

WAKE UP AMERICA, INC. MINISTRY

A Disciple's Duty -

Case for Christian Citizenship

"If we ever forget that we are One Nation Under God, then we will be a Nation gone under."
Ronald Reagan - Fortieth President of the United States

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Preface

Faith and freedom are twin sisters. They both flourish when we acknowledge the sovereign God to whom we owe our ultimate allegiance and from whom all blessings flow. Whether a nation or an individual, lasting happiness, peace, liberty and life exist only in Him. This is a message that individuals and our nation desperately need to hear today.

Salvation through faith in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is the answer for the individual. A strong and involved Christian citizenry is the answer for our nation.

But, what are our duties before God as Christian citizens of a free nation? How does Christian Citizenship relate to moral decay? What practical biblical steps can we take to restore Christian values, “right where we are”?

These and many other important questions are answered by “A Disciple’s Duty – A Case for Christian Citizenship.” Our prayer is that this training will educate, equip and compel individual Christians and Churches to successfully “Reclaim America Through Jesus Christ.”

Many sources and authors were consulted while developing this material. A great deal of care was taken to credit those sources. Sources used are those sited in the Endnotes section. We apologize for any unintentional omissions and are grateful for the insight and contributions made by others concerned with Christian Citizenship.

Introduction

Many, including some clergy, argue that organized religion has no place in the public affairs of a nation. Still others would declare America to be a Christian nation simply by virtue of historical evidence.

In principal, a Christian nation is made up of citizens who acknowledge their firm reliance on and commitment to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That personal relationship overflows from their private lives into the public arena. Citizenship responsibilities are carried out with a mind towards Christ and His principles. Public policy and laws are established based on the absolute truth of God's Holy Word. God's headship is readily acknowledged. Prayer precedes choices, demonstrating a continued reliance on God and the conscious will to do only that which honors and glorifies Him. In a Christian nation absolute truth is "God's Absolute Truth." Does this describe America today?

In today's America:

- God, His Holy Word and Christian principles are being ripped from the public consciousness of America. Prayer, the Bible, the Ten Commandments and any references to God or Jesus Christ are being declared unconstitutional under the banners of Separation of Church and State and individual rights.
- Humanism, witchcraft, atheism, and even Satanism are government recognized religions.
- Biblical views of behavior and personal responsibility are attacked as intolerant, out dated or even evil.

What is happening to America? More importantly, what can we do about it? This training is designed to educate and equip Christians with the tools and knowledge necessary to demonstrate Christ's love through social and political participation.

This training begins with a brief discussion of America's Christian heritage and the principles that governed our nation's founding. A biblical case is presented for people of faith participating in the social and political affairs of our country. A template process for church involvement in the moral issues of the day is available by writing to Wake Up America, Inc. (see footnote 2, page 16). This process contains the necessary information for churches or other non-profit organizations to encourage Christian Citizenship without violating Federal Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations. Finally, the training concludes with a challenge for every Christian to take a stand and get involved in the social and political affairs of our nation. To visualize this commitment, trainees are encouraged to sign the "Declaration of Dependence" included as Attachment B.

Our Christian Heritage

Even a brief review of our founding documents and history reveals that the Christian religion played an important role in the founding of our nation. Consider the following for example:

- The first government document created in this country was the Mayflower Compact. This document states: “...*Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith.... a Voyage to plant the first colony in the Northern Parts of Virginia;..*” Our forefathers stated purpose for coming to America was to advance the Christian Faith to the Glory of God.
- Of the fifty-six founding fathers that signed the Declaration of Independence twenty-seven held seminary degrees.
- “**The Congress of the United States**” printed the first English language Bible in America in 1782. Inscribed in the opening pages are the words, “for use of schools.”
- The Declaration of Independence itself acknowledges God. It states, “*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are... created...equal.*” You can’t get to the word “equal” without first going through the word, “created.” Next comes, “*..endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights..*” Our forefathers knew that the rights of man are granted to them by their Creator, God. Finally, this document states in conclusion, “*..with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence..*” divine-Godly; Providence-protection. Our forefathers looked to God to sustain and protect the nation they were birthing.
- The original North Carolina Constitution, along with many other state constitutions, said in part: “*No person, who shall deny the being of God, or the truth of the [Protestant] religion, or the divine authority either of the Old or New Testaments, or who shall hold religious principles incompatible with the freedom and safety of the state, shall be capable of holding any office, or place of trust or profit in the civil department, within this state.*”

Admittedly, not all founding fathers were Christians. But the handful that weren’t does not discount the truth of our religious heritage.

