

AMERICA'S FOUNDING

And He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father - to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 1:6

Much of the debate and dissent between conservative, or so-called, "right wing Christians" and the liberal element of American society stems from the premise put forth by the Christian community - that the United States was founded upon Judeo-Christian principles - the Ten Commandments being the cornerstone of those principles.

In the heat of the controversy, very little, if any, consideration is given to the question of whether such an ambitious endeavor by the Founding Fathers was prompted by their desire to seek to follow the leading of Jesus Christ, or whether it was motivated instead, as more of an angry reaction to the oppressive edicts of King George III. An investigation into the history of the colonies and the disunity that existed amongst their churches belies the notion that the unifying factor was a mutual devotion to Christ, but rather, it was their disdain for the "tyranny" of the King. We find this clearly stated in the Declaration of Independence:

The History of the present King of Great-Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States.

Now I doubt that anyone would dispute the fact that many (but not all) of the Founding Fathers were devout Christian men who believed that the welfare of this country and its perpetuation depended upon a continuing faith and trust in Almighty God. Much of what they said and wrote attest to that fact, and is verified in the research of professors Donald Lutz and Charles Hyneman who reviewed almost 15,000 historical writings of the fifty five delegates to the Constitutional Convention. They found that more than a third of the quotes in their writings came directly from the Bible. Correspondingly, in researching the history of the founding of this country, I find very little evidence that initially, there was any open opposition by the majority of the people to the acceptance of the concept of a Creator God. Indications are that the relationship of church and state in American society and its politics was readily accepted by the predominantly Christian population, and remained virtually unchallenged until after World War II. However, for the purposes of this writing, this is of relatively little importance, since I believe that this country was established upon a flawed premise -- that a secular nation could be founded upon what is commonly referred to as "Judeo-Christian principles. I don't make this statement frivolously and if it astonishes you, please reserve your judgment until you've read the rest of this writing.

Don't misunderstand. There was nothing inherently wrong with the desire of the Founding Fathers to form such a nation. They simply erred in failing to recognize that Christ had already established what they were seeking. No doubt they were blinded by the divisions and the man-made hierarchical structure that pervaded virtually all of Christendom at that time, which bore little resemblance to the united body that Christ intended for it to be.

However, regardless of their desires and their religious convictions, the wording of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution offers no justification for stating that the Founding Fathers were proposing to establish either a Christian nation, a Jewish nation, or a Judeo/Christian nation. For, although it is apparent that they did believe in a Creator - and one may justifiably assume what ideas that might have entailed *in their own minds*, - nevertheless, the ideas they *expressed* in these documents were more ideological than they were biblical. There is not a single mention of the name "Jesus Christ" or of "Christianity" in either document. I'll elaborate more on that later. And if you question my reference to their founding a "secular" nation, remember that these men specifically state in the First Amendment to the Constitution that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;" This seems to be consistent with a *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* definition of *secular* as "*not overtly or specifically religious.*" Even those who argue in support of the concept of a Judeo/Christian nation inadvertently admit as much

On page 25 of his book *America's Christian Heritage*, author Gary DeMar states:

Secularism also goes by the name "humanism." Like the secularist, the humanist believes that man and his enterprises are the center of all that is conceived. The benefits must be to man in the here and now without any concern for what man might encounter beyond the grave.

Would it be incorrect to say that DeMar, has given a fairly accurate synopsis of the contents of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States? An examination of these documents will verify as much.

And although DeMar is a strong proponent for political activism, he makes the following observation concerning the Constitution (page 35):

One theory to explain why the Constitution addresses religion only in an indirect way is because there were different Christian denominations represented at the constitutional convention in Philadelphia: Congregationalist, Episcopalian, Dutch Reformed, Presbyterian, Quaker, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and Methodist. "James Madison tells us there was "discord" of religious opinion within the convention,' which undoubtedly kept theological controversy off the floor." Some maintain that the proliferation of religious opinion among the delegates steered the convention away from including specific religious language in the Constitution.

So, it would appear that the "more perfect union" was not established on the unity of Christian beliefs, but rather, as inferred in the *Declaration of Independence*, a union prompted by a consensus of grievances against the British King.

Let me continue with a rather poignant question:

Did God allow for Israel to have other religions in their midst, or did Jesus allow for there to be other religions in His church?

Absolutely not. To the contrary, God commanded, "*You shall have no other gods before Me*" (*Exodus 20:3*) This does not mean that God intended for there to be a detachment of His people from the rest of the world, but simply that, within the confines of their own assemblies, worship of any other gods was forbidden. But, since the wording of the First Amendment *does* allow for such, how could it be construed that this country was founded upon the principles of either Judaism or Christianity?

And since there was no prohibition against non-believers settling in the colonies, and no assurance that future generations of Christian families would not depart from the faith, how could there be a guarantee that the nation would remain, indefinitely, a "Christian" nation? Therefore it was within the realm of possibility that eventually, unbelievers would become the majority or, at least, a controlling minority?

John Chalfant, author of [*America: A Call to Greatness*](#), "unequivocally states that "it is Christianity upon which the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were founded," and his opinion seems to be shared by many Christians today. However, since there is a conspicuous absence of any mention of Jesus Christ or Christianity in either of these documents, I believe a more accurate statement would be: "Based upon the language of the Declaration of Independence, it seems that the intent of the framers of the Constitution of the United States was to acknowledge their belief in a Creator and to establish a government that would reflect that belief -- subsequently, the Legislators based some, *but not all*, of their laws upon some, *but not all*, of the Ten Commandments?"

Notwithstanding the sincerity of intent of the Christian men who played a major part in drafting the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, it does not alter the fact that they were naïve and misguided in supposing that they could constitutionally -- as stated in the Preamble to the Constitution -- "form a more perfect union" and "secure the Blessings of Liberty" for themselves and their posterity. There could be no more perfect union than what they experienced in their fellowship in Christ, and He had given them His perfect government in the establishment of His church. Through His church, His manifold wisdom was to be revealed to

the world (Ephesians 3:10). Perhaps I should say, through His “properly functioning” church,” since He receives no glory from a body that men have divided and secularized. Since these men had failed to establish such a union through a Christ-governed church, how could they have expected to accomplish it through a man-governed nation? Compare the account of the church of the first century believers with the condition of the church today. We read in the Book of Acts, the following account of the state of that church:

So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. Acts 2:41-47

And we read a further account in Acts 4:

And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of

them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. Acts 4:32

What a sharp contrast from this harmonious body of believers and the divided church that we see in the world today - especially in the United States. “Those who believed were of one heart and soul.” “praising God and having favor with all the people. “

What an incredible testimony these believers must have been to the communities in which they resided. That is exactly the way Christ intended for His body to function in the world and we see that He was “adding to their number day by day.” Could there be a “more perfect union” of believers? They were truly the salt of the earth, the light of the world. The apostle Paul wrote:

To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known *through the church* to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. Ephesians 3:8-10

Oh, that believers would have partaken of God’s wisdom and sought to preserve the unity that He made available to us.

