

General Council Member Criteria*

- a. Complete a Pastor Council affiliation card or form and return to the area council office.
- b. Attend quarterly and special General Council leadership summits, workshops and special gatherings as often as schedule permits.
 - i. Summits will feature local, state and/or national featured speakers such as issues experts, elected officials and/or pastors. Other events will be informational or action in nature as the need is determined.
- b. Appoint, assign or recruit a Citizenship Ministry Coordinator (either staff or lay leader at your discretion) to serve as the facilitator of educational classes, issues information and to implement the AMERICA plan in your church.
- c. Review and cast advisory votes on decisions regarding organizational strategy, voter information, public policy positions and other relevant activities of the area Pastor Council.
 - i. This would occur via e-mail and fax as directed by the Executive Committee.

* - Only Senior Pastors or equivalent position may serve on the General Council or Executive Committee

A Publication of

USPC
US PASTOR COUNCIL

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*Citizenship
Is
Ministry!*

USPC
US PASTOR COUNCIL

Mission Statement

“The mission of the Houston Area Pastor Council is to empower pastors and their congregations across racial and denominational lines to impact the culture and community through concerted prayer, to equip our congregations for effective citizenship and to provide a unified voice on spiritual, cultural, social and moral issues as a means of promoting Biblical righteousness and justice.”

Our seven-fold purpose is called the
AMERICA plan*:

Articulate Biblical positions on important moral issues from the pulpit and to the community.

Motivate congregants to be godly, responsible citizens.

Educate congregants on Scriptural, historical and legal foundations for responsible Christian citizenship.

Register every eligible citizen in each participating church to vote

Inform congregants on a regular basis in regard to important local, state and national issues of concern.

Coordinate with Pastors and churches of like mind throughout the community to pray, stand and speak together.

Activate members to effective prayer, service and civic involvement in the community to promote Biblical righteousness and justice.

* - The AMERICA Plan was created by Dave Welch and is trademarked by Vision America



**She risked her life
to do it.**



Citizenship Is Ministry!

**They gave their lives
so you can do it.**



“The Reformation with its emphasis upon the Bible, in all that it teaches, as being the revelation of God, provided a freedom in society and yet a form in society as well. Thus, there were freedoms in Reformation countries (such as the world had never known before) without those freedoms leading to chaos—because both laws and morals were surrounded by a consensus resting upon what the Bible taught.” (emphasis added)

Dr. Francis Schaeffer, “The Great Evangelical Disaster”



**His future depends on
IF and HOW you do it.**

Introduction

One of the greatest tragedies of the 20th and early 21st century is the collapse of a Judeo-Christian consensus in America that has resulted in spiritual, moral, societal and political chaos. Why has this occurred? Far too often, those Christians who felt called to the battle to restore this consensus through the Biblical foundations of the church and our culture have looked “in all the wrong places” as to the source of the problem.

The bad news is that we need look no further than the Christian church in the United States. The good news is that we also need look no further than a return by The Church to the fundamental truths of God as revealed in His written Word to “turn the tide.”

Dr. Francis Schaeffer wrote the words shown at the top of the page in the last book published before he died in 1984. His “last words” are a call to the church to reject the “sacred vs. secular dichotomy” embraced by most evangelicals and once again embrace the concept that God’s authority and the Lordship of Jesus Christ cover ALL of creation and EVERY area of His followers’ lives - including our responsibilities as stewards of that creation.

We are going to directly challenge the current “Great Evangelical

**PRAY, VOTE AND
GET INVOLVED!**

It’s The Christian Thing To Do.

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Disaster” that has resulted in a weak and fractured church no longer providing the moral, cultural and political standard for the nation.

Under the Biblically-flawed view of “compassion” we are now asking the government to do what God directed the individual and/or the church to do, tolerating or embracing ungodly lifestyles and refusing to be “controversial.”

The downward spiral effect of this “tolerant” approach , which in evangelism attempts to find the most “attractive” means to reach the lost, is that as the culture has drifted farther away from the Judeo-Christian consensus, so has the church in order to “reach” it.

As a result, Pastors and laymen who bring Biblical standards of righteousness and justice into the arena of societal morality and governing as mandated by Scripture (see our other publication, “The Biblical Basis of Civil Government”) are not only criticized and opposed from the world, they often receive the same response from fellow believers.

We are throwing the gauntlet down and proclaiming that Scripturally, historically and Constitutionally, **“Citizenship is Ministry!”**

1

What Is Ministry?

MIN'ISTER, n. [L.] Properly, a chief servant; hence, an agent appointed to transact or manage business under the authority of another; in which sense, it is a word of very extensive application.

