CAPITOL ministries®

The Political Leaders Weekly Bible Study

NOVEMBER 30, 2026

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Christians and Government

Wrong View No. 4: Evangelism Not Politics



This week we arrive at the fourth wrong view of Church and state, the idea that believers should be involved in evangelism only and not politics.

The short of what's wrong with this view is this: if every believer adhered to this somewhat popular Evangelical teaching, there would be no believers in office! There would be no salt and light influence in a representative form of government.

Thoughtful believers might give credence to this camp, but consider a scenario typical of advocates of this position.

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

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PUBLIC SERVANT QUOTE

Glenn "GT" Thompson

U.S. Representative
Pennsylvania



"I am so grateful for the faithful ministry of Capitol Ministries that brings the Word of God, Bible studies, and discipleship and evangelism around the globe and certainly here on Capitol Hill. The ministry has aided me in my preparation; the Bible study has guided me to a deeper, more meaningful discernment of God's Word as it relates to serving in the government and has armored me because this is a tough job. I truly appreciate it. Thank you, Capitol Ministries, for your prayers on behalf of those of us who serve here, and for your service to our Lord on the Hill, in our state Capitols, and around the ***world***."

A megachurch pastor rallies his congregation to come out for a city council meeting where the decision would be made whether the Christian college he is the president of, should be granted a land use permit to construct a memorial chapel in his name. The incongruity of his encouragement to petition a government institution while discouraging his parishioners from other direct participation in the political process is glaring. Juxtaposing this contradiction with a biblical, specific mandate to make disciples in the political arena raises skepticism that such ministry can be effective if it teaches they, having become involved in the political process in a representative form of civil government, are out of step with God's will. May such anecdotes help us to hold up both sides of this debate to the Word of God on this matter with an eagerness to follow Scripture.

What follows are the biblical arguments for believers to participate in the state in ways beyond evangelism.

I. INTRODUCTION

That believers should affect the ***world*** in which they live rather than isolating themselves from it is evident from the Sermon on the Mount. Note Matthew 5:13–16:

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

When Jesus lights a ***lamp***—when He brings an individual to true saving faith in Himself—what results is a person who will ***give light***[1] ***to all who are in the house.*** This is not difficult to decipher from this passage. The word ***house*** (v.15) is another way of expressing two previously used words in the passage. This simply means a believer will affect people on the ***earth*** (v. 13), people in the ***world*** (v. 14). This passage teaches

that it is normative for believers to affect the physical ***earth, world***, or land in which they live in the here and now.

But notice the progression of this passage: verses 13–16 as quoted above, come after verses 1–12, which are commonly known as Jesus' Beatitudes. The Beatitudes teach concise virtues (listed in the opening portion of His Sermon on the Mount) that are emblematic of His mature followers, character qualities such as ***gentleness*** (5:5), ***righteousness*** (5:6, 10), ***mercifulness*** (5:7), ***purity*** (5:8), etc. Per the progressive nature of this passage, our manifestations of ***salt*** and ***light*** (similitudes expressing the idea that believers are to be preservers and illuminators in the ***world***) will be in direct proportion to the degree these characteristics inhabit us. The point is this: over the long run, we cannot affect our surroundings in a godly way unless we first possess godly character.

Who we are and how we affect our world are intrinsically intertwined.

Such an interpretation of the meaning of this passage is supported by the following key grammatical understandings. First, the twice-used verbs at the beginning of verses 13 and 14 are ***You are***. These verbs are present active *indicatives* in the Greek language. That is in contrast to being imperative verbs, or put another way, commands from Jesus. This is a subtle but important distinction. It means we are Christ-influencing in culture (agents of the preservation and illumination of truth) to the degree we are mature in the Savior. Jesus is not saying, "Be ***salt*** and ***light!*** " Rather, He is teaching the degree to which we internally manifest Christlikeness is the degree to which we will externally affect our ***world***, or in the case of the capital community, the people and laws of the capital.