But sadly, somewhere along the way, the salt lost its savor and the light was put under a basket. We read of how even the great revival that took place in the colonies in the early 1700’s did not restore any great measure of unity in the church.

So the first Great Awakening left colonials sharply polarized along religious lines. Anglicans and Quakers gained new members among those who disapproved of the revival's excesses, while the Baptists (and, in the 1770s, the Methodists) made even more handsome gains from the ranks of radical evangelical converts. The largest single group of churchgoing Americans remained within the Congregationalist and Presbyterian denominations, but they divided internally between advocates and opponents of the Awakening, known respectively as "New Lights" and "Old Lights." Inevitably, civil governments were drawn into the fray. In colonies where one denomination received state support, other churches lobbied legislatures for disestablishment, an end to the favored status of Congregationalism in Connecticut and Massachusetts and of Anglicanism in the southern colonies.

For these men to have attempted to build a nation based upon a foundation of such a splintered, divided body was a futile exercise, doomed to failure. History has proven it so, and men's attempts to revive it are even more foolhardy. These Founding Fathers would have been better advised to determine how they could emulate the united body of Christ that was described in the scriptures.

Correspondingly, regardless of the fact that these men acknowledged a "Creator," it would be quite presumptuous to assume that the founding of this nation was, therefore, sanctioned by the God of Christianity. It has been well documented that Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams, were deists (<http://members.tripod.com/~candst/tnppage/qtable.htm>) and did not subscribe to the basic tenets of Christianity. But, that is beside the point of whether those of the Founding Fathers who were Christians should have attempted to found a Christian nation. I propose for your consideration, my belief that they misunderstood God's plan and purpose for establishing His kingdom, and that it was a vain assumption on their part to suppose that God would bless their endeavor.

It is a matter of record that the tradition and culture of this country has gradually changed over the years, and that there is no longer a close association of church and state. To suggest that the United States is now a Christian nation is devoid of any sense of what is the definition of Christianity. It would be more accurately stated that: The population of the United States consists of many religions, currently foremost of which is what is commonly referred to as "Christianity."

There has been a profound deterioration in the values of our culture as a large representation of the citizenry has succumbed to the morass of moral relativism, pluralism, toleration, and political correctness. And inasmuch as the Constitution is subject to interpretation, those who have the power to do so are going to interpret it in accordance with their own political and societal dictates. Subsequently, the first Amendment to the Constitution is now being interpreted by the liberal establishment so as to view *any* expression of religious beliefs in the affairs of the state, to be construed as being in violation of that amendment.

Many Christians have adamantly opposed such a restrictive adaptation, and are seeking a more favorable interpretation of the amendment with the hope of bringing about a reversal of the moral degeneration of this country by means of the political process. They are zealous in their assertion that we have a moral responsibility for doing so and look upon those who differ as being irresponsible. They seem to believe that the election or appointment of Christians to public office -- if not the panacea for bringing about change in the culture and traditions of this country -- is the most effective means available.

But I believe that, rather than attempting to seek to accomplish change through the political process, we must consider the overall picture in light of our Christ-given responsibility. And although I personally believe that the Liberal's interpretation of the First Amendment is incorrect and self-serving, I also feel that attempts to rebut their interpretation only leads to frustration and disappointment. We err in believing that we can reason with unreasonable men, but there is one thing we can do.

I believe that it is imperative that we determine how we, as Christians, can respond in a Christ-like manner and thereby be an expression of what Jesus desires us to be -- "the salt of the earth," and "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13, 14). Knowing that, "the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God" ([James 1:20](#)), we must forsake heated political debate and expressions of dissent, and conduct ourselves in a manner commensurate with our standing in Christ.

Well-meaning conservative Christians would try to persuade us to become politically engaged in attempting to procure the right to express our faith in such matters as: "school prayer," - "Christian invocations at school functions" - "the installation of monuments or replicas of the Ten Commandments on public property" etc, etc. But, regardless of how God-honoring may be their intent, they may find themselves working at cross purposes to those of the Christ whom they desire to serve.

In order to respond properly, we must seek to appreciate the magnitude of the position that our Savior has given us in order to accomplish HIS purposes for a fallen world. *I believe that we have failed to grasp the fullness of what Christ desires for us to be as His ambassadors.* For, if we had, we would not have become preoccupied with debating about such issues as “school prayer” and “convocations” and “monuments of the Ten Commandments.” The woeful misunderstanding of our position has led us down a path of frustration, and anxiety. Only by functioning in the manner that Christ has prescribed for us as citizens of His kingdom and as His ambassadors of that kingdom, will we attain to that peace and quietude that He wants to instill in our hearts and in the hearts of those who are without hope in this world.

Imagine that! -- Ambassadors for Jesus Christ, the Son of God!” Should we suppose for one moment that Jesus would have His Ambassadors participate in the internal affairs of ungodly governments, regardless of *whether or not* that government is purported to have been founded upon Judeo/Christian principals? I think not. But please, don’t misunderstand. That does not preclude our taking a stand for the plight of the afflicted and the needy, ([Proverbs 29:7](#); [31:9](#)), nor for speaking out against injustice. For, although we are not to be attached to this world, we are to live in it as spokesmen for His truth and righteousness.

In his book, *Myths, Lies, and Half-Truths*, author Gary DeMar tries to make a case for Christians to be actively engaged in what he describes as “involvement in the world that God created for His people to prosper in and enjoy.” He lists, and summarily attacks, his conception of these “myths, lies, and half-truths” which turn out to be either fairly vapid clichés, or superficial assertions that fail to reveal an underlying truth upon which some of these so-called “myths, lies, and half-truths” are made. I don’t like to resort to another cliché, but I believe that Gary, throughout his book, is guilty of “creating a straw man” to attack and destroy.

Consider this:

- Is there any other nation besides Israel to whom God gave a land for them to possess as His Chosen People, or to whom He gave a command to enter and occupy?

God commanded Israel to enter and occupy the land that He had given to Abraham “and to his descendants forever” (Genesis 13:15). That promise is singular and is repeated throughout the history of Israel. However, we see no such command or promise concerning the church. Instead, Christ commanded His disciples to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19), and He promised a place in His kingdom - not to the proud or the mighty, but to those who are “poor in spirit” ([Matthew 5:3](#)) and “those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness” ([Matthew 5:10](#)). His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and has no boundaries.