(Webster 1828 Dictionary)

Romans 13 clearly provides an understanding of God’s limited purpose of governing authority. The term “minister” is used in verse 4 as part of that description, using the Greek word:

Diakonos - dee-ak'-on-os

1. one who executes the commands of another, esp. of a master, a servant, attendant, minister; the servant of a king

If it is appropriate for a mature Christian to have a pet peeve, mine

- **Reap the harvest** – 2 Chron. 7:14 – (hear, forgive, heal)

The final call to action is a reminder that, while we are restoring the moral, social, cultural and political foundations of our nation to reflect God’s righteousness, we must heed Francis Schaeffer's final words in his last book, *“Love—and the unity it attests to—is the mark Christ gave Christians to wear before the world. Only with this mark may the world know that Christians are indeed Christians and that Jesus was sent by the Father.”*

If the church does not consistently take principled, reasoned and Biblically grounded positions on key issues of the day, who will?

TAKING ACTION: Pastors must take citizenship ministry seriously by enlisting a ministry leader and supporting the development of a functioning, ongoing ministry focus in your church. Steps on how to begin a Citizenship Ministry can be found in “Christian Citizenship 101”, which can be downloaded at:

www.uspastorcouncil.org/resources.htm

“It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.” - **George Washington**

“The Bible is the cornerstone of liberty. A student's perusal of the sacred volume will make him a better citizen, a better father, a better husband.” **Thomas Jefferson**

“So great is my veneration for the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society. I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once every year.” **John Quincy Adams**

“I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this Book. But for it we could not know right from wrong.” **Abraham Lincoln**

The above quotes were taken from American Government in Christian Perspective, (A Beka Book) and American Quotations, William J. Federer.

again. Pastors and churches have been intimidated into silence with one of the greatest bluffs since poker was invented.

The fact is that the duty given by God to be stewards of His institution overrides any man made laws. It is time that His church regain its courage and place Him once again as the Sovereign rather than the State. Churches that are not incorporated or have not sought 501 (c) (3) recognition by the IRS are not restricted in any way, yet are extended tax exemption. More information can be found at www.uspastorcouncil.org/resources.

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7

Conclusion—Pass The Salt, Turn On The Light!

On December 22, 1820, Daniel Webster gave a speech at the bicentennial celebration of the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock. In that speech the "great orator" summarized the driving force behind the Pilgrims' "errand in the wilderness" when he said, "*Our ancestors established their system of government on morality and religious sentiment. Moral habits, they believed, cannot safely be trusted on any other foundation than religious principle, nor any government be secure which is not supported by moral habits. Whatever makes men good Christians makes them good citizens.*"

We propose a four step cultural redemption plan that every church can and should implement in coordination with as many other pastors and churches in each community as will join them:

- **Pray, fast and repent** – 2 Chron. 7:14 – (humble, seek, pray, turn)
- **Serve our neighbor** – James 1:27 (pure and undefiled religion)
- **Raise the standard of righteousness** - Matt. 5: 13-16 (Apply the salt, shine the light)

is the often-used term that someone was "called to the ministry". The un-official evangelical definition of that term applies to those called to serve as pastors or missionaries, therefore clearly implying that all believers NOT in those areas of calling are not in "The Ministry."

The words *Diakonos* and *Diakaneo* appear a combined total of 59 times in the New Testament, including the familiar passage in Matthew 20:26, "*It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your (diakonos) servant.*" I doubt that any believer would argue that Christians should be servants, regardless of our profession or vocation. All Christians are in "The Ministry".

It seems evident that like any ministry, the exercise of civil authority will be performed best by disciples of Christ who think and act Biblically.

Biblically, civil rulers are servants and since all civil authority is granted by and accountable to God (Romans 13:1-7) the purpose of civil authority is indeed to "minister".

Is it possible for this ministry to be conducted properly by those who don't believe in the God who gave the authority and who "made the rules"? Or by those who claim to believe but insist His Word is full of errors? It seems evident that like any ministry, the exercise of civil authority will be performed best by disciples of Christ who think and act Biblically.

When the ministry of governing is disconnected from Biblical moorings, there is no possible way for it to retain His perfect balance of justice and mercy. It must then be tossed upon the waves of selfishness, greed, sin and corruption. Sound familiar?

2

Who Turned Off The Light?

A vital premise of ministering through governing is tempered with the requirement that we are to, "Let your light so shine before

men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.” Tragically, we must admit the light is very dim in America today.

