

Newsletter November 2016

In last month's October 2016 newsletter we discussed the ultimate formation of a global government. In this newsletter we shall discuss the relationship between Christianity and human government, which has at times been benevolent and at other times extremely antagonistic of the Christian faith. Ever since the fall of Adam, God has continually and openly revealed Himself to all of mankind. As the Apostle Paul said, "... that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Ro. 1:19,20). Nevertheless, man's persistent fallen nature has caused him to suppress that clear knowledge. Because of mankind's stubborn unbelief, God gives men and women over to their own irrational thoughts to imagine and to engage in all kinds of despicable activities: "...even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Ro. 1:28-32).

In the days after Adam's fall until Noah, each man was only governed by his conscience, and his fallen nature was such that his thoughts had over time become so evil that he committed wicked acts continually. This dishonored God's holy nature to the extent that He was grieved that He had ever created them. For that reason, God send forth a global flood to destroy all of mankind – saving only Noah and his immediate family to provide the seed of humanity for a new beginning (cf. Ge.6:5-8;7:4; Newsletter, August 2015). Immediately following the global deluge of Noah's day, God instituted certain principles of human government to control mankind's wicked activities through the exercise of severe judicial penalties for violation of its civil laws. Its primary purpose was to protect human life (cf. Ge.9:6) as well as personal property that sustains human life. Without civil government to curtail evil acts committed by fallen men today, anarchy would again reign over the earth such that theft and murder and every other form of wickedness would become as rampant as it was in the days before the flood – which had demanded God's extreme judgment.

Although human government is primarily intended to be a terror to the reprobate in an effort to control his propensity for evil, it's laws are universal to all of mankind – even the Christian who is ruled and constrained inwardly by the Holy Spirit. Concerning this, the Apostle Paul said, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (Ro,13:1,2). At the time Paul made these statements concerning civil government, the then known world was being governed by a powerful Roman empire that, although outwardly benevolent in that it tended to protect all of its citizens against murder and theft, was nevertheless being ruled by very ungodly men. Therefore, we find that regardless of the form of government they may find themselves living under, Christians have a holy obligation to obey its laws, pay taxes to maintain it, and honor its rulers (cf. Mt. 22:21) because of the mandate God has given human government to maintain civil order in a fallen world (cf. Ro. 13:7). Not only are we to be subject to civil government to avoid incurring its wrath, but because our enlightened conscience desires a peaceful life for all of society including the unsaved (cf. Ro. 13:5). We must continually pray for our rulers such that the Gospel may be freely dispensed to the salvation of many souls (cf. 1Ti. 2:1-3).

Although Christians are required to humbly obey all laws enacted by human government – even many that do not strictly conform to a biblical Christian ethic – there is a limit to that obedience that is reached when a choice must be made between obeying God and obeying man (cf. Ac.5:27-29,41,42). Human laws must be openly spoken against and strongly resisted by Christian believers when they attempt to force beliefs or activities upon them that God has expressly prohibited – or conversely, if they prohibit them from carrying out those things that God has expressly mandated that they do. While Christians must often tolerate the sins of

others in this fallen world, which is our current abode, our citizenship is firmly anchored in Heaven. When we were redeemed in Christ, we were not immediately taken to our heavenly home, but remain on earth as ambassadors and spokesmen for that heavenly Kingdom (cf. 2Co.5:20). Christians must therefore reject any demands of government to make us a party to the decadent sins of others through close association or by demanding our personal acceptance and consent. Accordingly, Christians must firmly speak out against all forms of sexual impurity such as pornography, fornication, abortion, and homosexuality, all of which violates marriage as a sacred God-given institution between one man and one woman. Failing to do so would not only be to disobey God, but it would also result in the ultimate dismantling of the very foundation of human society. Many who hold positions within civil government and others who become impacted by such immoral laws, must expect persecution for their necessary disobedience and may be forced to seek other means of employment in order to maintain a state of peace between their personal conscience and the civil powers.

Chief of those things that God has mandated is regularly assembling ourselves together to worship Him, and to teach the Gospel Truth to every person on earth thus making additional disciples. He has equipped every true Christian to engage in disseminating the Gospel as a full-time vocation in whatever situation or work of life he finds himself. The Gospel is not a mean-spirited condemnation of everything that man considers enjoyable, as the unregenerate put forth, but an honest offer of God's grace, love, and acceptance of those individuals who will repent of their sinful deeds and accept the redemption made available to them in Jesus Christ (cf. Jn.3:16,17). Therefore, any compromise regarding these important mandates not only violates the Christian mandate, it deprives men and women from hearing the truth through which comes redemption.