Consider this also: When the first settlers came to America, they came not to a vacant land, but to territory inhabited by tribes of Indians. In some cases, the settlers and Indians lived peaceably together, some even becoming converts to Christianity. But for the most part, the Indians were forced off of their land and fought savagely to recover or retain it. [.http://www.mahopaclibrary.org/localhistory/chapter2.htm](http://www.mahopaclibrary.org/localhistory/chapter2.htm)

These early Christian settlers had no mandate from God to conquer and occupy the land. They were delegated to remain “aliens and strangers” (1 Peter 2:11) in whatever land in which they chose, or were forced, to reside.

Now, let’s examine the concept of “new nations.”

- Is there a scriptural basis for Christians to form new nations - even ones that are proposed to be founded upon Judeo - Christian principles?

Consider this very carefully, since it will make a vast difference in how we react to the events that have taken place and are taking place in this country and in the world today. And it is paramount that we examine any of our endeavors in light of the word of God, and be willing to forsake what we may have previously accepted based upon tradition rather than Biblical instruction. For even though there is no specific prohibition against forming such nations, an examination and spiritual discernment of the Scriptures will reveal that such an endeavor was not

only unnecessary, but inadvisable and - as we have come to experience - fraught with disappointment and frustration. Spiritual discernment is not just a matter of observing the do's and don'ts of Scripture, but it encompasses the understanding and application of Christ's intent for His people in light of His ultimate purpose of establishing His eternal Kingdom. This entails a heart that is committed to being an instrument of Jesus' mercy and grace, and the setting aside of one's own selfish interests, and diligently pursuing after His.

Had the founding fathers of this country been spiritually attuned to Christ's desire for His church, they would have recognized that there was no need for them to try to establish a Christian nation, or a nation founded upon "Judeo-Christian" principles. In like manner, there is no reason that they should not have been able to anticipate the problems and conflicts that would occur in trying to do so. How often do we devise a plan, and then ask the Lord's blessing on it? And how often do we fail to recognize that the Lord's hand was never upon that plan? We read:

The LORD nullifies the counsel of the nations;
He frustrates the plans of the peoples.
The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
The plans of His heart from generation to generation. Psalm 33:10-11

God is faithful, and had these men sought the Lord's counsel before embarking on such an enterprise, they would have abandoned it and sought how to accomplish what was *His* plan for them. He taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). Not "*Our* will be done," but, "*Your* will be done."

We read of the faith of Abel, Enoch, Noah and, Abraham and Sarah in chapter 11 of the book of Hebrews where the writer concludes

All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them. Hebrews 11:13-16

I don't wish to question or belittle the faith of the Founding Fathers, but the country of which they spoke when they drafted their Declaration of Independence doesn't seem to indicate any awareness they may have had of the heavenly one which God had prepared for them. Their "pursuit of happiness" seems to have emanated from a fleshly desire for satisfaction in the here and now. We have seen how this has led to a "happiness" that is based upon comfort, convenience, amusement and pleasure. The apostle Paul understood that the happiness that the world offers was a hindrance to the real joy of serving Christ

More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.
Philippians 3:8

And having had this attitude, shortly before being beheaded for his faith, Paul could look back upon his life and say:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. 2 Timothy 4:7-8

Paul, like those who had gone before him, knew that attachment to this world was to be scorned in favor of the "better country" that awaited him.

But returning to the question of the scriptural basis for Christians founding a new nation, we find that there were only two nations established by God as “a people for His own possession.” These nations were *the nation of Israel* and *the church*.

This fact is critical to our understanding of our role in the world today.

Israel was established by God as His chosen people who were to be governed by the laws and commandments that He laid down for them in the Mosaic Covenant. In Deuteronomy 14 we read:

"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. Deuteronomy 14:2

In the covenant that God made with Israel, the blessings that they were to receive were contingent upon their obedience to His commandments. And these blessings were tantamount to having the land that He had given them becoming a virtual paradise here on earth. We have but to read Deuteronomy 28:1-14 to see the incredible nature of God's promises that would have made Israel the awe and envy of the entire world. Read this passage carefully and consider the magnitude of His promises.

1. "Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the LORD your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.

² "All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the LORD your God:

³ "Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country.

⁴ "Blessed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your ground and the offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock.

⁵ "Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.

⁶ "Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.

⁷ "The LORD shall cause your enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you; they will come out against you one way and will flee before you seven ways.

⁸ "The LORD will command the blessing upon you in your barns and in all that you put your hand to, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

⁹ "The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, as He swore to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways.

¹⁰ "So all the peoples of the earth will see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they will be afraid of you.

¹¹ "The LORD will make you abound in prosperity, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your beast and in the produce of your ground, in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you.

¹² "The LORD will open for you His good storehouse, the heavens, to give rain to your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hand; and you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.

¹³ "The LORD will make you the head and not the tail, and you only will be above, and you will not be underneath, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I charge you today, to observe them carefully,

14 and do not turn aside from any of the words which I command you today, to the right or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

What incredible promises! Contingent upon their obedience to His commandments, the nation of Israel was to have had such monumental favor bestowed upon them that the blessings they were to receive were to be a testimony to their benevolent, all-powerful God -- the only true God -- in contrast to the gods of the unbelievers; gods that were nothing more than powerless icons who could neither bless, protect, nor prosper their worshipers. The entire world would have known that the God of Israel was the only true God, to the end that there would have been accorded to Him, a sense of reverential fear so aptly expressed by Joshua to the people of Israel

"For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed, just as the LORD your God had done to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed; that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the LORD is mighty, so that you may fear the LORD your God forever."

Joshua 4:23-24

And we know that "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding" ([Proverbs 9:10](#)). All of the nations of the world would have come to knowledge of the Lord through the testimony of Israel.

Sadly, however, Israel did not obey God's commandments and they suffered His wrath instead of His blessings. The history of their hardness of heart and God's dealing with them is recorded in both testaments. However, He made the following promise to them,

³⁵ Thus says the LORD,
Who gives the sun for light by day
And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night,
Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar;
The LORD of hosts is His name:
³⁶ "If this fixed order departs
From before Me," declares the LORD,
"Then the offspring of Israel also will cease
From being a nation before Me forever."
³⁷ Thus says the LORD,
"If the heavens above can be measured
And the foundations of the earth searched out below,
Then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel
For all that they have done," declares the LORD. Jeremiah 31:35-37

God has not rejected His people (Romans 11:1) and will one day restore them to the land of their inheritance. He also promised:

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. "I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD," declares the Lord GOD, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight. "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. Ezekiel 36:22-24

Israel will be a nation before God forever. But they have been temporarily set aside until all of the Gentile nations have heard the gospel. When they rejected Jesus as their Messiah, He said to them,

"Did you never read in the Scriptures,
THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED,
THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone;
THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD,
AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES"?

