

# Christian Citizenship Council

*"When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan." (Prov 29:2)*

## Citizenship

### Principles of Christian Citizenship

**Citizenship** is owing loyalty to, and entitled by birth or naturalization to the protection of, a particular state. Citizenship includes exercising the right to vote and enjoying other privileges.

**Christian Citizenship** is the application of a Christian, Biblical, world-view to the exercise of our privileges and responsibilities as a citizen of this nation, and being a contributing member of society.

Booklet: Equipping the Church to Vote!

Church Policy on Christian Citizenship

Purpose of the Church

Separation Confusion

Role of the Church

Christian concern

National trends

What can be done?

Bottom Line

10 Steps to start ministry

Purpose of the Church:

- Worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:24; Col 3:16)
- Pray for God's will to be revealed and fulfilled in His church and the world (Matt 9:10; 1 Tim 2:1-4, Jer 29:7)
- Exercise spiritual gifts for the edification, maturing and equipping of God's people for the service to God (1 Cor 12:4-7)
- Proclaim the gospel of God's saving grace (Matt 28:18-20)
- Live exemplary lives in obedience to God to bring Him glory in all walks of life (1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17)
- Apply Biblical principles and a Christian worldview to all spheres of the culture around us, and to all of life as citizens of this nation (Matt 5:13-16, Prov 14:34, Deut 4:6-8)

Separation Confusion:

Separation of Church and State (which is nowhere in the U.S. Constitution) really means removing every influence of Christianity & Christians from the public arena. In Biblical and practical terms, true separation means that the church does not appoint public leaders, wage armed conflict, setup a national party, create or enforce civil laws, or levy and collect taxes. However the church and believers do equip leaders for public office, speak out on moral issues, pray for our leaders and nation, influence society by moral persuasion, influence the state for good, and discipline manifest sinners. Conversely, the state must not establish a religion, set church policies, establish doctrine, rule on spiritual matters, or appoint church leaders. The state must recognize it's accountable to God, protect free expression of religion, commend the good, and punish evil actions. In this context, it is important to remember that the church is not a political action committee or organ of a political party or candidate, the church has legal restrictions, the church does not use the weapons of the

world, it's weapons are spiritual (2 Cor 10:3-5), and we are to do all things for the glory of Christ, and in a Christ-like manner (1 Cor 10:31).

What's the role of the Church:

As Christian citizens of any nation, we are obligated to:

- "Love (our) neighbor as (our) self" (Matt 22:39), including the speaking of truth in love (Eph 4:15)
- influence people for good by appealing to conscience and reason (Rom 2:15; 2 Cor 10:3-5);
- seek the "peace and prosperity of the city" in which we live (Jer 29:7);
- not ignore our duties and responsibilities to be involved, godly citizens (James 4:17);
- work diligently to restore righteousness to the land (Proverbs 14:34);
- encourage government to fulfill it's God ordained role (punish evil, commend good: Romans 13:1-4), which includes maintaining an environment amenable to Christianity.
- provide "wise counsel" to the nation in selecting leaders, establishing laws, ensuring justice and affecting society for good (Proverbs 11:14, 25:15, 28:28, 29:2);
- submit "... to the governing authorities" and pray "... for those in authority" (Romans 13:1, 1 Timothy 2:1-2);
- "Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them." (Ephesians 5:11)
- "Defend .. the weak and fatherless ... maintain rights of the poor and oppressed ... rescue the weak and needy" (Psalm 82:3-4)
- be "the salt of the earth and light of the world" (Matt 5:13-14) in all spheres of life

Why are Christians concerned?

- Major growth in American society of moral relativism, multi-culturalism, and secular humanism.
- Continued promotion of grave moral evils under the guise of liberalism and "tolerance";
- Church movement into a "holy huddle" - afraid to speak God's Truth in public;
- Societal belief of the "irrelevance" of Christianity;
- Public as well as private hostility for anything "Christian";
- Tremendous need for Christians to re-engage society with Biblical wisdom and sound reason.