According to Christian researcher George Barna, “...substantial numbers of Christians believe that activities such as abortion, gay sex, sexual fantasies, cohabitation, drunkenness and viewing pornography are morally acceptable. “Without some firm and compelling basis for suggesting that such acts are inappropriate, people are left with philosophies such as ‘if it feels good, do it,’ ‘everyone else is doing it’ or ‘as long as it doesn’t hurt anyone else, it’s permissible.’ In fact, the alarmingly fast decline of moral foundations

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Other research by Barna includes troubling facts:

- No difference between churchd vs. unchurchd adults in reading or watching a movie or video that contained explicit sexual images.

- No difference between born-again and non-born individuals on viewing adult content on the Internet, reading magazines or watching videos with explicit sexual content
- Born again Christians are just as likely to get divorced as are non-born again adults.
- Areas of life that are less overtly associated with people’s religious beliefs (economics, political influence or entertainment choices) may not be impacted by their faith.

Barna concludes this report summarizing, “Because the Christian faith is not associated in people’s minds with a comprehensively different way of life than they would lead if they were not a Christian, the impact of that faith is largely limited to those dimensions of thought and behavior that are obviously religious in nature.”

Chuck Colson stated in “Kingdoms In Conflict” that “The

Historically we DID

Despite the revisionist history taught in government schools and even in many “Christian” educational institutions, the role of Christianity and the Bible in the cultural and governmental foundations of the United States are irrefutable. According to Christian historians David Barton, Gary DeMar, Marshall Foster and Peter Marshall the Bible was a primary and secondary reference in over 90 percent of writings, debates and public discourse during the founding era. Also, for example, at least 52 of the 55 signers of the Declaration of Independence were professing Christians and active church members.

U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Joseph Story (appointed by President and “Father of the Constitution”, James Madison) said in his *Commentary on the Constitution of the United States*, that “Probably, at the time of the adoption of the Constitution, and of the . . . [First Amendment], the general, if not the universal, sentiment in America was, that Christianity ought to receive encouragement from the State, so far as such encouragement was not incompatible with the private rights of conscience, and the freedom of religious worship...”

Legally we MAY

If in fact God ordained government then it is really not a serious question as to whether the church has a right to influence it. The fact that the “you’ll lose your tax exempt status” hammer is raised in regards to the 501 (c)(3) non-profit status of incorporated churches—under IRS regulations that did not exist until 1954—illustrates the Biblical, historical and Constitutional bankruptcy of the ACLU, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, etc.

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Since the imposition of restrictions on political speech by 501 (c)(3) churches in 1954, only ONE CHURCH has lost its tax exempt status for ONE DAY because of political activities. Please read that

Scripturally, Historically, Legally -YES!

Scripturally we MUST

It does not take a Biblical scholar to determine very quickly that the Bible illustrates how God used leaders like Joseph, Esther, Daniel, David, Solomon and even the unrighteous kings for His purposes. In addition, we are told to seek the peace of the city

It is also evident that when the unrighteous rule, the people bear the consequences, particularly when we have chosen them.

(Jeremiah 29:7) , pray for leaders that we may live peaceable lives (1 Tim. 2:2) and obey earthly authorities (1 Peter 2: 13-15). Also very clear is the correlation between the adherence by the kings to God's laws and the spiritual and moral direction of the people. Ungodly king = ungodly people.

The reality of personal responsibility for our sin and the requirement for personal repentance and surrender to Christ for salvation are clear. It is also evident that when the unrighteous rule, the people bear the consequences, particularly when we have chosen them. Our command is to, "Select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain, and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, of tens." (Ex. 18:21)

The one major difference between the governing authorities during Biblical times and our own is the direct role of personal responsibility each citizen carries under the Constitution of the United States for its policies. We the people *are* the government and are responsible for the authority vested in the followers of Jesus Christ, referring again to Matthew 28:18-21, "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore..."

first responsibility for the citizen of the Kingdom, then, is to understand historic Christian truth: to know Scripture and the classic fundamentals of the faith."

He went on to say that, "When Christians either lack knowledge or are insecure about what they believe, as is the case with many today, they forfeit their place in contending for theological truth, and secularism advances."

Dr. D. James Kennedy describes The Cultural Mandate, first given in Genesis 1:26-28, as part of the Dual Mandate of the Great Commission. He states that we are "Junior Partners" in God's creation and are told to "...subdue it; and rule over...every living thing."

"That mandate is still in force today. As the vice-regents of God, we are to bring His truth and His will to bear on every sphere of our world and our society. We are to exercise godly dominion and influence over our neighborhoods, our schools, our government, our literature and arts, our sports arenas, our entertainment media, our news media, our scientific endeavors - in short, over every aspect and intrusion of human society."