"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it. Matthew 21:42-43

And Paul wrote:

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery--so that you will not be wise in your own estimation--that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; And so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written:

THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB."

Romans 11:25-26

What a glorious promise to the nation of Israel. "for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29)

Now, let's take a look at the other nation that are called "a people for God's own possession" The church was a new nation established by Jesus Christ to be governed by the laws and commandments that He laid down for it under the New Covenant. Peter said of the church that we are a "holy nation"

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A *PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION*, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; [1 Peter 2:9](#)

In Christ, we have our citizenship in His new nation, His eternal kingdom, which, though not physically established at this present time, is spiritually established in our hearts and minds and spirit. And make no mistake: *His kingdom is not a democracy*. It is, if I may coin a phrase, a theocratic monarchy, and Christ is the King. And He is a king who expects absolute obedience and faithfulness of His citizens (disciples).

So, what should be the attitude of a Christian regarding the country in which he finds himself residing? Should it not be consistent with scripture, regardless of whether it's the United States, France, England, China, Russia, Iran or wherever else it may be? In light of our citizenship in His heavenly kingdom, should we not consider ourselves as aliens, albeit legal aliens, in that country?

Most Christians today have lost sight of the fact that when we committed our lives to Christ, we became citizens of another Kingdom, and are, as Paul states: "no longer strangers and aliens," to His heavenly kingdom, but are "fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household" (Ephesians 2:19). As such, "our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20).

Gary DeMar seems to have the erroneous notion that all who profess our "citizenship in heaven" are proposing that we abandon the world and live a hermetic life of recluse, keeping our faith a "solely a private affair." Not true. He takes issue with those Christians who didn't speak and act against Hitler during his rise to power.

It is easy for Mr. DeMar, while in the secure and comfortable confines of his office, or while standing behind a lectern in an auditorium filled with like-minded adherents, to fearlessly ostracize Adolph Hitler and to criticize and condemn Christians who didn't speak out in opposition to him during his ride to power. It would have been quite another thing to do so in the hostile environment of Nazi Germany and

The dreaded Gestapo. Many bravely did and suffered death or the horrors of the concentration camp.

But would Mr. DeMar be so quick to condemn the Ten Boom family, a Christian family in occupied Holland, who hid Jews in their home, while remaining outwardly passive in regard to Hitler and their German conquerors. They were eventually discovered and were assigned to the dreaded death camps where the father was executed in the gas chambers. But the two sisters, Corrie, and Betsy, in particular, became powerful witnesses for Christ Jesus in that camp. Even in death, Becky became a legend, about whom her sister Corrie miraculously lived to tell.

Then we have Christian activists such as Justice Roy Moore, who displayed a monument of the Ten Commandments in the rotunda of the Alabama State Courthouse and defiantly refused the order of the court to remove it? When the court had the monument forcibly removed, many Christians demonstrated - some quite vociferously - in front of the Court House. It was not a very edifying spectacle.

So, I guess I would have to ask Mr. DeMar, “Who do you suppose had a greater impact for the kingdom of God - Betsy Ten Boom, or Justice Moore?”

The Ten Boom family did not consider their faith “solely a private affair,” but neither did they wear it on their sleeve as some sort of badge of honor. They just quietly went about their daily lives living in obedience to their Lord.

And then there was George Mueller, that great man of faith who in an interview with Charles R. Parsons, was asked, “You have always found the Lord faithful to his promise, Mr. Mueller?”

“Always! He has never failed me! For nearly seventy years every need in connection with this work [an orphanage for abandoned children] has been supplied. The orphans from the first until now have numbered nine thousand five hundred, but they never wanted {for} a meal. Hundreds of times we have commenced the day without a penny, but our Heavenly Father has sent supplies the moment they were actually required. There never was a time when we had no wholesome meal. During all these years I have been enabled to trust in the living God alone. In answer to prayer \$7,500,000 have been sent to me. We have needed as much as \$200,000 in one year, and it has all come when needed. No man can ever say I asked him for a penny. We have no committees, no collectors, no voting, and no endowment. All has come in answer to believing prayer. God has many ways of moving the hearts of men all over the world to help us. While I am praying He speaks to one and another on this continent and on that to send us help. Only the other evening, while I was preaching, a gentleman wrote a check for a large amount and handed it to me when the service was over.”

George Mueller never involved himself in the politics of England, where he lived and ministered to the lives of the thousands of orphan children who came to his door. But his life was, and is, a testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he served as a true disciple and ambassador

In their book *Blinded by Might*, Cal Thomas and Ed Dobson tell of their experiences as former insiders with Jerry Falwell’s organization, the Moral Majority. They tell of how “despite nearly twenty years of vigorous and sophisticated activism, it has failed to end abortion, eliminate pornography, restore the shattered American family, and usher in a better world built on “traditional values.”

I don’t wish to single out Mr. DeMar, but his postulations seem to be representative of a large segment of Christendom today. He erroneously suggests that I am proposing that Christians are to repudiate the privileges of citizenship of the country in which we are citizens. Not true. What I do propose is that we are to observe all of the laws of the country in which we reside, except for any that would cause us to violate one of God’s laws. When that country grants us certain rights and privileges which are advantageous to our welfare, there is no reason to not take advantage of them. Of course, the right to vote seems to be one that causes a great deal of consternation amongst Christians. Some seem to believe that we have what is tantamount to a sacred duty as “responsible Christians” to vote, and to be involved in the political process. I have no qualm about voting for men of principle and integrity. My question is, “Do I have the option of voting for *a Christian*, whose very first act would be to disregard Jesus’ command of Matthew 5:34 and take an oath - an oath to uphold the Constitution or the laws of the state, some of which are diametrically opposed to His laws? Does Jesus bless what He expressly prohibits?”

Paul’s statements about our citizenship being in heaven are not just clever rhetoric or a meaningless play on words. They attest to our new position in Christ as citizens of His kingdom. We are awaiting Jesus’ coming to assume His role as the rightful heir of that Kingdom, and we are told that we are "fellow heirs" with Him. (Romans 8:17). So

for the present, we have become aliens and strangers in whatever earthly country we find ourselves, and as such are to assume a passive role regarding its internal affairs and those with other nations.

We must not lose sight of the fact that: not only is God *in control*, but He is *controlling* world events in accordance with His purposes and desires. Three times in Daniel chapter 4 we read the refrain, "the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men." (4:17, 25, 32) The implication here is that God's establishment goes to whom He chooses for the fulfillment of His ultimate purpose. He established His church so that we may "proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9)

A.N. Groves, a devout man of God, understood our position and, speaking of our role as followers of Jesus, said:

"He [Jesus] declared that as a man on earth He had not been appointed a judge or a righter of the injustices of the earth (Luke 12:14). Thus He refused to act in a civil cause; and when men would have constituted Him judge in a criminal case (John 8: I-II), He so convicted the prosecutors that they abandoned the proceedings and the case lapsed. His followers while left on earth are to walk as He walked, follow His steps and example, and do as He did when here (I John 6; I Peter 2: 21-23; John 13:15). This is the essential mark of discipleship."