The United States of America was founded upon Christian principles such that earlier on its laws clearly reflected those principles (cf. *CRC Book III*, Chapter 18.5). They ensured freedom to openly worship God and to freely disseminate the Gospel of Jesus Christ without any conflict with the role of civil government. Nevertheless, witnessing of the Christian faith today in the public arena is prohibited by law; exercise of the Christian faith is only permitted behind closed doors. If a believer attempts to witness to an unsaved individual he meets today, it is often characterized as hate speech – inasmuch as it offends the sensitivities of the unsaved sinner to think and act as they please. This violent reaction against God's laws has smothered the clear exposition of the Gospel message of redemption from individual believers who have cause to fear not only personal rejection but possible legal reprisals for carrying out this loving mandate. Christians must be willing to accept the consequences of faithfully disseminating the Gospel in open disobedience to civil law when it becomes absolutely necessary to do so. Rejection and persecution must be readily accepted in turn as a blessing that we receive in suffering for the name of Jesus Christ. Christians have undergone rejection and severe persecution by degenerate human governments in the past and will need to do so in the future as well. Severe persecution including death is already being suffered by many Christians throughout the world.

Observing the rapid moral decline of civil government coming about in the United States, some churches and Christian organizations unwisely sought to fight against all laws or regulations that oppose or do not conform to a biblical Christian ethic through direct political action (cf. *CRC Book III*, pages 462-464). However, attempting to enforce a strict Christian ethic upon a great number of unregenerate citizens, has only aroused additional anger in them – leading them to make a determined effort to silence or even to exterminate Christianity. Instead of political action, every Christian would have been better employed in the prayerful personal evangelism of every man and woman they encounter in the sincere hope of their conversion one at a time into the body of Christ – thus changing society from within. Not only do men and women continue to sin today, they flaunt it with arrogant impunity and seek to promote and legalize it as an acceptable lifestyle through public education and civil law. Over time, this angry reaction of unregenerate men and women against the Christian ethic has become deeply entrenched within civil government, as they have gained control of high positions in it through their sheer numbers. Accordingly, government has sought to stifle all Christian witness to silence its clarion warning against following an insane path that must ultimately lead to God's judgment.

As this newsletter is being written, the United States is facing a national election for the office of President in which both major party candidates are morally deficient. This should not be surprising considering the

depraved state of the society from which they came, but their personal moral failings are overshadowing far more significant issues. One candidate represents a liberal-progressive political party whose platform advocates legalizing most if not all of the sins listed in Romans 1:29-31 – openly promoting abortion and homosexuality. These represent those “who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Ro.1:32). It further seeks to accelerate the political decline into Socialism and advocates a speedy path toward Globalism through open border policies. The other candidate, morally flawed and greatly demonized by a complicit liberal media, nevertheless supports a moral constitutional platform as well as advocating a return to U. S. nationalism through strictly controlled borders and a rejuvenated capitalist economic system free of excessive governmental control to restore the economy. The nation's citizenry appears blinded to these very serious issues and remains divided concerning which candidate to elect to the highest office in the land.

In *CRC Book III*, page 502, we discussed this coming decline of U.S. International Moral Influence in the world. The spark of true Christian liberty, which the U.S. Republic once received as a nation under God, has already been surrendered in large part to the dark anti-Christian principles of creeping humanistic Socialism. Should that trend continue unabated, the ultimate failure of the U.S. Republic as a government led by a moral self-ruling people is most surely at hand. Under the weight of the current progressive political movement, the light of the “shining city on a hill” envisioned by our founding fathers as a beacon of the Christian faith to the entire world has all but flickered out. That light which had once made the United States of America unique in the history of the world soon will have faded out completely — even as she has turned her back on the Almighty God who graciously blessed her every endeavor after having first given her birth and breath.

When the United States finally loses her economic dominance to foreign nations, who will have drained her of her material wealth, it will also cease to be a dominant political world power and will no longer be able to influence world events. Lacking the means and the moral will to prevail against her sworn enemies, she must then submissively give in to various nuclear threats and terrorist demands in exchange for a nebulous hope of attaining world peace through appeasement. The United States will then have become just another nation within a larger socialist world as she conforms to the humanist worldview against which she had once stood out as a bright beacon of hope. She will have been weighed in the balances and found wanting (cf. Da.5:27). This certainly explains why the United States of America is never mentioned or even alluded to in Bible prophecies concerning the last days prior to the return of Christ.