"The first responsibility for the citizen of the Kingdom, then, is to understand historic Christian truth: to know Scripture and the classic fundamentals of the faith."

The second mandate of the Great Commission is more widely referenced in today's church, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matt. 28:21)

Can it be said that we are ruling over His creation properly, making disciples and teaching them ALL things He commanded? If we were, would the United States be different than it is spiritually, morally, culturally and politically?

We would like to blame secular humanists, liberals, the

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the National Education Association (NEA), or the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force for the moral collapse – but can we?

3

Citizenship Ministry Begins In The Heart

The book of Isaiah begins during a time of moral and spiritual chaos for Israel and Judah very similar to the condition of our nation today.

Much of chapter one describes a nation whose “sons” acted corruptly. They had abandoned, despised and turned away from the Lord and their sacrifices were no longer tolerable to Him. God’s people are told (Isaiah 1:16,17) to follow these steps of repentance:

- Wash yourselves
- Cease to do evil
- Learn to do good
- Reprove the ruthless
- Defend the orphan
- Plead for the widow

Later, the Lord admonished Israel through Jeremiah to “*Do justice and righteousness, and deliver the one who has been robbed from the power of his oppressor. Also do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the orphan or the widow; and do not shed innocent blood in this place.*” (Jer. 22:3) Scripture is filled from Genesis to Revelation with illustrations that God is concerned with our love for and obedience to Him as evidenced by how we minister to, or serve, those around us.

We love to quote 2 Chronicles 7:14 as the banner verse for spiritual, moral, cultural and even political restoration but are we personally and corporately applying the four “ifs”?

1. Humble ourselves
2. Pray
3. Seek His face
4. Turn from OUR wicked ways

Anyone who has enjoyed a real, full-scale, down home back yard

reflect on a few facts:

- *Abortion rates are down but is still legal through all nine months of pregnancy; out-of-wedlock births now account for 37% of all births..*
- *Sexual perversity is now becoming a legally protected “right”.*
- *Pornography has exploded as an industry, destroying lives and families.*
- *Drug abuse by pre-teens, teens and young adults continues to increase.*
- *Divorce, sexual abuse of children and spousal abuse are at historically high levels.*

Many of our most vulnerable are victimized both by wasteful, faceless bureaucracies and opportunistic leaders bringing ungodly solutions to these problems.

These are primarily symptoms of spiritual, mental and/or emotional chaos – however civil government has a vital role which either rewards good and restrains evil - or vice versa.

Godly leaders will make God-centered decisions which will produce God-honoring benefits in the lives of citizens under the authority of those leaders. Voting is the least we can do to promote righteousness and justice in our communities, state and nation, but is just a small part. God is indeed watching and we must “raise the bar” to assure that we will no longer be found wanting in this vital area of our stewardship. NOT voting is NOT an option for Christians!

Pastors must exert clear and firm leadership through our pulpits and our church communications for EVERY Election to ask EVERY eligible congregant to cast a prayerful, informed and Biblically-defensible vote!

Godly leaders will make God-centered decisions, which will produce God-honoring benefits in the lives of citizens under the authority of those leaders.

Citizenship Ministry is NOT optional!

Many reasons have been given as to why Christians should or should not vote, either in spite of or due to being disappointed, frustrated and/or disillusioned with political leaders and the political process. Most of the reasons do not address the most important principle and in fact illustrate a remaining weakness in how we think about the arena of governing. We are still far too “Issues Driven”, even if the issues are sound. Genesis 9:6, Exodus 18:21, Matthew

28:18, Romans 13:1, Colossians 1:16 and 2:10, and Ephesians 1:21 all reveal that God has delegated His authority to His people to exercise in accordance with His will.

In the United States, voting is simply the extension of His authority to a “representative” to act on our behalf in order to make decisions on affairs of civil government.

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The responsibility for the Biblical use of that authority rests primarily with followers of Jesus Christ. If we either do not vote or we vote for men or women who are spiritually, morally and philosophically weak – WE are accountable to God for the misuse of that authority.

One of the most clear, timeless and scriptural descriptions of the reason why Christians must vote was given by American Statesman **Noah Webster** in 1832. He stated that, “...*If the citizens neglect their duty and place unprincipled men in office, the government will soon be corrupted; laws will be made not for the public good so much as for the selfish or local purposes; Corrupt or incompetent men will be appointed to execute the laws; the public revenues will be squandered on unworthy men; and the rights of the citizens will be violated or disregarded...*”

Believer, this is not about politics – it is about ministry! Let’s just

barbeque has also had the “joy” of the clean up. Washing a pile of greasy dishes and cookware can quickly become nothing more than an exercise in futility when the dishwasher becomes so dirty that you are just moving the grease around. The only solution is to drain the sink and refill with fresh, warm, soapy water. You simply cannot clean dirty dishes with dirty dishwasher, and you cannot “clean” a culture with “dirty” Christians.