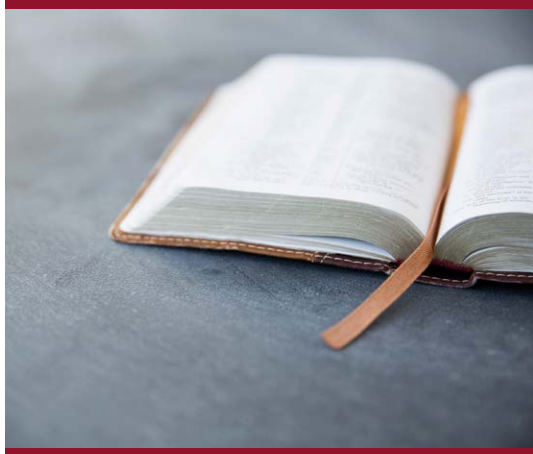
Why is this so important? Jesus is not saying, "You must be ***salt*** and ***light!***" Jesus is not speaking in the imperative here. Rather, the use of ***you are*** means this: ***you are*** *preserving and illuminating in society to the degree* ***you are*** *beatitudinal!* ***You are*** is based on what Jesus has already said in the Sermon on the Mount! Indicative of beatitudinal character—always connected to Christlike maturity—are preservation and illumination in the ***world*** today! There is no way around this plain meaning and connection in this passage. Jesus' emphasis is a clear cause and effect.

Secondly, notice in the original language, the beginning of the next verse, verse 16. The adverb in the first clause of the passage further evidences Jesus' sequential thinking relative to what He has previously delineated. In the passage, ***"Let your light shine before men in such a way,"*** the phrase ***"in such a way,"*** *(houtos)* means "in this way," or "thus." The verb ***"shine"*** *(lampo)* is an imperative, meaning God is commanding you: in other words, our light must shine in this way. And what is that way? That others see your godly character and your resulting cultural preservation and illumination. What results is that others "***glorify your father who is in heaven.***" That's to say, following this formula, you

VERSE OF THE WEEK

Matthew 5:13–16

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."



Cultural participation in the ***world*** is a necessary ingredient to becoming an effective witness!

MINISTRY UPDATE

Capitol Ministries Launches First Caribbean Ministry in Belize



On October 21, 2026, Capitol Ministries officially launched its first ministry in the Caribbean in Belmopan, the capital of Belize, where government officials and pastors gathered to celebrate the establishment of a ministry dedicated to teaching God's Word to public servants.

Among those attending was a member of Congress with responsibilities involving constitutional affairs and transportation, as well as the mayor of Belmopan and his wife. Both officials enthusiastically welcomed the ministry and expressed a desire for regular Bible studies.

Pastor Scott Stirm, a respected Belizean pastor and

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become a powerful witness in a fallen ***world***! Here is a graphic summation:

Spiritual Maturation
(Matthew 5:1–12)
↓
Cultural Participation
(Matthew 5:13–15)
↓
Gospel Evangelization
(Matthew 5:16)

Personal spiritual maturation will be *indicated* by our cultural participation which then testifies of God to an onlooking ***world***. This progression reveals the biblical formula for having an effective testimony—glorifying God—in a fallen ***world***.

So, to those who say, "The believer should only be about evangelism in the political arena," this passage evidences their omission of a vital and necessary step: cultural participation in the ***world*** is a necessary ingredient to becoming an effective witness! (Cf. 1Corinthians 9:20–23)

Can any evangelist be effective without understanding and engaging with the lives of the people he hopes to reach? [2]

The thought that we could evangelize without culturally engaging is not supported by Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5. Rather, the Sermon on the Mount corrects such thinking. We cannot eliminate the need for the believer to be a preserver and illuminator on the ***earth*** and in the ***world*** if we desire to be good evangelists.

What follows are eight additional biblically supported reasons for believers to be involved in politics.

II. EVANGELISM ONLY IS TOO NARROW AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE MISSION OF JESUS

In the Great Commission passage of Matthew 28:19–20, Jesus commands His followers to teach others more than just the truths of the Gospel (as primary as the Gospel is to the mission of Jesus). He teaches believers to go beyond evangelism and ***"make disciples."*** How is the believer to do that? By ***"teaching*** [others] ***to observe all that I commanded you."*** Paul echoes the necessary breadth of instruction beyond the truths of the Gospel when he said to the Ephesian elders, ***"For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God"*** (Acts 20:27). Paul said regarding all of his biblical writings, ***The things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment*** (1 Corinthians 14:37). Peter lays out his purpose for his rigorous teaching: ***that you should remember ... the commandments of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles*** (2 Peter 3:2). Accordingly, Jesus wants others to know ***all*** of His instruction. That means He wants

His followers to learn about marriage, family, church, commerce,—and government. All are required to ***make disciples*** (which is the main ***command*** of the Great Commission). Conclusively, while the primacy of Jesus' mission is to convert the lost, the entirety of His message encompasses ***making disciples.***

Myopic Thinking

That the believer should never, himself, hold political office—that his sole responsibility is to evangelize political leaders—represents ultra-myopic thinking. The effective evangelist would need to counsel his elected-official convert to immediately leave office! If an evangelist won every elected leader to Christ, the government would have to shut down!