The religious convictions of our founding fathers assured all peoples of faith the freedom of worship. Patrick Henry stated:

“It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For this very reason peoples of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship here.”

Our forefathers gave their fortunes, honor and lives to guarantee all Americans Freedom of Religion. Have you ever wondered what happened to those men who signed the Declaration of Independence?

Five signers were captured by the British as traitors, and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons in the Revolutionary Army. Another had two sons captured. 9 of the 56 fought and died from wounds or the hardships of the Revolutionary War. Our founding fathers signed the Declaration of Independence knowing full well that the penalty would be death if they were captured. They signed and they pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.

Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships swept from the seas by the British navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts, and died in rags.

Thomas McKeam was so hounded by the British that he was forced to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Congress without pay, and his family was kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him, and poverty was his reward.

Vandals or soldiers or both, looted the properties of Ellery, Clymer, Hall, Walton, Gwinnett, Heyward, Rutledge, and Middleton.

At the Battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson Jr., noted that the British General Cornwallis, had taken over the Nelson home for his headquarters. The owner quietly urged General George Washington to open fire, which was done. The home was destroyed, and Nelson died bankrupt.

Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife, and she died within a few months.

John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their 13 children fled for their lives. His fields and his gristmill were laid waste. For more than a year he lived in forests and caves, returning home after the war to find his wife dead, his children vanished. A few weeks later he died from exhaustion and a broken heart. Norris and Livingston suffered similar fates.

These men had security, but they valued liberty more. They pledged: "*For the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of the Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.*" They relied on God as they stepped out in faith to give us an independent America that assures all its citizens Freedom of Religion.

For more information concerning the Truth of our Christian Heritage see "www.wakeupamericainc.org" web site.

A Christian Citizenry

Our forefathers saw no disagreement between a person's responsibilities before God and those of a citizen patriot in America. In fact, they believed our nation's future relied upon its citizens continued submission to God and His principles.

James Madison said it this way:

"We've staked the whole future of American civilization not on the power of government, far from it. We have staked the future ...upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God. The future and success of America is not in this Constitution, but in the laws of God upon which this Constitution is founded."

In his *Farewell Address* George Washington declared, *"Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labour to subvert these great pillars of human happiness."*

Washington's successor, John Adams, also addressed the role of religion and morality in our nation's life. In 1798 President Adams said, *"We have no government armed in power capable of contending in human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Our Constitution was made for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other."*

The Declaration of Independence states, *"For a free nation derives its power from the consent of those governed."* Our forefathers understood that the constitutional form of government they helped found relied on the consent of the people. They also knew a moral and religious people would pass moral laws and that an immoral people, unbridled from religious convictions, would pass immoral laws.

Clearly, deeply held religious beliefs compel people to get involved in the affairs of their community, state and nation. These beliefs demand participation in the political and legislative processes that direct our country. The future prosperity of America DOES depend upon the spiritual well-being and participation of its citizenry.

When citizenship responsibilities are ignored by people of faith then moral decay and its effects are unleashed on society.

Moral Decay

Philosophies like Separation of Church and State drive God and His principles from the public arena. We are told that God no longer has a place in social, educational, legislative, judicial or political affairs of America. This view not only denies our Christian heritage but it rejects God's sovereignty and headship over America.

Churches and Christians have accepted these godless philosophies by their relative silence and lack of organized public opposition. In short, Christians have been derelict in their Disciple's Duties.

Effects of Moral Decay

Without a doubt, America is experiencing unparalleled moral decay. This moral decay has many faces - pornography, child/spousal abuse, alcoholism, homosexuality, adultery, abortion, drug addiction, sexually transmitted diseases, crime, and the list goes on and on. The effects of moral decay reach into every corner of our society whether political, educational, economic, cultural, religious, or sociological.

