



“Why Should a Christian Be Involved in Politics?”

By Mike Griffin, Sr.

As we think upon the subject of Christians and politics it may seem odd to many that we would put the two together. Politics has gotten such a negative portrayal these days that to mention Christianity and politics in the same breath is as if you were suggesting that Christianity and pornography or Christianity and drug abuse went together!

Politics is seen in such a bad light that the word itself has become synonymous with that which is evil, corrupt and deceptive. While admitting that this perception is widespread, we must also acknowledge that the word politics is not in and of itself evil. The word “politic” comes from the Greek word “politikos” meaning, “of a citizen”. The word “politics” refers to the science and art of civil government. The word democracy means, “the rule of the people.”

When we put all of this together in the context of the United States, we find out that what we have is called a democratic republic. This means that our system of government is based upon a written constitution which guarantees that our God given unalienable rights are to be protected by representatives that are democratically elected by its citizens. They are elected by popular vote and they legislate by majority vote.

Practically speaking, what this means is that there must be citizens who willingly offer themselves as candidates for public office. This is where we as individual Christians citizens come in at. (At this point I am not advocating that churches endorse candidates, but that church members how are citizens should become involved in politics.)

According to Romans 13 it is God who came up with the idea and institution of government. As a matter of fact, people who serve in government or politics are called “ministers of God.” See Romans 13:1, 4.

In light of these definitions and what the Bible says, we come up with a different perspective than what is perceived today. For example, in Proverbs 29:12 it reads, “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.” So, since this verse is true, then what makes “politics” good or evil is determined by the caliber of people who get involved in it. If the righteous are involved the citizens will rejoice, if the wicked are more involved the citizens will mourn. It was Edmund Burke who once said, “All that is required for evil to triumph is for good

men to do nothing.” If you as a Christian citizen or a citizen of traditional moral values stand back and do nothing you will insure that the things you dislike most about government will continue to happen!

It is with this understanding that I want to share with you four obligations that require the Christian’s involvement in politics.

The first obligation that the Christian has to be involved in politics is what I call “**the spiritual obligation to God.**” Our spiritual obligation to God says, “that being a good Christian involves being a good citizen. Being a good citizen is a logical conclusion when you are maturing as a Christian.

When Jesus described the character and nature of the Christian in the Sermon on the Mount, He said that we as Christians are to be as “salt and light.” (Matt. 5)

Notice that Jesus was not saying what we “ought to be”. He was telling us what we are! True Christianity is not “trying” to be “salt and light”, true Christianity is salt and light. The issue is not what we are - if indeed, we are converted. The question is: “how effective are we going to be at what we are?”

Jesus encourages us to be “salty” and that means we need to get out of the “shaker”. He encourages us to not “hide our lamp under a bushel”, but rather to display it in such a way that it has the maximum amount of exposure! I believe for us not to be involved and vocally heard is treason against God and His Word.

As Christians we have a dual citizenship. We are citizens both of heaven and earth. And, because of that we must guard against the temptation to be so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good!

The second obligation that we as Christians have to be involved in politics is what I call **the “social obligation to others”**. Our social obligation to others says that to be a good citizen involves being willing to run for public office.

The government of the United States is unique in comparison to other governments because if you are a legal citizen YOU ARE THE GOVERNMENT. I remind you that the first three words of the U.S. Constitution are “We the people”. So many times we think of the government as “those people” in Atlanta or in Washington, D.C. They are our representatives. But we as a whole, the people of the United States, are the government. And the people who serve us in Atlanta or Washington will only be as good as those who run and whom we elect to public office! We are losing our best representative government not because of revolt or rebellion but by DEFAULT!

If we are left with nothing but unrighteous and unprincipled men and women to lead us, then don’t be surprised at the laws and policy we have. Each of us as Christians have a social obligation to our families, our children, our communities and our future generations to be engaged and involved in our political process. Are we so selfish that

we don't care what kind of country we will pass on to our children and our grandchildren? Is it not time again to say with the prophet Isaiah, "here am I Lord, send me"? Note how Charles Spurgeon put it...

"I often hear it said 'Do not bring religion into politics.' This is precisely where it ought to be brought! I would have the cabinet and members of the parliament do the work of the nation as before the Lord, and I would have the nation, either in making war or peace, consider the matter by the light of righteousness. We have had enough of clever men without conscience. Now let us see what honest, God fearing men will do."

The third obligation that we as Christians have to be involved in politics is what I call **the "moral obligation to truth"**. Our moral obligation to truth says that if we run for public office, we must stand for something! It's been said that "if you do not stand for something, you will fall for anything!" The problem we have today with "politics" and "political parties" is that we have unprincipled people who will say, do and confess anything to get elected and stay elected.

It is clear that we have too many "politicians" and not enough "statesmen". I believe it was Will Rogers who once gave the difference between a politician and a statesman. He said "a politician knows the truth but tells you what you want to hear. A statesman knows what you want to hear but tells you the truth anyway."

It is a sad commentary upon the state of our society that truth is not what our citizens are looking for. It is only in the pursuit of truth that any society can have the kind of values that make life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness worth living for. Our laws and policies must be based upon those certain unalienable rights that come from our Creator God. And it is He alone, who in the Ten Commandments has established eternal standards of right and wrong that any civilized society must be based upon. All those who run for such offices must hold fast to the moral obligation of truth. This is seen in Romans 13:9-10.

The fourth and final obligation that we as Christians have to be involved in politics is what might be called **the "eternal obligation to righteousness"**. Our eternal obligation to righteousness says that if we are willing to "stand for something", we must also be willing to "suffer the consequences". This fact hits us at the very core of what drove and motivated our founding fathers in the writing of The Declaration of Independence. How can any of us forget their words, that they were willing to give "their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor"!

Our founding fathers knew that anything worth living for was indeed worth dying for! For the Christian this means we have to be involved in the political process of our country, even if it means running for public office, and even if it means you will lose. You see my friend, there is more at stake than an election. We, above all people, have an eternal obligation to righteousness that transcends this earthly life into eternity itself!

We must realize that it is never wrong to do what is right, even if we don't see the

immediate results of our labor. You see, it's not just about us. It is about others. It's about other generations and it is ultimately about having to stand before God in eternity and give an account to Him.

I am not known for quoting a lot of what Coach Mike Ditka has said, but years ago I heard him say, "you're never a loser unless you quit." I fear that too many Christians are more worried about being a loser in the world's eyes than being a winner in God's eyes!

If you, as a Christian, decide to run for public office and in standing for righteousness you lose, just remember, if you stand for truth you are still a winner! I believe that it is possible to win the race, but lose the election. Listen, the fact that the best candidate does not always win must not keep us from trying. We must not be too short sighted in understanding what true success is! True success is not measured by just what happens on election night but rather on Judgment Day!

There is an eternal obligation to righteousness that transcends our personal comfort zone. When your personal obligation to God, others, truth and righteousness is fulfilled you are a success. Think about the seeds you have sown. Think about the lives that have been touched. Think about the lives that have been encouraged and, not to mention, those that have been inspired.

When we stand up and suffer the consequences for doing what is right, it encourages others to stand up also. That's what the apostle Paul is referring to in Philippians 1:12-14. It may very well be that your witness, your testimony, your involvement or your example keeps hope alive in this country! As a matter of fact, the Bible tells us that it is better to suffer in this light than to suffer having done what is wrong! (1 Peter 3:17)

Don't make excuses for not accepting your responsibility to be involved. You do have as a genuine Christian a spiritual, social, moral, and eternal obligation to be involved in politics. I think this is something worth thinking about!