

Saving a Nation

By

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There are several movements afoot today, spearheaded by national Christian leaders, all seeking to restore the nation to the kind of government intended by our founding fathers. The movement comes under many different names, such as the Dominion Theory, Reformation, Reconstruction, Coalition (of various kinds), Kingdom Now, etc. One thing that all seem to have in common is the concept that eventually the whole world will be converted to Christ and come under the dominion of the church.

Without a doubt Christians ought to work to establish and maintain a government which rules justly according to God's laws, and in this regard there has been a sad responsibility among those in leadership positions. But in correcting this we must remember that the primary object of Christ and the gospel is to bring man to repentance that he might be justified before God in order to receive life immortal.

Did Jesus expect all the world to be converted? He asked the question: "When the Son of man comes, will He find *the faith* on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). Of course, He will find many *kinds* of faith, but will He find **THE** faith? It hardly seems likely that He would have raised the question if all the world was to be converted before His return.

In the parable of the tares, the servants were told to let the tares (weeds) grow along with the wheat until the time of the harvest, and at that time they would be gathered and burned up. In explaining the parable Jesus said: "The tares are the sons of the evil one...and the harvest is the end of the world...As therefore the tares are gathered up and burned with fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father" (Mt. 13:38-43).

According to the parable the unsaved will live side by side with the redeemed until the coming of Christ, which means that the whole world is not going to be converted. It also tells us that when Jesus returns it will be time for judgment and the end of the world. After the separation of the wheat and tares, there will be no time for a millennium of perfect government in the present world.

It is Jesus who said, "Enter in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straight is the way that leads unto life, and few are they that find it" (Mt. 7:13-14).

What Jesus portrayed was not the sudden conversion of the world (in the 21st century) but the continual warfare between the saints and the power of evil in "high places." Victory for the Christian is never pictured as a great political coup that sweeps Christians into Caesar's seat but as personal victory over sin and temptation under the persecution and opposition of the state. This is what Christians have experienced for 2,000 years, and it is exactly what we see over all the world today.

Christ did not establish the church for it to become a bureaucracy in charge of man's affairs. History shows that whenever any church assumes political/civil power it becomes as tyrannical as the secular powers (witness the Roman Catholic Papacy and the Church of England). The Pilgrims came to America to escape such power.

Our nation became great because it was founded upon the principles of individual integrity and responsibility under God's laws. Its greatness can be restored only by restoring these characteristics in individual citizens. The battle of the 21st century is a battle between the truth of Jesus and all the lies of all other religion, superstition and humanistic doctrine. It is a question of serving God or Mammon, God or the state, God or sin, God or self.

The answer to society's ills is given by Jesus. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). The way is given, but it is not a way that appeals to fallen mankind. Jesus warned that all who choose it may expect to be hated and treated by the world as he was treated (John 15:18–23). However, this does not indicate defeat; neither is it pessimism to recognize this truth. Rather it is proof that our Lord knew what He was talking about, and we can confidently carry on the work He gave us to do, knowing that conditions are just as He described them. Our task is to become obedient "children of God without blemish, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom (we) are seen as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15). We are salt. It is our responsibility to see that the commands of God which are so repugnant to the pleasure-seeking populace are still applicable and held in the highest regard by people who find peace and joy in keeping them.

Christians, who are to love God wholeheartedly and to love our neighbors as ourselves, are to demonstrate to those neighbors the difference between the value of the temporal and the eternal. Paul said, "The world has been crucified unto me and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). We must see the world as the environment in which we work to please God—not to please the world. The world then will be influenced by our actions. Nothing is more glaringly inconsistent than the activists who wants to reform society who himself, or herself, stands in obvious need of repentance and conversion. The strategy given in Scripture for changing the world is that we ourselves be "transformed." Thus the greatest challenge any of us have is to bring ourselves under the sovereignty of Christ our King in every facet of life.

The church, as the body of saints, is to influence society by holding forth the truth of God, by presenting an example of a redeemed people who are different. This cannot be done when the church follows the world, as is so often the case today, where worship had become a theatrical act with the preacher and other staff the performers and the members only spectators. When the believers give up their personal discipleship and no longer engage in day-to-day service of obedience to Christ, they become willing to turn responsibility over to the bureaucrats of the church. They may think they have done their part when they give their money or sign some petition for moral action. But this is not the way Jesus prescribed, and it will be of no avail unless one has become a true disciple by putting the will of God above all human expedience. This requires self-denial and deliberately seeking God's will in all things. "Seek you first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:3;3). "All these things" refers to all the temporal necessities of life, including whatever security and freedom God wishes to grant.

The Christian cannot be separate from the issues of society, especially in a nation that is to be governed by elected officials. We must support good candidates and oppose evil ones, but this does not mean that the church as an organization is to use clout to bring society around. Change is to come as each believer lives out his testimony and demonstrates his faith by his works.

The way of Jesus encompasses the entire purpose of God, that we should be His servants in this world, that we might be conformed to His image and have immortality and glory in the world to come. What would it profit if we gained this world only to lose the next? Rather, we should lose life for Christ's sake and the Gospel's in order to gain it for eternity.

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