Trends in the United States:

- Nation began as an experiment in the application of Biblical principles at virtually every level of society;
- A Christian legacy as served and preserved this nation for at least 150 years;
- Rapid decay of this legacy in the last generation;
- Christianity now perceived as not just irrelevant but the cause of many current societal and national problems;
- The nation is rapidly moving from a post-Christian era to an anti-Christian pagan era;
- Our freedom to worship, evangelize, and influence society for good is rapidly coming to a close.
- The goal of the ungodly is nothing less than the Criminalization of Christianity!

What can be done?

- Pray for those in leadership over us (1 Timothy 2:1-4)
- Support the election of godly leadership in all positions of authority;
- Encourage officials to fulfill their responsibilities in a righteous way (Romans 13:3-4);
- Influence and encourage godly candidates seeking elective office;
- Pursue public office as personal giftedness, desire & opportunity allow;
- Become knowledgeable on moral issues of societal concern;
- Meet regularly on citizenship concerns and take action wherever possible;
- Ensure just enforcement of righteous laws (1 Timothy 1:8-11)
- Coordinate with other Christ-centered churches and ministries to multiply effectiveness.
- Register to Vote, then Vote responsibly

- Identify good candidates for office (preferably a qualified Christian) and campaign for them.
- Form an ad hoc Christian Citizenship Group to begin planning actions (with pastoral blessing)
- Become knowledgeable on societal, local and national issues by reading books, websites, and Christian newsletters.
- Subscribe to legislative alerts (paper or electronic) from trustworthy sources.
- Identify local activist organizations with which to participate.
- Write letters to the Editor expressing your views.
- Write and/or call legislators expressing your views on pending legislation.
- Read and understand the Declaration of Independence and United States Constitution. A person ignorant of their rights has no rights!
- Investigate school curriculum and teaching programs - use Opt-Out forms if necessary, consider home schooling.

#### The Bottom Line:

- Our salvation is centered in Jesus Christ, not our nation, its leaders, or its laws.
- True, lasting change comes through changed hearts.
- Christian Citizenship is not the priority in life, but its also not to be neglected.
- Involvement in governance and cultural issues can significantly reduce the onslaught against Christianity.
- Restoring God's standards to the public arena can bring moral change.
- We have a Biblical mandate to apply a Christian worldview to all spheres of life (including citizenship duties)
- Our nation was founded on Biblical truths and will only survive if those truths are lived.
- The Lord can, and often does, use those of little account to accomplish great deeds. "Blessed are the poor in Spirit."
- God doesn't demand us to be successful, only faithful.
- We are to do all with love towards others, not hostility!
- If souls aren't saved, nothing is saved.
- Whatever we do, it is done for the glory of Christ! (1 Cor 10:31)

#### 10 Practical Steps in forming a church-based "Christian Citizenship Ministry"

First, always remember:

- Every church is different
- Be submissive to your pastor's authority
- Do not be divisive
- Pray for wisdom and opportunity
- Find out if there is an existing citizenship ministry similar or related to what you want to do.
- If one doesn't exist, find several people that share your interest in this area.
- Meet together to discuss what you would like to see done within your church.
- Ensure the citizenship ministry leader is a mature believer with a broad base of interests (prevents narrow focus)
- Find a church leader (pastor, elder, ministry leader, etc) sympathetic to your interests.
- With this leader, strategize an approach to defining, developing and implementing a citizenship ministry within your particular church environment.
- Formulate clear, to the point: citizenship ministry goals; approach; resource needs; and how it will be implemented under pastoral oversight
- Present your plan to wider church leadership for approval and oversight. Be receptive to their concerns and remain flexible.
- Be patient, if this type of ministry does not already exist, it may take time to create.
- If approved, establish a standard meeting time and place, and advertise.



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