolition of slavery, was it merely a **temporal good**, with no spiritual significance? Who is it that can rightfully judge the eternal value of something done in this earth, no matter the sphere it is done in?

In the forward to *Tortured for Christ*, Tom White writes this regarding the definition of a Martyr:

"Many today believe that a martyr is simply someone who dies for his faith. Unfortunately, by this definition we have lost the true significance and depth of martyrdom. St. Augustine once stated, "The cause, not the suffering, makes a genuine martyr." In his play *Murder in the Cathedral*, T. S. Eliot describes a martyr as one "who has become an instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, not lost it but found it, for he has found freedom in submission to God. The martyr no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of martyrdom."

Later, in the first chapter of the book, Pastor Wurmbrand writes of some remarkable people:

"When I was kidnapped by police and kept imprisoned for years in strictest secrecy, a Christian doctor actually became a member of the secret police to learn my whereabouts! As a secret police doctor, he had access to the cells of all prisoners and hoped to find me. All of his friends shunned him, thinking he had become a Communist. To go around dressed in the uniform of the torturers is a much greater sacrifice than to wear the uniform of a prisoner.

The doctor found me in a deep, dark cell and sent word that I was alive. He was the first friend to discover me during my initial eight-and-a-half years in prison! Due to him, word was spread that I was alive and, when prisoners were released during the Eisenhower-Khrushchev "thaw" in 1956, Christians clamored for my release and I was freed for a short time. If it had not been for this doctor, who joined the secret police specifically to find me, I would never have been released. I would still be in prison—or in a grave—today.

Using their position in the secret police, these members of the Underground Church warned us many times and were of tremendous help. The Underground Church in Communist countries has men in the secret police today who protect and warn Christians of impending danger. Some are high up in government circles, keeping their faith in Christ secret and helping us greatly. One day in heaven they can publicly proclaim Christ, whom they serve secretly now."