So, what does Jesus teach—what is ***the whole purpose of God***—regarding civil government? Among other things this: God Himself created it (Genesis 1:26; Colossians 1:16); He ordained it (Romans 13:1); He sustains it (Colossians 1:17); and He intends it to moralize a fallen ***world*** (Romans 13:4). In addition to His saving grace, Jesus' purposes, compelled by a heart of compassion for the lost (Matthew 9:36), manifest common grace and restraining grace to all of His creation through this ordained institution (cf. Matthew 5:45). How great is His love!

Jesus clearly has a purpose for the institution of government that is in addition to evangelism. Accordingly, when one of the leading advocates for the "all evangelism, no politics" viewpoint states,

> [Jesus] did not come to earth to make the old creation moral through social and governmental reform but to make new creatures (His people) holy through the saving power of the gospel and the transforming work of the Holy Spirit,[3]

he is propagating too narrow an understanding of the mission of Jesus! What this author says does not represent the whole counsel of God regarding His purposes for His institution of civil government! As primary the believer's role of evangelism is to government, there must always be the broader understanding of Jesus' teachings regarding the institution of government. The believer must be about teaching *all* that Scripture says about civil government and even more specifically, teaching these truths to civil government leaders!

In a parallel and expansive sense, to say that Jesus' overall purpose and mission was solely about salvation is to imply that Jesus gives no instruction about marriage, family, church, or commerce.

Another error of this same influential Christian author is his tendency to spiritualize away the importance of good civil government to the propagation of the Gospel. He states, "The ideal human government can ultimately do nothing to advance God's kingdom, and the worst, most despotic ***world***ly govern-

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host of a Christian television program with extensive relationships throughout the nation's political community, has served as a Capitol Ministries Ministry Leader since 2025.



Stirm lives in Belmopan, the nation's capital, and serves as vice president of the National Evangelical Association of Belize. He explained that Belize has an unusual level of formal cooperation between the government and the Christian community, including a senator who officially represents the church.

The greatest opportunity, however, is emerging as Stirm initiates Capitol Ministries Bible studies inside government offices.

"What we found is that they are crying out for this, and they're actually loving every minute of it," Stirm said.

This development reflects the heart of CapMin's "top-down" missiology—reaching political leaders with the Word

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of God, recognizing that those in positions of authority have a unique opportunity to influence the spiritual direction of their nations. By making disciples of public servants, Capitol Ministries seeks to see biblical principles take root in the hearts of leaders and, through their influence, throughout society.



Brian Hanson, Capitol Ministries Global Director, who traveled from Ohio to attend the launch, said the response from political leaders was especially encouraging:

"Political leaders who attended the launch expressed a genuine hunger for God's Word in their own lives and a desire to invite their colleagues to join them in studying Scripture."

Another participating pastor captured the excitement:

"We believe the Lord is blessing Belize. It is no coincidence that the first official

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ment in the end cannot halt the power of the Holy Spirit or the spread of God's Word."[4]

In an ultimate sense and in view of the grandeur and sovereignty of God, what is said here is true. But is this a tenable argument for believers not to be involved in civil government? We do not have to be much of a student of current geopolitics, history, or historic missions to know that Middle Eastern countries, North Korea, Cuba and Russia, among others, have attempted to suppress the growth of the Body of Christ to a much greater degree than other countries. Practically speaking, why have 90% of missions in the past century been funded by believers in the United States? Believers should be involved in politics if for no other reason than to keep missionary-sending countries missionary-sending countries for the purposes of spreading God's Word! The ideal country can advance God's Kingdom more than a country that squashes every known attempt of evangelism.

Good government is, therefore, important to achieve and maintain if for no other reason than to aid in the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

The present and historic impetus for much of the fulfillment of the Great Commission stems from countries that honor freedom. That means the believer's role in sustaining a country's health and well-being is a noble and important task and is certainly in keeping with ***all that*** Jesus ***commanded*** us.

