

CIVIL INFLUENCE

Some thoughts:

- 1) **Christians should exercise civil influence and be involved with government (i.e. politics). Why?**
 - a) "When the righteous are in authority, people rejoice; when the wicked are in authority people mourn" (Prov 29:2). "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov 14:34).
 - b) Christians are to be "salt" and "light" (Mt 5:13-14).
 - c) We are to seek God's will on EARTH as it is in Heaven (Mt 6:10).
 - d) We are to disciple the "nations" and teach them to observe all that God has commanded (Mt 28:19 - 20).
 - e) We have biblical examples of involvement with government:
 1. Joseph (Genesis 41)
 2. Moses (Exodus 3 – 12)
 3. Daniel (Daniel)
 4. Ezra (Ezra)
 5. Queen Esther (Esther)
 6. Gideon (Judges 6 – 8)
 7. Samuel and other prophets
 8. Apostle Paul – claimed his rights as a Roman citizen (Acts 22:25-28), appeared before magistrates (Acts 23:33, 24:10-16, 25:1-9, 26:1-32), appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:11) and witnessed to the household of the Caesar of the Roman Empire (Philippians 4:22).
 - f) Christians live in cities, states and nations and are deeply affected by the leadership in place and the events that take place.

- g) Christians possess spiritual and moral qualifications, which are essential to community and national leadership (e.g., fruit of spirit, biblical love, spiritual armor, etc.).
- h) Christian leadership in the affairs of government is a part of our American heritage (refer to books/tapes by David Barton, Peter Marshall, etc.).
- i) Christian leadership may help reverse the trend toward moral deterioration in our country.
- j) Historically, God has severely judged cities/nations that turn aside from God's ways (e.g., Israel, Sodom & Gomorrah, ancient Rome, etc.).
- k) If Christians fail to provide political leadership, a void is created which amoral or immoral leaders may fill.

2) **Christians need to influence government and society by:**

Biblical TRUTH + Biblical LOVE

Eph 4:15 "... speaking the TRUTH in LOVE ..."

I Jn 3:18 "... LOVE in actions and in TRUTH"

I Pet 1:22 "Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the TRUTH so that you have sincere LOVE for your brother, LOVE one another deeply from the heart".

TRUTH

- Jn 17:17 we are sanctified (set apart for holy use) by the TRUTH; God's word is the source of TRUTH
- Eph 6:14 An important part of our spiritual armor is the belt of TRUTH
- Titus 1:1 knowledge of the TRUTH leads to godliness

- I Tim 2:4 God wants all men to come to a knowledge of the TRUTH
- II Thes 2:13 we are saved through belief in the TRUTH, the source of which is God's word (Jn 17:17; James 1:18)
- Jn 8:31-32 Jesus' teaching is the source of TRUTH, and the TRUTH sets us free
- III John 4 John had no greater joy than seeing that his children were walking in the TRUTH
- Jn 14:6 Jesus said "I am the way, the TRUTH, the life ..."
- Perhaps the most common recorded expression of Jesus was the words "I tell you the TRUTH"
- Jn 1:17 TRUTH came through Jesus Christ; Jn 1:14 Jesus came full of TRUTH; Eph 4:21 TRUTH is in Jesus
- Jn 18:37 Jesus came into the world to testify to the TRUTH
- Jn 4:23-24 we are to worship in spirit and in TRUTH

LOVE

Mt 22:34-40 The great commandment includes to LOVE God, and to LOVE our neighbors as ourselves

Gal 6:9-10 We are to show LOVE to everybody, especially fellow Christians

Jn 13:34-35 A great way for Christians to be an effective witness to unbelievers is to show great LOVE for each other

Luke 6:27-36 We are to show LOVE to our enemies!

- 3) **Christians should exercise our civil influence in such a way as to NOT unduly hinder our important goals of the GREAT COMMISSION (Mt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8) and the GREAT COMMANDMENT (Mt 22:34-40) and our desire to always GLORIFY GOD (I Cor 10:31).**

A CLOSING PASSAGE ON CIVIL INFLUENCE: Titus 3:1-8

EXERCISING CIVIL INFLUENCE

Ways for Christians to exercise civil influence include:

- 1) **PRAY** - the most important thing we can do is pray without ceasing (I Thes. 5:17). We should pray for: national repentance and revival (Nehemiah 9; II Chron. 7:14), our civil leaders (I Tim. 2:1-2), for the election of righteous over unrighteous people (Prov. 29:2), and for government to fulfill it's primary role of restraining evil and protecting the innocent (I Tim 2:2; Rm 13:4).
- 2) **Register to Vote & Vote Consistently** - in Oregon, you must be registered 20 days prior to election day. To make our votes count, we must be able to identify the candidate that will best support Christian values. One resource to help identify such candidates, is to use the "Voter's Guide" produced by Oregon Family Council (write: Oregon Family Council, P.O. Box 13367, Portland OR 97213).
- 3) **Personally Endorse Worthy Candidates & Ballot Measures** - we can personally endorse candidates by displaying bumper stickers and/or lawn signs, and verbally sharing our support with people we know (relatives, neighbors, co-workers, etc.). We can also encourage others to join our efforts to support pro-Christian values.
- 4) **Volunteer to Work on Campaigns** - campaigns need volunteers to help on a wide variety of tasks. There is opportunity for almost everybody to do something to help.
- 5) **Practice Civil Influence On an On-Going Basis** - we can write and/or call our legislators when issues arise. We can also write letters to the newspapers, call in on radio talk shows, attend pro-family events, and keep informed. One way to keep informed is to get on the mailing list of Focus on the Family, both for their regular newsletter and for their "Citizen" magazine. (Write: Focus on the Family,

P.O Box 35500 Colorado Springs, Co. 80935 and enclose a suggested donation of \$20).

- 6) **Financially support worthy candidates and organizations** - A relatively painless way to provide financial support is to take advantage of the Oregon political tax credit. Married taxpayers may give \$100 and single taxpayers may give \$50 and receive 100% back through a state tax credit! This tax credit reduces the amount of state taxes owed, resulting in a larger refund (or smaller payment) . We may contribute to any political candidate and/or organization (note: Oregon Family Council may be a good choice).

- 7) **Get involved with a political party** - (e.g., becomes a precinct committee person).

- 8) **Run for Political Office or Serve on a Volunteer Board/Committee** - (e.g., city budget committee, school board, city council, Oregon House or Senate).