Writing about the life and ministry of A. N. Groves, G.H. Lang wrote:

Groves knew that he was not of this world, not in some undefined, non-effective sense, but precisely as Christ was not (John 17:16), and he carried this into practice, which last is where he differs from so many who make the same profession. On the one hand, the

ambitions and dignities open to candidates in the sphere of human affairs, including its religious section, had simply no attractions for him, even as they had none for Moses after he had seen in advance the coming glories of the Christ (Hebrews 11). On the other hand, its politics and its quarrels were no affairs of his as a Christian. He could sorrow deeply over its awful state, and would relieve its miseries where possible, as he did with pain and peril amid plague and war in Baghdad [where he served on the mission field] but he acted everywhere as an outsider, a benevolent alien in a foreign land, as much in England as in Persia. To his heart it was no theory or mere doctrine, but a conscious, blessed, practice-compelling experience that God had rescued him out of the sphere of darkness and had translated him into the kingdom of the Son of His love. That kingdom is as actually existing a policy as is any earthly kingdom. "Our citizenship (the State, the constitution, to which as citizens we belong) is even now in the heavens, for the kingdom of heaven is a present kingdom."

This seems to be a totally foreign concept today amongst Christian leaders and pastors who are continually urging us to "get involved" and to fulfill our "Christian duty" to vote in the coming elections. Or, as John W. Chalfant, author of [*America: A Call to Greatness*](#), exhorts that we have "the primary responsibility for reclaiming our nation's Christian heritage, which we are in danger of losing because Christian clergy have abandoned 'the militant, power-filled, full-dimensional' faith of America's founders." I don't know exactly what Mr. Chalfant means when he says "militant," but it sounds like a far cry from the warning of Jesus, "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all" ([Mark 10:15](#)). Indeed, we are soldiers, but of a different army. Paul exhorts, "No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier" ([2 Timothy 2:4](#)).

And how many times do we have to hear Christian "leaders" solemnize Edmund Burke's oft quoted cliché, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." I assume that many Christians equate Burke's - "to do nothing" - with such passivity as not voting, or with not protesting the removal of a monument of the Ten Commandments from an Alabama courthouse. This is nothing more than non-sequitur pontificating rather than sound scriptural reasoning. But, it is easy for unenlightened Christians to be led astray by these spiritual activists and eagerly add their own voices to their protestations. And once again the testimony of Christ is lost

amid the clamor for “religious freedom” and “constitutional rights.” The ballot, not the cross, having become the instrument of warfare of the political zealots, the unbeliever becomes the adversary, rather than object of the love of Christ through the preaching of the gospel. Might I suggest that a revision of Mr. Burke’s statement might read, “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for Christians to disregard the warning of the apostle Paul and attempt to use worldly means to accomplish Christ’s purposes” Paul wrote:

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,

¹⁵ and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE;

¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

¹⁷ And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, ¹⁹ and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰ for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Ephesians 6:10-20

I’m sure you’ve read and heard this passage many times, but I urge you to go back and read it again and absorb it. Paul was not ignorant of dangers that believers would encounter were they to forsake the weapons of spiritual warfare with which they have been provided, and attempt to fight the enemy on his own grounds. He admonished:

I ask that when I am present I need not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some, who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. Corinthians 10:2-4

In our own power, we are no match for the deceptive wiles of Satan. Only as we yield our lives to the leading of the Holy Spirit, shall we be enabled to overcome Him. The apostle John tells us, “You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” ([1 John 4:3-4](#)). The adversary, although not possessing the omniscience of God, could easily foresee the damage he could inflict upon the church, by having it substitute noble sounding rhetoric and platitudes for the inerrant wisdom of God.

With all due respect to the revered President Lincoln, and his belief that “government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth,” history shall prove him wrong. Any government founded upon such a tenuous premise will eventually succumb to the treacherous manipulations of those whose desire it is to rule over that people. To assume otherwise is dangerously naïve. Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away" ([Matthew 24:35](#)).

Now let’s consider the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution which begins with this declaration:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

I would like to examine each of the stated provisions in order to ascertain what, if any, spiritual significance they have for disciples of Christ.

- “in order to form a more perfect union”

Allow me to repeat myself. There was no need for Christians to try to form a more perfect union. The church was already a perfect union under Christ, and regardless of how men have tried to divide it, “the gates of Hades will not overpower it” (Matthew 16:18). And unlike worldly nations, His kingdom has no boundaries and is the only nation that is an everlasting nation that will never perish from the earth.

Had the Christian settlers of this country understood the profundity of their heavenly citizenship, they would not have seen any reason to try to “establish a more perfect union.” Their unity was in Christ through the Holy Spirit. Their desire to try to establish a union of the church with the secular was totally unwarranted and in opposition to Paul’s clear instruction to the contrary, saying: “Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? ([2 Corinthians 6:14](#)).

Far better would it have been to have seen the unbelieving citizens of that nation incorporated into the body of Christ through their receiving the Lord Christ as their Savior. *The “Great Commission” does not instruct us to “Go, and make nations of all of the disciples,” but rather, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:19)*

Let’s continue:

- “establish justice”

How do Christians “establish justice” in a mixed society of believers and non-believers?

What standard are they to adopt? How would laws be enforced? There is no provision in church government for imprisonment or the death penalty. The most severe punishment that Jesus designates for an unrepentant sinner in the church is expulsion from fellowship. However, under the Mosaic Law, violators could be put to death by stoning.

Which, then, were to apply; Jesus’ law, or the laws of Judaism? If it was to be Judeo Law, would they execute adulterers, and children who dishonored their parents? Which of these “Judeo-Christian” principles would apply?

- “insure domestic tranquility”

Whatever definition one would ascribe to “domestic tranquility,” there is no way that a nation can “insure” its accomplishment. Assuming that it was the framer’s intent to augment the legislative and judicial branches of government with an agency to police and enforce their decisions, there could be no assurance or guarantee of its success. We have seen crime and domestic violence become rampant in this country, and we don’t even have enough prisons to house all of the offenders.

Notwithstanding the fallacy of such a premise, it presents a dilemma for Christians who are elected or appointed to positions in these branches of government. In a nation that is governed by a conglomerate of believers and

unbelievers, it is inevitable that laws will be passed that will be in conflict with, if not diametrically opposed to, the commands of Christ.