When America overthrew Saddam Hussain in Iraq, the subsequent new constitution included an article which provides for freedom of religion! In keeping with that same line of thinking, how wonderful would it be if President Donald Trump and Vice President J.D. Vance negotiated freedom of religion with North Korea as part of a denuclearization agreement and opened that country to Christianity as well as to the rest of the ***world***! Both serve to illustrate how the State can positively affect the mission of the Church!

To illustrate one of many results from living by too narrow an understanding of the mission of Jesus, radio preachers must now edit their radio broadcasts in Canada so as to not include any mention of Romans 1. Paul's life-changing epistle addresses the severity of sin, the principle of justification, the importance of faith, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, among many other significant issues of faith. However, new Canadian laws made without the influence of Christian parliamentarians prohibit broadcasting ***the whole purpose of God***. What will become of the great radio ministries in America that have so affected our culture for good and evangelized the lost[5] if the laws, written by un- and anti-Christian lawmakers, also begin to encroach on the Church's commission to evangelize here in the U.S.?

Governments indeed do facilitate or else hinder the advance of God's Kingdom.

Should believers be involved in civil government if only for the sake of the Great Commission? Yes! Church leaders should applaud, respect, support, sustain, prepare, and elect more Christian political leaders (if for no other reason) to work hard to preserve every believer's freedom to propagate the Gospel.

Christian legislators view themselves in a partnership with pastors. Shouldn't pastors view themselves in partnership with Christian legislators?

Should the Church raise up young men and women to run for office with the same passion and enthusiasm that it places on raising up godly pastors, wives, husbands, children, and businessmen? Absolutely, yes!

III. THE MISSION OF JESUS INCLUDES A TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY

If ***teaching them to observe all that I commanded you*** is the overall purpose for Christ's coming to ***earth***,[6] as previously seen (the Gospel ministry being the vital starting point to ***making disciples)*** then the mission of Jesus includes the transformation of marriages, families, commerce, and governments. (A deeper dive into the biblical view of God's five institutions is found in CapMin's study called "God's Institutions and Their Roles on Earth.") The mission of Jesus has a sum total intent on transforming societies, or as they are called in the Great Commission passage, ***nations*** *(ethnos)*. The Great Commission passage is clear: believers are to affect ***nations***! Those who advocate too narrow a view of Jesus' mission are forced to interpret *ethnos* to mean "people groups" so as to make the passage fit their viewpoint of non-civil government involvement. But, for those who hold a bigger view of Jesus' mission, individual evangelism is inescapable, but so is affecting geo-political ***nations*** for good.

IV. WHICH PARTS OF THE BIBLE SHOULD THE CHURCH NOT PREACH ABOUT?

What follows from the pastor or believer who holds that Christians have no place in civil government is not only a limited understanding of Jesus' mission, but also a decision regarding portions of the Bible that clearly show believers fully participating in, exhorting, and obeying national administration. Do we omit teaching from Genesis 9:5–6, John 19:11, Acts 25:11, Romans 13:1–7, or 1 Peter 2:13–14 since they have to do with believers impacting government? Do we avoid teaching about Joseph's influence on Pharaoh's government, or Daniel's on Nebuchadnezzar's

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Capitol Ministries launch in the Caribbean is happening here. We are excited about what God is doing and how this ministry can help transform our nation."

Alberty Reyes, Capitol Ministries Director for the Caribbean, addressed the gathering and led a special time of prayer for those serving in the political arena.



Equipping Pastors to Reach Political Leaders

Prior to the launch, Capitol Ministries conducted a Mini-Training that brought together pastors and Bible teachers from across Belize to learn the biblical mandate for reaching public servants with the Gospel—a calling clearly rooted in Scripture and explored in Ralph Drollinger's book *All in Authority*.

For the Mini-Training, Stirm recruited pastors from different regions of Belize, many of whom were already involved in some form of ministry to government officials.

The training, however, introduced them to a more intentional approach to reaching

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political leaders through personal relationships, regular Bible teaching, and discipleship.

One pastor described how the training helped clarify his ministry approach:

"I have always wanted to share God's Word with government leaders, but I lacked a clear strategy. Capitol Ministries has helped me understand how to reach them and build meaningful relationships."

Another pastor explained how the training changed his perspective:

"This training has changed the way I see the political leaders of my country. Rather than viewing them as enemies, I now see them as a mission field I am called to reach with the Gospel."