Enormous resources are spent combating each of these individual ills. Billions of dollars and hundreds of thousands of man-hours are spent annually fighting addictions, pornography, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), rape, robbery and murder, as well as family issues such as abortion, adultery, homosexuality, divorce, spousal and child abuse. All of these individual issues need our attention. However, one central question persists: “Is there a single underlying “root cause” for the moral decay we are experiencing?”

Root Cause of Moral Decay

A root cause is defined as that basic cause which, if eliminated, would also eliminate the undesirable effects or results. If the moral decay of America is “the problem,” what root cause can we point to that, if removed, would eliminate the erosion of our nation’s values?

Would moral decay cease to exist if we won the war on drugs and every form of drug addiction were eliminated? If spousal and child abuse were eliminated would rape, robbery, murder and all the other effects of moral decay cease to exist? The obvious answer is, NO! These are simply symptoms of a more basic problem.

Personal gain drives some to commit robbery or larceny. Sexual gratification drives rape, teen pregnancy and child molestation. Convenience, fear, and/or shame often fuels abortion. The faces of moral decay are many and their driving factors just as varied. Therefore, the root cause cannot exist in these factors. We must continue even deeper. We must go where God goes, where He puts His attention – the heart of man.

The Heart of Man

God tells us that the heart of man is desperately wicked. (Jeremiah 17:9) He further reveals that man’s righteousness is as filthy rags. (Isaiah 54:6) Left unconstrained, man will always seek greater heights of wickedness and new ways to exercise that wickedness. He will always seek to satisfy his insatiable lust for more power and self-gratification. This path leads to even greater depths of immorality and social atrocities. Human life is devalued and becomes simply something to be used, a means to an end. Clearly, man is addicted to sin. Like any other addiction, what once satisfied no longer satisfies. Greater degrees and depths of sin are required to realize the same gratification. This sin addiction spirals ever downward, gaining momentum, until reaching the natural end, self-destruction. Simply stated, America is experiencing a spiritual heart attack.

The Heart of America

This attack of the heart begins with our rejection of God and His principles. Romans 1:21-23 says it this way,

“For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.”

America is “exchanging the glory of the immortal God”... for other images.

In today’s America:

- God, His Holy Word and Christian principles are being ripped from the public consciousness of America. Prayer, the Bible, the Ten Commandments and any references to God or Jesus Christ are being declared unconstitutional under the guise of Separation of Church and State and individual rights.¹
- Humanism, witchcraft, atheism, and even Satanism are government recognized religions.
- Biblical views of behavior and personal responsibility are attacked as intolerant, out dated or even evil.

Our nation’s spiritual decline (rejection of God) leads to moral decay:

“And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct. They were filled with all manner of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malignity, they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.” (Romans 1:28-31)

When God's standards are removed, we deny the divinity of Christ and His completed work on the cross. Then man is free to substitute his own standards of morality. As a result, there is no longer any need for God and His atoning grace. The moral compass points to what is right in the eyes of each individual without respect to God's standards.

In today’s America:

- More than one million babies are aborted every year. Abortion is so commonplace and available that many now view it as simply another form of birth control.
- Drug and Alcohol addiction and their associated crimes undermine the economic and social fabric of our society
- Aids and other sexually transmitted diseases are spreading rapidly throughout our population
- Pornography, homosexuality and adultery are so wide spread that the traditional family structure is in jeopardy of extinction.
- Child abuse/neglect and favorable treatment of sin and violence in the mass media threaten future generations.
- And the list can go on and on...

God's word in Judges 21:25 says, *"In those days every man did that which was right in his own eyes."* Is that a description of our country today? Many people today do their own thing without regard to God's will. The question is asked, "Isn't one person's values as good as another's?" Many in our society, including some Christians, believe the answer to this is, "YES".

¹ Most recently, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the Pledge Of Allegiance unconstitutional in our public schools! The judges ruled that the phrase "under God" is a violation of the U.S. Constitution because it creates an "establishment" of religion and therefore violates Separation of Church and State tenants. This ruling will most certainly be appealed to the Federal Supreme Court.

If the root cause of America's moral decay is our rejection of God, then the answer is to turn the heart of man and our nation back to God. God is calling His people to action.