If there is little or no measurable difference in the lives of men, women and children who profess to be Christians from those who do not, the faith becomes more than irrelevant; it becomes an irritant.

According to other studies by Barna, only 32% of adult Christians believe in moral absolutes, leaving the inescapable conclusion that the majority who claim to have accepted Jesus Christ as savior do not believe in unchangeable principles of right and wrong as given in His word.

Twenty years of assessment of thousands of Christian students, parents and teachers by the Nehemiah Institute through the PEERS (Politics, Education, Economics, Religion and Social issues) Worldview test reveal a downward trend in Christians who can “connect the dots” with their philosophy and decisions in those categories with Biblical standards. Out of a potential 100 points, the average score for a Christian student in a Christian school is 30—essentially a socialistic, secular worldview.

We cannot avoid the challenge facing the church in America today - and that is whether we will reassert the Biblical foundations of the church and the nation that do not recognize any separation between “sacred” and “secular” any more than they do the separation of God from government.

Few Christians or even non-Christians for that matter would dispute that we have a mandate as individuals and as a church to minister to the physical needs of those who are unable to do so for

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themselves. Why, however, have we bought into an unscriptural premise that ruling justly and in the fear of God is not ministry?

4

Ministry By Any Other Name?

GOV'ERN, v.t. [L. gubernō. The L. gubernō seems to be a compound.]

1. To direct and control, as the actions or conduct of men, either by established laws or by arbitrary will; to regulate by authority; to keep within the limits prescribed by law or sovereign will. ...Every man should govern well his own family. (*Webster 1828 Dictionary*)

God is sovereign over both church and state, but each have a unique and assigned role as do the ministers within each institution.

It is fascinating that we hear almost daily about leaders of other nations referred to in their role with “Culture Ministry” (Greece), “Education Ministry” (Chile), “Agriculture Ministry” (South Korea), “Defense Ministry” (Russia), etc., without questioning the use of the term.

In the way of a disclaimer, the role of “minister” within the jurisdiction of the church is certainly a different function than that of minister within the civil realm. In fact, *“It would probably be a surprise to many that the doctrine of the separation of church and state is a uniquely Judeo-Christian concept. Historically, in most non-Judeo Christian cultures the church and state were in fact one and the same.”* (See USPC’s, *“The Biblical Basis of Civil Government”*)

The distinction, however is institutional in nature, meaning that God is still sovereign over both church and state, but each have a unique and assigned role as do the ministers within each institution.

We choose to use the term Citizenship Ministry simply because it covers the entire concept of governing for God’s purposes and by His Word. Governing is simply the use of God’s authority to protect the person and property of innocent, law abiding citizens and to punish those who violate the person or property of citizens

under the civil jurisdiction (Romans 13).

Many would argue, accurately, that government in the United States has far exceeded the Biblical and Constitutional parameters of its legitimate role. Regardless of if and when that is addressed, government at the city, county, state and federal levels touches our lives every day.

We are usually not even conscious of how it does until something goes wrong, but from the water you use to shower in the morning, the food you consume (hurriedly!) for breakfast, the car you drive, the fuel in it, the roads you drive on, the government schools at which ninety percent of children are educated, the business or job that provides you income, to the home that is supposed to be your “castle” - very little is left out of government’s reach today.

Is it not a legitimate role of the Christian church to assure that governing authority is held to the Biblical standards and limitations of its purpose? Is it not also ministry to assure that it is administered with the proper balance of justice and mercy?

Since all civil authority in the United States rests with the citizens and is delegated to government, it is the citizens - particularly Christians - who carry the burden of responsibility for its use. We would propose then that it is a vital and valid ministry of the individual believer and the local church to assure that life, property, nor liberty of citizens are not to be taken without due process of just laws. In addition the poor, the widow, the orphan and the defenseless are not to be oppressed and taken advantage of.

Is it not a legitimate role of the Christian church to assure that governing authority is held to the Biblical standards and limitations of its purpose?

How then, can that occur if we do not actively participate in the choice of “rulers” at every level of government, promote moral virtue in the community, protect the physical, emotional and spiritual condition of our children and be “fully armored” for the battle raging all around us?