Reyes said the pastors demonstrated a genuine love for their country and a desire to see biblical principles influence the lives of those entrusted with public responsibility.

Participating pastors also shared valuable contacts that could help Capitol Ministries establish ministries in other Caribbean nations.

"We now look forward with great anticipation to the upcoming ministry launch on the island of St. Martin, reaching both the French and Dutch sides. We are excited about the opportunities this next step may bring for advancing Capitol Ministries' mission throughout the Caribbean," said Reyes.

government? By way of extension, if we "just preach the Gospel" should we avoid teaching on marriage and family? What parts of the ***whole purpose of God*** should the Bible teacher omit? Foisting too narrow an understanding of the mission of Jesus inevitably leads to editing the portions of Scripture you will teach or omit—and a huge ensuing incongruity in light of 2 Timothy 3:16–17: ***All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching,*** and Acts 20:27, ***"declaring to you the whole purpose of God."***

V. GOD LEAVES CHRISTIANS HERE ON EARTH BOTH TO DO EVANGELISM AND TO DO GOOD FOR OTHERS

God tends to leave His saints on earth after He saves them. So, after we are saved, what are believers to do? Should we only evangelize others the remainder of their ***earthly*** lives? What about Matthew 22:39, ***"'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF'"***? This command is listed six other times in the New Testament. Like the Great Commission command, this is a command from Jesus! The spirit of this commandment demands that we consider these kinds of issues: making sure the law punishes thieves who could otherwise rob my ***neighbor***; working to create and enforce laws pertaining to internet privacy to protect my ***neighbors*** from hackers who would otherwise steal their credit card information; creating policies that ensure that those who educate my ***neighbor's*** child cannot teach them things that are evil. How could these policies that are so compatible with the mandates of Scripture ***to love thy neighbor*** be accomplished if not by Christians involved in policy making? Galatians 6:10 reinforces this idea of ***loving*** our ***neighbor*** in the here and now: ***So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially those who are of the household of faith.*** Ephesians 2:10 reinforces the believer's societal responsibility when it says, ***For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.***

> "Why should churches teach their people how to do good works in hospitals and in schools, and in businesses and in neighborhoods, but not in government?"[7]

The biblical connection between ***loving*** our ***neighbors*** and being involved in civil government is strong.

VI. GOD ESTABLISHED BOTH THE CHURCH AND THE STATE TO RESTRAIN EVIL

When a believer wins someone to Christ, such internal regeneration should quell evil in the heart of the convert (2 Corinthians 5:17). However, history and present observation indicate that not everyone comes to Christ, nor are those who do come to Christ completely and immediately sanctified in their manifest actions. Accordingly, God has instituted, in addition to the Church, civil government to restrain evil by the use of

force and punishment in a fallen ***world***. Romans 13:4 is clear about this where Paul states (speaking of government), ***But if you do what is evil be afraid, for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.*** First Peter 2:13–14 states similarly, ***Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers.***[8] God mediates His reign by vesting His authority in civil government (Romans 13:1) in order to restrain evil in a fallen ***world***. While the Church is God's conduit of saving grace, the state is God's conduit of restraining grace. Such a realization necessitates the believer's involvement in civil government since it is part of Jesus' overall mission.

One other point here is worth mentioning. Christian isolationists often harbor ideological superiority: as if the authority of the Church is over the authority of the state. The Church is not preeminent to the state; the Church must submit to the state. The glaring historical and embarrassing American illustration of this is the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. The abolition of slavery came not from the institution of the Church via evangelism. It was the state that birthed a human being's freedom from another person's ownership. Sometimes the state restrains evil more effectively than does the Church!

Keep in mind too, that it was not the punctuality of the Church leaders that gave us the canonization of the New Testament. Not until Constantine in the early 4th century demanded it from Eusebius did the Church get around to sewing the 27 books together!

Rather than harboring condescending attitudes toward the unique, God-given role of the state, believers should respect it and be involved in civil government lest they inherit a lawless country without religious freedom.

VII. CHRISTIANS HAVE INFLUENCED THE STATE POSITIVELY THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Standing in sharp contrast to the idea of a believer's noninvolvement in the state other than evangelism, are the following examples. There are at least three categories of historical influence of believers on the State. These accounts are numerous and well documented by authors Alvin Schmidt (*How Christianity Changed the World*)[9] and Charles Colson (*God and Government: An Insider's View on the Boundaries between Faith and Politics*)[10]. Here is a summary.