- “secure the blessings of Liberty”

How can a nation “secure the blessings of Liberty” for its citizens? True liberty can be found only in a life submitted to the lordship of Christ. Anyone who has experienced the blessing of freedom from anxiety that emanates from the peace that only Christ can give knows that it goes beyond the pale of a false sense of security created by prosperity or power. The scriptures show that if God is with a nation, no one can defeat them, but if He is against them, no amount of military ordinance or manpower can protect them. It is naive to assume that a government can secure even a small measure of the blessings of liberty in a world that is incapable of living in peace and harmony. Today’s terrorists have proven that there are no borders that can be secured against their intrusion.

Now let’s examine the following hallmark statement found in the Declaration of Independence:

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness -

Christians must ask themselves the question - “Why should these Christian founding fathers have been concerned about their “right” to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?”

The “right to life?” Their life was in Christ and He said:

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

[John 6:63](#)

Surely these Christian statesmen knew the true source of “life” was not to be attained through the declarations and constitutions of men, but rather, by heeding the declarations of their Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus who admonished:

²⁵ "For this reason I say to you, *do not be worried about your life*, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"

²⁶ "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? (emphasis added) Matthew 6:26

And what need for concern had they for “liberty?” Did they not have the liberty to meet and to worship together unhindered? I have found no record of their being prohibited from doing so. Whatever measure of religious persecution was found in the early colonies seemed to stem from within the confines of their own churches. But more importantly, perfect liberty is an issue of the heart and James encourages us: “But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does” ([James 1:25](#)).

Are those believers who are being imprisoned and persecuted in China and other countries around the world to be pitied? Jesus said that their reward in heaven shall be great (Matthew 5:12). Is it not we who live a life of relative ease and “freedom of religion” who are to be pitied? For He admonished us: "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also" (John 15:20).

As concerning the “pursuit of happiness,” what need had these early Christian settlers for the fleeting happiness that the world offers? The joy of the Lord is permanent and far surpasses any of the momentary “blessings” of the

world. The apostle Paul admonishes “*while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal*” ([2 Corinthians 4:18](#)). We can readily see that the pursuit of earthly “happiness” has been the cause of most of the pride, envy, jealousy, animosity, greed, covetousness, and disputes that have corrupted our society. One has but to look at the sordid lives of the “rich and famous” to recognize that divorce, drugs, infidelity and adultery are the hallmarks in the lives of most of them. Happiness is elusive, and at best short-lived. The sensual appetite is never sated. Self gratification produces no measure of permanent joy. Could not these Christian founders have discerned as much?

How well did the Psalmist convey the true source of our joy, saying:

You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever [Psalm 16:11](#)

And:

The wicked have laid a snare for me,
Yet I have not gone astray from Your precepts.
I have inherited Your testimonies forever,
For they are the joy of my heart.
I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes
Forever, even to the end. Psalm 119:110-112

Now, consider this also:

- Nowhere in Scripture can it be shown that Christians are instructed to impose God’s laws upon unbelievers.

In fact, we are specifically told that we are not to judge those outside of the church. God will judge them (I Corinthians 5:12-13). That doesn’t mean that we are to not speak the truth about sin or injustice. But first and foremost, we are instructed to deal with sin in the church and we have been given the procedure for doing so (Matt 18:15-18). Woefully, we have spent an inordinate amount of time judging the world, while casting a blind eye at sin in the church. The salt has lost its savor. The light has been hidden under a basket

Nor are we instructed to try to reform individuals or to try to bring about change in the affairs of governments. We err when we attempt to do so by forsaking our heritage and the guidance of the inerrant word of God and enter the political arena of the secular, spawned by the ethos of “patriotism,” and engendered by the clichés and platitudes about “liberty, ““freedom,” and “responsible citizenship,” It is not uncommon for “Patriotism” or “Nationalism” to inadvertently become one’s religion, but it is foolhardy to believe that it is possible to serve two masters. Therefore, it is really a moot point whether or not this country was founded upon Judeo/Christian principals. The important question is “Should it ever have been attempted by Christians?”

At the beginning of this writing I cited that professors Donald Lutz and Charles Hyneman reviewed almost 15,000 historical writings of the fifty five delegates to the Constitutional Convention and found that more than a third of the quotes in their writings came directly from the Bible. My guess would be that these quotes were scriptures that made reference to “trusting in God” and concerned His “blessings.” But I wonder if any of these historical writings made reference to the following scriptures. For had they understood their meaning, it would have precluded any possibility of founding a nation based upon “Judeo-Christian” principles. Let’s examine each one individually and determine how it applies to such an ambitious endeavor.

- [2 Corinthians 6:14](#)
Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?

I make no apology for the redundancy, since this verse bears repeating, for, if it were the only verse to be considered, it would suffice to rule out in advance, the thought of such an enterprise. Inasmuch as not every citizen in the colonies was a Christian, and it could be safely assumed that, in the future, other non-Christians would become citizens, it would render it impossible for Christians to not be bound together with them under a Constitutional rule of a republic.

- [1 Corinthians 5:12](#)

For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church?

Again, I think it bears repeating that, inasmuch as the Constitution was to empower the Congress to make laws, it was inevitable, that some of those laws would conflict with, if not be in violation of, God's laws. Christians appointed to judgeships would be compelled to judge "outsiders."

And Christians serving on juries would be required to do the same. Where are we given the option to ignore scriptural instruction for the sake of fulfilling our obligation to the state?

- [Matthew 5:33](#)

"Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, "YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD."

³⁴ "But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,

³⁵ or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING.

An oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States was to be required of elected officials. To take such an oath is in direct violation with a command given by Jesus and reiterated by the Apostle James: "But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment" (James 5:12).

There are those who would make light this command of Jesus, or dismiss it entirely. Some even cite wedding vows as "proof" that it is a permissible practice. They fail to recognize that there is absolutely no scriptural precedent for such a "tradition," for it is no more than that - a tradition. Need we call for a show of hands to determine who among us has faithfully kept those wedding vows?

Was Jesus unaware of the frailty of men's vows? Was he surprised when Peter and the others denied Him after vowing, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You." ([Matthew 26:35](#)). Of course, that is merely a rhetorical question. And for those among us who would accredit themselves with a greater measure of courage than that of those disciples, Paul warns, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall" ([1 Corinthians 10:12](#)).

We don't have to fully understand a command of Christ at the moment of making a decision - we are simply to obey it in faith. All too soon would we come to understand the folly of disobeying Him.

- [Matthew 5:32](#)

"but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery."

You might find it strange that I would include this verse until one ponders its significance in light of attempts to form a nation based upon Christian principles. Certainly, no one could fault the founding Fathers for not anticipating the degree to which divorce would become acceptable, even amongst Christians. Nor could they imagine the frivolous charges upon which it might be granted, such as "incompatibility" or "mental abuse" to name just a couple. But consider the dilemma this presents for a judge who is a Christian. Were he to grant a divorce for reasons of incompatibility, would he not be complicit in causing the woman to commit adultery? And

were he to refuse to grant what the law allows, based upon religious convictions, would he not be charged with being in violation of the First Amendment?