While God has ordained government to control criminal and immoral activities within society at large, He ordained the Visible Church on earth to act as a storehouse of divine truth and intrusted it with the responsibility to influence both government and society with God's Gospel of peace. Through many centuries, the Visible Church has found itself encased within a larger temporal church organized and operated by fallible men who are susceptible to all the ills of fallen mankind. As we discussed in our September 2016 newsletter, extreme human depravity will eventually infiltrate the congregations of organized temporal churches such that they will fall into a state of total apostasy – they will have become creatures and voices for the corrupted state. Churches today have become user-friendly and seeker-friendly to the point that they have abandoned all biblical Truth in favor of congregational unity. Moreover, the lifeblood of most of our temporal churches today is not the blood of Christ, but hard cold cash. Due to the large investment in buildings and grounds, large church staffs, and voluminous programs designed to enlist the unsaved, a church soon finds that it must compromise its beliefs in order to bring in enough money to keep up its worldly commitments. When money becomes even tighter, and as the Elect increasingly vacate those churches, Jesus may again find himself being sold out for “thirty pieces of silver” as they compromise their beliefs in conformity to government decadence to insure their continuance. A combination of increased external persecution as well as great pressures arising from increasing internal religious and political corruption will drive the temporal church to the breaking point after which it will totally depart from the faith without any hope of its redemption.

It must be reiterated that when we speak of the temporal church going into a final state of apostasy, we are not talking about the Visible Church – the Elect in Christ Jesus who still reside within the fringes of those

organizations. Those who are truly the Elect of God cannot possibly fall away (cf. Jn. 10:27-30). Therefore, as the total apostasy of the temporal church draws near, the Elect making up the visible Church within it will begin to flee out of these corrupt church organizations that have not only rejected Christ, but have become complicit with a corrupt civil government in the persecution of his Elect. As the Apostle Paul said in an earlier age, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial [i.e. Satan]? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” (2Co. 6:14-18).

In order to avoid physical persecution from government as well as the temporal church and continue to retain and freely practice the true biblical faith, elect Christians in that day will be forced to meet surreptitiously in individual homes or other places of relative obscurity in small groups (cf. *CRC Book III*, page 544-549). The House Church (sometimes referred to as a Home Church) is not a new development; it has been a bastion of the faith existing on the periphery of temporal Christendom ever since the first century. All of the early first century churches were essentially house churches inasmuch as they had no set-aside places of worship. In the infant church, small groups would travel from house to house meeting together with the apostles, praying, and engaging in the Lord’s Table memorial (Ac.2:42,46). In various parts of the world today where Christianity has been heavily persecuted by atheistic governments, the house church has proved to be the mainstay of Christian persistence and growth. Although there are many areas of the world in which we could cite this case, two primary examples can be found in the two Communist nations of Russia and China. In each instance, those house churches were formed in opposition to a counterfeit national “church” strictly regulated and controlled by the central government. In Russia, the *Russian Orthodox Church* was taken over by the communist government and used in an attempt to encase all religious activity within its walls in order to control it, stifle it, and prevent it from spreading to newer generations. In China, its communist government utilized the *Three Self Patriotic Movement* in much the same way. Although gathering in house churches was strictly forbidden in these nations, believers still met as often as they could, many were persecuted, and their leaders arrested – and often many were executed as subversives. In spite of severe persecutions, these house churches have prevailed and continue to prevail in the Christian faith. As still other governments of the world mobilize the operation of organized temporal churches to serve their own ends, house churches will become even more widespread.

House churches will eventually become universal, as the temporal church goes its way into a state of ultimate apostasy, but that exodus is already underway. The reason for this initial exodus is based upon serious failings of the temporal church that have arisen from the various negative trends and movements that have already been discussed throughout this work. The current size of the house church movement is difficult to evaluate because house churches are very small and nearly invisible by their very nature. Most house churches likely began as isolated home Bible study groups. Dissatisfied with weak Bible teaching (or the complete lack thereof) that they were receiving in local organized churches, many have chosen to gather in small groups to study the Bible for themselves. These study groups take on more of the characteristics of a true church as participants begin to pray together and establish their own basic doctrines and practices. Their unrecorded memberships are expanded by personal invitation thus reducing the possibility of a dangerous secular influx, which would undermine their efforts. These distributed congregations of believers will very likely constitute the living Church that will one day hear the shout of Jesus Christ to call them from off the earth to meet with Him in the air (cf. 1Th. 4:17).

Once Global unity becomes a reality, the world will soon enter into a tumultuous seven-year period preceding the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. This seven-year period will be initiated by Jesus Christ as He breaks open the first seal of a seven-sealed scroll in Heaven at the specific direction of God the Father (cf. Re. 5:1,6,7; 6:1; Mk.13:32). We plan to discuss the preordained events that are contained within that seven-year period in considerable detail in upcoming newsletters. © *Arthur J. Smith November 2016*