A. THE DIGNITY OF MANKIND

The historic spread of Christian influence on the state has been responsible for many victories: its influence outlawed infanticide, child abandonment, and abortion in the Roman Empire (374); it prohibited the burning alive of widows in India (1829); it ended slavery in the British Empire (1840); it stopped the binding of women's feet in China (1912); and it outlawed racial discrimination in America. These are but a few of the historic contributions of Christians engaged in politics.

MINISTRY LEADER PROFILE

Gideon Phiri

National Ministry Leader
Eswatini



Gideon Phiri serves as Capitol Ministries' Ministry Leader in Eswatini, where he is working to establish Bible studies among national and local political leaders. For Gideon, reaching those who serve in government is a natural extension of Christ's command to make disciples. "I believe the Great Commission includes evangelizing and discipling public servants," he explains.

Gideon has served in pastoral ministry since 2007 and as a Bible school teacher since 2010. He became a lead pastor in 2019 and previously served as principal of the Eswatini College of Theology. His extensive theological education includes a Ph.D. in Theological Education, a Master of Arts in Ministerial Studies, and bachelor's degrees in Bible, Theology, and Biblical Studies.

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Gideon and his wife, Rosalie, have four children: Tatenda, Mary, Gideon, and Joshua.

His years of teaching and discipling believers prepared Gideon well for Capitol Ministries. He wholeheartedly embraces CapMin's biblical theology of ministry to political leaders, believing that discipleship must reach beyond church walls to those whose decisions influence an entire nation.

As Gideon has worked to establish the ministry in Eswatini, God has begun opening important doors. A meeting with a Chief Executive Officer provided an opportunity to introduce Capitol Ministries and its mission. The CEO offered to connect Gideon with key people who can help open doors for Bible studies among the nation's public servants.

The work is not without challenges. Access to leaders can be difficult, resources are limited, and establishing ministry within the political arena requires patience and perseverance. Yet Gideon remains hopeful, praying for open doors and trusting God to provide the relationships and resources needed to establish sustainable Bible studies.

At the heart of Gideon's ministry is a deep conviction that lasting change begins

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B. THE CONSTITUTIONS OF MANKIND

Christians were influential in the writing of the Magna Carta in England in 1215, the Declaration of Independence in America in 1776, and the Constitution of the United States in 1787. These are the most important documents in the history of governments known to mankind. All were significantly influenced by believers and are the basis, not only of prosperous countries, but the ensuing Christian mission movement ***world***wide. These advanced views of government have birthed individual freedoms, justice, freedom of religion, and the institutional separation of Church and state.

C. THE EDUCATION OF MANKIND

Believers have influenced the development of higher education in America.

Of the 182 colleges and universities in America in 1932, 92% had been founded by Christian denominations.

Such influence has led to the advancement of a society theretofore unknown in history, a society that has accelerated the Great Commission to levels of accomplishment equal to that of the first century Church.

These are but a few illustrations of Christian influence on the State beyond evangelism. Therefore, when a prominent Christian author reasons in 2000, "God does not call the church to influence the culture by promoting legislation and court rulings that advance a scriptural point of view," and "Using temporal methods to promote legislative and judicial change ... is not our calling—and has no eternal value,"[11] we wonder how he can arrive at such a narrow understanding of the mission of Jesus. In his much earlier commentary on Matthew 5:13–16, (1985) this author says, "Christians can have a powerful influence on the welfare of the ***world***."[12] And therein he quotes Martyn Lloyd-Jones, who said regarding England's positive governance, "The political situation was affected, and the great Acts of Parliament which were passed in the last century were mostly due to the fact that there were such large numbers of individual Christians found in the land."[13] Unfortunately, in the year 2000, this same writer wrote a book to attempt to influence pastors to avoid governmental involvement (see endnote 3). Christian influence on the state throughout history, as well as the contextual argument of Matthew 5:1–16 favors this author's more biblical 1985 position.

VIII. DOESN'T THE BIBLE SAY THAT PERSECUTION IS COMING?

When studying eschatology, the doctrine of future biblical events, we could reason "Since things are going to get worse in the end times (Matthew 24:9–12, 21–22; 2 Timothy 3:1–5) why should anyone attempt to improve government today?" The answer is simple: in the meantime, the believer is to

be ***"salt*** and ***light"*** (Matthew 5:13–15), to "***LOVE*** [his or her] ***NEIGHBOR"*** (Matthew 22:39), and to do ***good works*** (Ephesians 2:10) in addition to evangelizing the lost (Matthew 5:16). We cannot disobey the clear commands of God in the here and now in consideration of end-time passages.

