

# Is There Not a Cause?



By Debbie Mullins

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## **The Ekklesia**

The *Koiné* Greek for church, *ekklesia*, literally means “to call out” or “called-out ones.” It specifically references a legislative assembly, or summoned group. As light and salt, the church is called out from the world to contend for faith on behalf of the proverbial seven mountains of family, religion, education, media, arts/entertainment, business and government. Doing so, the *ekklesia* functions as a sort of City Council or political assembly whose subjects are afforded keys of the Kingdom (that is, judicial authority) to “bind” and to “loose.” (Matthew 18:15-20) God “sought one to stand in the gap before Him on behalf of the land,” but too often, because of push back, “He found none.” (Ezekiel 22:30)

## **Christian Nationalism Defined**

Propelled by secularism, today’s Cancel Culture specifically targets the *ekklesia* and its mission. Enter, Christian Nationalism, a *faux* term that emerged in 2006 and falsely, albeit convincingly accused the church of advancing a theocracy that purportedly oppresses women and all minorities. Dr. Stephen Coughlin fingers at its core the Maoist insurgency model of political warfare being employed by Cancel-Culture companions, Marxist tactics for which include Hegelian Dialectic, gas-lighting, group think, political correctness and social engineering. Under said attack, many Bible-

believing Christians willingly self-muzzle so as not to be labeled Christian nationalists. The so-called separation principle fortifies their misdirected posturing.

### **Separation of Church and State**

But, then, a wall of separation is nowhere found in the *US Constitution*. Nor is it a biblical mandate. Historically, the phrase appeared in a letter by Thomas Jefferson, but it was not intended to restrict the *ekkesia's* influencing government. Rather, Jefferson's clear-cut point was to *prohibit government intrusion into matters of the church*. In the words of President John Quincy Adams, connecting "in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the precepts of Christianity" is "the highest glory of the American Revolution." To that point, Supreme Court Justice Douglas explained, "*We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being ... We find no constitutional requirement which makes it necessary for government ... to throw its weight against efforts to widen the effective scope of religious influence.*"

### **People of Faith in Government** (*How Christianity Changed the World*, Alvin Schmidt)

Throughout history, Christians have influenced government for good. For example, their efforts led to outlawing child abandonment, infanticide and abortion in Greece; cruel gladiatorial contests in Rome; human sacrifice, pedophilia and polygamy among European cultures, and burning widows in India. More than two-thirds of the leaders in the Abolitionist Movement were Christian pastors who faithfully preached politics from their pulpits to condemn and outlaw slavery. Whenever and wherever the *ekklesia* fulfilled her God-given legislative call, political landscapes were altered for the good. Case in point: The Civil Rights Act of 1964 trailed Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s public condemnation of racial discrimination and segregation.

## The *Ekklesia*'s Civic Duty

It's true, Jesus rejected the political pathway to inaugurate His coming kingdom, and so should we. Nevertheless, a believer's civic duties are clearly delineated in Scriptures.

### ▪ Old Testament Political Engagement

The so-called "separation principle" was unknown to Old Testament patriarchs and judges, kings and prophets. A "man after God's own heart," King David served at the highest level of governance; and Daniel exercised strong influence over Babylon's government. Joseph held sway over Pharaoh and administered FEMA-like relief in response to widespread famine. Moses was a law-giver, Deborah a judge. At risk of personal peril, Queen Esther boldly lobbied King Ahasuerus (Xerxes) and thereby saved an entire people group. A governor of the Persian province of Judah (Nehemiah) incited national reformation and, following Babylonian exile, led the return to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel.

### ▪ New Testament Political Engagement

At the very least, New Testament believers are commanded to pray for all in authority, give respect where it is due, submit to godly governance and be ready for every good work. Their struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, authorities and spiritual powers of this dark world. (1 Timothy 2:1-2, Titus 3:1-2, Ephesians 6:12) With these truths in view, the *ekklesia*'s governmental call was well-modeled by the Apostle Paul. Appealing to protection afforded him as a Roman citizen, Paul boldly challenged the prevailing philosophy of cultural elites at Mars Hill. Even as John the Baptist influenced Herod, Paul likewise brought the Roman procurator of Judea (Felix) to conviction and approached Agrippa to the point of his near conversion.

### ▪ American Christians' Political Engagement

Throughout America's history, Christians have brought faith into the public square. Early on, Christian patriots boldly crossed the church-state line to birth "one nation under God." To this end, founder of the Black-Robed Regiment Pastor Peter Muhlenberg took to the battlefield and encouraged others to do likewise. Signing the *Declaration of Independence*, Witherspoon bowed in prayer; and Samuel Adams stated, "We have this day restored the Sovereign, to Whom alone men ought to be obedient." Blessed by God, America emerged as the freest, richest, most generous country the world had ever known. Our charge on her behalf is to occupy and steward the land aright until the Lord comes. Biblical citizenship requires a lifestyle of advocacy for truth (loving God), community bridge-building (connecting to Jesus), and cultural/political engagement (serving the world).

*One must ask, "What if reluctant people of faith throughout millennia had distanced themselves from politics, failed to engage culture, and remained silent in the face of evil?" What if the ekklesia had shirked her civic duty?*

### **State of the Union**

Good government promotes literacy, advances just law, provides religious liberty and allows churches freedom to preach, teach and serve. It is a conduit for furthering the Gospel and human flourishing. In contrast, consider the state of our Union today: *Arguably, the church at large suffers escalating persecution from without and spiritual deception from within. More often than not, moral relativism trumps biblical mandate. Given misplaced love of money and pleasure, many are preoccupied with materialism. Youth are seduced by scripturally-forbidden, yet culturally-celebrated alternative lifestyles and "oppositions of science, falsely so called"—i.e., gender dysphoria protocols. Young girls are compelled to forgo modesty along with a fair chance at competing in women's sports. Increasingly, our culture lacks natural affection—this, demonstrated by influx of human*

*trafficking, open and legal prostitution, quick-fix abortions, no-fault divorce, rampant pornography, sexualization of children, substance abuse and addiction. A culture of death reigns supreme, and a contagion of contention attends political posturing. Despite exponentially increased knowledge, our education system is fatally marred by distraction, confusion, violence and godless indoctrination. In the bogus name of peace, abounding lawlessness invites increasingly totalitarian transnational governance propelled by the spirit of Antichrist. Add to these: Threat of war and rumors thereof, pesky new strains of disease and escalating natural calamities. It would seem that “the kingdom of heaven contained good seed, but while men slept, the enemy sowed bad seed.” (Matthew 13:25)*

Fiddling while one’s nation burns is not biblically defensible. So, then, what are we to do? As Jesus addressed political discussions of His day “with a profound sense of clarity,” so must we. The *ekklesia* has a voice, and she must use it. Perhaps now more than ever. The inimitable Dietrich Bonhoeffer reminds us that “silence in the face of evil is itself evil.” Indeed, when idle silence meets wickedness, the *ekklesia* misses her calling; and God’s favor is repelled. On the other hand, when informed Christians speak, stand and vote in alignment with God’s Word, “the lot is cast into the lap”; and “its every decision is from the Lord.” (Proverbs 16:33) Indicting fear, faithlessness, wrong motive and passivity, David queried, “Is there not a cause?” (1 Samuel 17-29) Indeed, there is. For American Christians today, informed, principled voting is more than a privilege. It’s a mandate.

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