The point of all of this is to demonstrate the foolhardiness of the Christian founders of this country in supposing that they could establish a Christian nation, or a nation founded upon Judeo-Christian principles, as well as the inadvisability of Christians attempting to “restore” it to its former imagined grandeur. No one will deny that we are, at least for the present, the most affluent nation on the face of the earth, or that we are the most militarily powerful. Nor would I belittle the blessings that we have experienced in having the freedom to openly gather and worship as Christian assemblies. But one might at least wonder why Jesus never attributed blessings (see Matthew 5:1-12) to the proud, or to the powerful, or to the affluent, or to those who hunger and thirst for revenge, or to those who are free of persecution. It should be apparent, that we have been living under the delusion that we can “form a more perfect union . . . , establish justice . . . , insure domestic tranquility . . . , and secure the blessings of liberty,” while disregarding the commands of Him, in whose name we commend our efforts.

We must recognize that a change in a nation can only be brought about by a change in the lives of the citizens of that nation, and that permanent and meaningful change can only be brought about by seeing those individual lives *transformed* by the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are commissioned to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that Jesus commanded (Matt 28:19-20). As Christ’s ambassadors we are not authorized to act in accordance with our own particular or collective impulses. He instructs us as to how we are to conduct ourselves, and to the unfaithful ones who fail to heed His instructions, He says, “Why do you call Me “Lord, Lord” and do not do what I tell you.”

There are those who question whether the commands of Jesus in His “Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew 5, 6 and 7) are applicable today. These commands, they say, are impossible to follow - “After all, how can we love our enemies?” “Obviously,” they claim, “these commandments must apply to the time when Jesus has come again and established His kingdom.”

They fail to remember that, Jesus never commands us to do anything without giving us the means to carry it out. And that “means,” is His infinite grace. That is why John could say, “This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome” ([1 John 5:3](#)). These commandments require righteousness not based upon Pharisaical law, but rather, upon a heart that is given over to *His* righteousness; not based upon some Talmudic tradition, but based upon a heart bent toward pleasing Him.

When He tells us: "You have heard that it was said, YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' "But I say to you, "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," He is well aware that, in our own strength, we are unable to do so, therefore He pours out His grace upon those who willingly obey, knowing that His grace is sufficient. He who asked the Father for forgiveness of those who cursed Him, and spat upon Him, and hung Him on a cross -- has He not the right to admonish us to forgive those who hate us?

When He tells us, “Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you” (Matt 5:42), we are not to question the advisability of doing so. Our natural (fleshly) tendency is to be cautious to not be taken advantage of. But, we must never try to assume the responsibility to judge who might be attempting to do so. If and when, in His own time and in His own manner, He exposes those who would seek to defraud us, we may then apply the command, “For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: “if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either” (2). But, unless, and until, this unwillingness is disclosed to us, we are to cheerfully give, expecting nothing in return. This requires faith and the assurance that His purposes are served regardless of the outward appearance. We may never know what effect our obedience may have had on the lives of others, until we stand before His judgment seat, where all will be revealed. Nevertheless, our faithfulness will not be judged on the basis of results but rather upon our unrequited obedience to His commands. And is it possible that we could receive a greater blessing by giving simply in obedience to His command, even when we have sufficient reason to feel that we are being taken advantage of? It doesn’t require a great deal of faith to give to “accredited” organizations, which have the seal of approval of Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability. But what about the bedraggled stranger who comes knocking on your door, or who

stands at a busy intersection with a sign that reads: “Will work for food”? Do we give willingly to them, or do we obey our instincts and close the door, or drive away? Some will ask, “But don’t we have the responsibility as good stewards to do a preliminary investigation of the integrity of those to whom we give? I find nothing in Scripture to affirm that.

When He tells us, “Whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to Him the other also” (Matthew 5:39). we are to obey Him, rather than yield to our fleshly instinct to strike back. But, oh how our flesh revels in those stories or movies about the offended parties who seek and carry out their own revenge. But God has said, “Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord” ([Romans 12:19](#)).

As we yield to Him, we experience the joy of “Christ in us, the hope of glory.” Who, more than Jesus, had a right to exact His vengeance upon those who struck Him and spat upon Him, the very one who had come to offer them eternal life. But instead, He said, “Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do.”

If we question these commands based upon our “common sense,” remember also that God has said, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts; nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD” ([Isaiah 55:8](#)).

Oh, how we like to reason and debate with others, expressing our wisdom and knowledge of God’s ways either verbally, in books, or other means. One of the current forms of such expressions is the increasingly popular internet “blogs.” We use these methods in order to convey our thoughts and opinions, and quite often, in the process, we get argumentative with those who disagree, But God has said, “Come now, and let us reason together” ([Isaiah 1:18](#)). And, how are we to reason together with God? The only way that I know of is through His word and prayer. Too often we try to rationalize away God’s word by reasoning in our own minds and applying our own wisdom to His words.

Perhaps this is nowhere more evident than in the divisions in His body. We read Paul’s admonition:

Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgement. 1 Corinthians 1:10

However, we have the church in the United States divided into over one thousand denominations. These denominations, each convinced that they have a corner on some particular truth, set themselves apart from others in the body of Christ, even to the point of taking a name. “We are Baptists.” “We are Methodists.” “We are Presbyterians.” “We are Lutherans.” “We are Episcopalians.” “Can we not recognize a similarity to Paul’s denunciation of the divisions in the church at Corinth?

For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." Has Christ been divided?
1 Corinthians 1:11-13

And lest one should be misled into thinking that the early settlers were one big happy Christian family, a little research will prove otherwise. Even in the wake of religious revival known as, *the Great Awakening* (1730-1745) that swept over the American colonies about the middle of the 18th century, there was discord among the churches involved.

Allow me to repeat what Christine Leigh Heyrman, Department of History professor at the University of Delaware had to say concerning this:

So the first Great Awakening left colonials sharply polarized along religious lines. Anglicans and Quakers gained new members among those who disapproved of the revival's excesses, while the Baptists (and, in the 1770s, the Methodists) made even more handsome gains from the ranks of radical evangelical converts. The largest single group of churchgoing Americans remained within the Congregationalist and Presbyterian denominations, but they

divided internally between advocates and opponents of the Awakening, known respectively as "New Lights" and "Old Lights." Inevitably, civil governments were drawn into the fray. In colonies where one denomination received state support, other churches lobbied legislatures for disestablishment, an end to the favored status of Congregationalism in Connecticut and Massachusetts and of Anglicanism in the southern colonies.