A fatalistic view of the future of the world tomorrow is no excuse for societal disenfranchisement today.

Scripture is explicit that no one knows the exact time of His Second Coming (Matthew 24:36; 25:13); therefore, believer, influence civil government for good as long as you are able.

IX. WILL POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT DISTRACT BELIEVERS FROM THE MAIN TASK OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL?

Evangelism-only advocates sometimes argue that political involvement by the Church today serves to distract believers from the main task of preaching the Gospel to the ***world***. But in order to keep the Gospel preeminent, God has called the believer to be ***salt*** and ***light*** as a predicate for evangelism.

X. SUMMARY

For these reasons, the "Do evangelism, not politics" understanding of the Christian is an incorrect understanding of Church and state. Believers should be involved in politics in ways similar to their involvement in making their marriage better, their family better, their business better, or their church better. Running for office or serving in civil government is no less spiritual than going into full-time ministry, getting married, raising a family, or building a business. Our next study gives a correct view of the separation of Church and state.

In the Christians and Government study series we explore

PART 1: Wrong View No. 1: Government Should Compel Religion

PART 2: Wrong View No. 2: Government Should Exclude Religion

PART 3: Wrong View No. 3: All Governments Are Evil and Demonic

PART 4: Wrong View No. 4: Believers Should Do Evangelism and Not Politics

PART 5: Right View: A Biblically-Reasoned Understanding of the Separation of Church and State

Continued from previous page



in the heart. He believes true discipleship takes place when the hearts of men and women are captured by Scripture. As God's Word transforms individuals, biblical principles begin shaping how they live, lead, and serve others.

Gideon's prayer is to see that transformation among Eswatini's public servants and to faithfully pioneer and sustain Bible studies where political leaders can know Christ, grow in His Word, and become His disciples.

1. This is also a present active *indicative verb.*
2. In 1 Corinthians 9:22 the Apostle Paul states, ***"I have become all things to all men so that I may by all means save some."*** This is an appropriate supporting passage relative to this scriptural understanding of cultural involvement. Paul was willing to get involved in the lives, professions (including the political arena, see Philippians 1:13, 4:22, and Acts 26 for examples), and cultures of others without compromising biblical truth in order to evangelize the lost. How can today's Church evangelize political leaders if it is unwilling to connect with political leaders?
3. John MacArthur, *Why Government Can't Save You: An Alternative to Political Activism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000) 11-12. It is worth noting MacArthur's exposition of Romans 13:1-7 in 1994 wherein he states respective of ordination and moralization: "Human government is ordained by God for the benefit of society. ... In order to promote and protect the good in society human government must punish the evil." (John MacArthur. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Romans 9-16* [Chicago: Moody, 1994] 218, 225) Implicit in his comments is his seeming admission to a broader role of the mission of Jesus (cf. Colossians 1:16). Unfortunately, his later thinking ("do evangelism, not politics") has influenced many.
4. Ibid., 7.
5. Many leading Christian thinkers believe one of the major reasons America has not gone the way of Europe is due to the presence and power of Christian radio.
6. Said another way, did Christ come to save or make disciples? The Great Commission, Matthew 28:19–20, indicates the latter. Christ did not end His ministry commanding His followers to evangelize, but rather to make disciples.
7. Wayne Grudem, *Politics According to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010) 48. Note: this study uses Dr. Grudem's respective chapter outline (with its comprehensiveness) in this study with his permission.
8. The one exception to obedience to the authority of the state is when such obedience would necessitate disobedience to God's Word (Exodus 1:17; Daniel 3:16–18; 6:7, 10; Acts 4:19).
9. Alvin Schmidt, *How Christianity Changed the World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004)
10. Charles Colson, *God and Government: An Insider's View on the Boundaries between Faith and Politics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007). (Previously published as *Kingdoms in Conflict*).
11. MacArthur, *Why Government Can't Save You: An Alternative to Political Activism,* 130, 15.
12. John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Matthew 1–7* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985) 243.
13. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 1:157 (as quoted in MacArthur, *Why Government Can't Save You: An Alternative to Political Activism*).

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