

## #20 THE DOCTRINE OF A CIVIL SOCIETY

30 PRACTICAL DOCTRINES YOU NEED TO KNOW | DR. RANDY WHITE

### CHRISTIAN GROUPS HAVE DEBATED CHRISTIAN PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT

- Anabaptists (the radical reformation) argued that the Christian should not in any way be involved as a “magistrate.”
- The reformation believed that the best magistrate was a Christian.
- Arguments against Christian participation in Government were almost wholly given from pacifist or a church-state concerns.

### THE BIBLE DOES NOT DIRECTLY ADDRESS DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

- The Bible was addressed to those under various forms of government:
  - No government (Genesis 1-9)
  - A social government (Genesis 10-Exodus 19)
  - A theocracy (Exodus 20-2 Chronicles)
  - An occupying dictatorship (Ezra – Revelation).
- Democracy is not “Biblical” if your standard for Biblical is “ordained” in Scripture.
- Scripture ordains *government* but (for our dispensation) does not ordain the *type* of government. Because of this, a civil society is necessary to a benevolent government.
- There are many principles in Scripture which can (and should be) applied in a democratic society, including:
  - Family structure as the foundation for society. (Gen. 2:24, Ex. 20:12)
  - Respect for authority (Rom. 13:1, 1 Tim. 2:1-2)
  - Personal property rights (Ex. 20:15, Eph. 4:28)
  - The necessity of truth (Ex. 20:16)
  - The sanctity of life (Ex. 20:13)
  - Recognition of objective truth (Jn. 8:32, 17:17)

### OUR SOCIETY IS QUICKLY LOSING ALL CIVILITY

- A house divided... Matthew 12:25.
- We have developed a society that cannot handle competing ideas. A toleration of ideas and views has been the hallmark of free and prosperous societies.
- We have come to the point in our society in which it is more valued to be militant than to be civil.
- There is so much irrational behavior in our society that the only conclusion can be that there has been a rising tide of spiritual warfare behind the scenes. 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 1 Timothy 4:1-3.

### PRINCIPLES OF CIVILITY – A PASTOR’S POINT OF VIEW

- A civil society recognizes both a freedom of and a freedom from religion.
  - Freedom of religion gives the religious and their institutions total freedom to operate without restriction except in cases where the operation of that religion infringes upon the life and liberty of others.
  - Freedom from religion gives the non-religious the freedom to reject religion and its programs and institutions from their daily lives, living lives of their own conscience.
  - Neither freedom of nor freedom from religion makes the public square a religious zone nor a religious free zone. *People* are religious, and public squares are for people. Equal access is the key to a civil society.
- A civil society values the discussion of ideas for the common good.
  - A discussion requires pros and cons, give and take, agreement and disagreement.
  - A discussion requires parties to sit at the table and listen as much as they talk.
- A civil society values eradication of social problems and dilemmas and does something to bring about progress toward eradication.
  - When members of our deliberative bodies spend decades passing the buck on social problems, those members need to be assisted in their coming career change.
- A civil society has values that are based on expressed reality.
  - For the USA, that reality has always been the written Word of God.
  - Our forefathers that rejected the written Word of God as supernatural (such as Jefferson), and rejected its application in their personal lives (such as Franklin), nonetheless recognized that it was the thing to which we could go for common ground.
    - “Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters.” -Ben Franklin
  - Today, there is no expressed reality to which our society can turn to – and this reality spells disaster for our future.

### HOW CAN YOU HELP

- Promote civility in your own conversations.
- Recognize that a moral grounding is required for a civil society. Whatever you can do to build such a foundation will promote civility.
- Don’t base your life or wellbeing on the expectation of civility. As the end approaches, society will collapse.