(www.nhc.rtp.nc.us/tserve/eighteen/ekeyinfo/grawaken.htm)

So, we see that even this great spiritual revival did little to bring about unity in the already divided church. In fact it actually seems to have created even further schisms within some of them.

Most Christian churches, then as now, offer membership in their particular denomination based upon acceptance of the doctrinal beliefs established by their governing body. Can this be pleasing to our Lord Jesus Christ who said:

¹⁴ "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

¹⁵ "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.

¹⁶ "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

¹⁷ "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

¹⁸ "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

¹⁹ "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

²⁰ "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

²¹ that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

"that they may all be one;that the world may believe that You sent Me." Do you fully grasp that, Christian brothers and sisters? *"that the world may believe that You sent Me."* The very testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ is at stake!

Do we not realize that our denominational divisions are diametrically opposed to the desires of the Lord Jesus Christ whom we claim to serve -- for whom we are ambassadors? If Jesus said "They are not of the world" (vs. 16), why do we act as if we are? Whose ambassadors are we?

"The Great Commission" that Jesus gave to His disciples was, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching *them to observe all that I commanded you*; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20) (emphasis mine).

At His judgment seat, shall we hear that blessed benediction, "*Well done thou good and faithful servant*" - or - that tragic indictment, "*Why did you call Me "Lord, Lord" and did not do what I told you.*"

Paul urged: "*Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test?*" Better to do some intensive self-examination here and now, rather than risk failing the test at His judgment seat.

In light of some of the more recent events that have occurred I would like conclude by asking you to take a moment to contemplate the utter fallaciousness of one in public office, particularly, the President of the United States, trying to serve two masters. Consider the conflict that arises when the following scenarios occur.

- The President or a government official is publicly accused of sin.

Who is to have jurisdiction over the investigation and disposition of such an accusation?

One who professes to be a Christian, and who sins - whether he is President of the United States, one who occupies a pew in a local church or a peasant in Guatemala - is subject to the exact same church discipline prescribed by

Jesus in Matthew 18:17. The witnesses to the alleged sin are instructed to confront, and attempt to effect repentance of the sinner. If repentance is not accomplished, they are to tell it to the church and the church is instructed to expel the unrepentant one from fellowship. There is no “executive privilege” in the church of Jesus Christ. There is no plea bargaining at the bar of Christ.

An obvious problem arises when charges are made against a Christian (or one who professes to be a Christian) who holds a public office. Take the case of President Clinton. During his terms in office, many charges of sexual misconduct were made public - accusations that were later proven to be true while others were never satisfactorily resolved. But never once, during this time was the President called before the church to answer these charges. Admittedly, such action would have been difficult to administer, since the public attention that would have resulted would have rendered it nothing more than a media circus. Furthermore, I doubt that Mr. Clinton would have subjected himself to scrutiny by a church body, since it would have been convenient for him to have excused himself on the legitimate grounds that it would have been a hindrance to the faithful exercise of his duties. And the church, I’m afraid, would have come under attack for trying to interfere in the affairs of the state. Nevertheless, the church is not exonerated for failing to carry out the instructions of Christ. And those self-appointed church leaders who have been so vocal in condemning the sins of abortion and homosexuality were strangely silent in regard to the administration of church discipline against Mr. Clinton.

This is only one of the manifold complications which will inevitably arise when a Christian attempts to split his or her allegiance between serving God and serving men. The intricacies of trying to adhere to the demands of both systems will eventually cause a conflict. Sadly, it is all too often that allegiance to the state will take precedence over faithfulness to God. Are we to suppose that the Lord was unaware that such conflicts would arise?

Let’s look at another of these conflicts engendered by attempting to merge the spiritual with the secular

- The President is pressured into making alliances with ungodly nations.

We are told, “Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?” ([2 Corinthians 6:14](#)). Nevertheless, it is inevitable that, for whatever reasons, the President will be compelled to, or choose to, form alliances with countries that either make no pretense of being Christian nations, or those that are even openly non-Christian. In the war with Iraq the President formed a coalition with such countries.

In attempting to mollify some of the Muslim countries he has audaciously stated that Christians and Muslims “worship the same God.” This is a totally false statement and one that should have aroused the ire of church leaders around the country. Are we to rationalize away such a statement as being made in the interest of political expediency, where his desired end would attempt to justify the means? Can a Christian politician defy the wisdom of God and somehow serve two masters? Does God bless what He prohibits?

There are other scenarios that could be cited as scriptural obstacles to deter Christians from establishing a new nation, but is there any necessity for citing more than one? Of course, the objection might be raised, “Yes, but it’s a lot easier to view these things in hindsight, whereas, the Founding Fathers had no such luxury.” Quite true, but they had the clear instruction of the word of God, and they ignored that instruction of [2 Corinthians 6:14](#), which required no foresight on their part, only obedience.

So let us reconsider these ideas about patriotism and allegiance to the flag of a country, and cease striving in an attempt to reshape this country into a God-fearing nation. We need transformation, not reformation, and unless God initiates a national revival, it will only be accomplished individually in the lives of those who receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

No doubt, such an attitude will not satisfy those like Mr. Chalfant who states that “The United States is losing its greatness, because Christian clergy have abandoned ‘the militant, power-filled, full-dimensional’ faith of America’s founders” May I suggest to Mr. Chalfant that whatever “greatness” the United States may have

possessed, it was not spiritual, but rather, was based upon the secular idealism of some sincerely “patriotic” men who were willing to die for the cause of freedom. But lest we err in equating such noble, but misguided zeal with spirituality, remember that the terrorists who crashed the planes into the Twin Towers on 9/11 were no less zealous for their “cause.”

Unlike the state departments of worldly nations whose foreign policy may change with a change of administration, the policies of our Lord Jesus Christ never change. They are rooted in the wisdom of the omnipotent Godhead against whom, “there is no wisdom and no understanding and no counsel” (Proverbs 21:30). And if you will forgive a little play on words, His “term of office” is eternal and has no limit.

With the polarization of this country politically, and the steady declension of moral values, the adversary has accomplished his purpose and he has done it by turning the hearts and minds of many Christians away from being instruments of grace and mercy, to being political activists. The ineffectiveness of this activism can be seen (by those who have eyes to see) in the dramatic increase in homosexuality, divorce, abortion, drug abuse, pornography, sexually transmitted diseases, fraud, violent crime. Need I go on?

We don’t have to try to understand the underlying reasons for the American Revolution and the intent of the Founding Fathers. We have but to determine what is our duty as citizens of Christ’s kingdom

He is coming again to establish His kingdom, and we want to be found faithful when He arrives. How glorious it will be when we hear that last trumpet and the loud voices in heaven saying:

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

Revelation 11: 15

Amen and Hallelujah! Come, Lord Jesus!

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The Founding of America