Take A Stand

What America is experiencing is not a new phenomenon. Over the ages people of faith have often turned from God. However, the Lord has always sought ways to turn His people's heart back to Him. Frequently, God called a faithful few to declare His desire for the people to return to Him. Take for example, Elijah.

1 Kings 18:21 says: "Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waiver between two opinions?" if the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal [humanism, atheism, money, power, prestige, etc.] is [your] God, follow him...."

Elijah confronted a people split in their allegiance. Their actions spoke louder than their words. They knew the one true God, but, by their actions and inaction, they followed other gods. Evil was embraced because it served the people's needs and desires. False belief systems were born that justified the evil. These false belief systems sought to veil or even replace the absolute truth of God's commandments to His people.

Then we see the man of God standing, in the power of God, declaring, "you can't have it both ways." You can't promote or condone evil and say you are following God. There is no middle ground. How long are WE going to tolerate evil and the false belief systems sweeping across our land?

Luke 11:52 says, "*Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.*" The ACLU, godless judges and others like them are held accountable before God for attempting to withhold the absolute truth of God's Holy Word from His people, thereby, hindering those that would follow after God. But each of us must also assess where we are. There is no middle ground. Our silence hinders them that would enter in also.

Why do so many waver between these two choices? Perhaps, some are not sure. Many, however, know that the Lord is God, but they enjoy their lives 'as is' and the benefits that come with not fully following the Lord. They have the attitude, "I have already given at the office, why are you now asking more, Lord?" We do that which is expected but when called to act on faith outside of our comfort zones, we draw the line and say, in essence, 'enough is enough.'

Elijah's message challenged the people of Israel, and his message challenges us today, TAKE A STAND! Let's pray that our answer will NOT be the same answer recorded in the final words of 1 Kings 18:21, "*But the people said nothing.*"

If we drift along with whatever is pleasant, comfortable and easy, we will someday discover that we have been worshipping, by our actions or inaction, false gods-**OURSELVES**.

The answer isn't to throw more and more resources at the effects of moral decay but rather to attack its root cause. But how? By fulfilling our Disciple's Duties.

A Disciple's Duties

Win the Lost

First and foremost, we must renew our commitment to go in the power of Christ's great commission, reaching the lost:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:19-20 KJV)

Perhaps it is in this area that apathy and indifference on the part of God's people have taken their greatest toll. One troubling statistic is that approximately 95% of those naming Christ as Lord never lead another person to Christ.

Acts 8:4 states, *"Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word."*

In context, this verse immediately follows the stoning of Stephen and according to verse 8:2, *"And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria..."*

Many believe witnessing is the job of the Pastor and others. After all, wasn't it the Apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit that caused so many to accept Christ in the early church? Isn't that our example today? In response, look at what Acts 8:2 says in its entirety: *"And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles."*

Who was doing the preaching in verse 8:4? Laypeople - those naming Christ as Lord. The Gospel Truth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is able to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. As individuals hear and respond to the gospel message, our nation will be turned back to God.

Empowered by God, equipped by His Word, it is time for every person that names Christ as Lord to reach out to the lost and *"Reclaim America through Jesus Christ, **one person at a time.**"*

Intercede before God for Our Nation

God is searching for Christians who will stand in the gap for our nation before Him. Ezekiel 22:30 states,

"And I searched among them for a man that would build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found no one."

The duty of every Christian is to intercede before God on behalf of our nation by:

1. Praying

God's Word tells us that "*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*" (James 5:16 - KJV) In other words, there is power in prayer, God's power.

II Chr. 7:14 (KJV) states, "*If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*" The healing of America is "*first*" conditional on Christians humbly acknowledging their sin of indifference and apathy and asking God for His forgiveness. Then, we must effectively and frequently pray for our nation.

An effective national prayer movement involves:

- o Staying informed concerning contemporary issues that would draw our nation or individuals further away from God.
- o Consistently and frequently praying for each identified issue.
- o Confessing our national sins before God.
- o Frequently praying for our leaders.

2. Serving

We can effectively serve Him by:

- a. Personally reaching out to others with the gospel message of Jesus Christ. We **MUST NOT** lose sight of Christ's great commission to go out and make disciples of all men.
- b. Standing up for Christ in our daily lives
 - o Speaking to that store manager that is displaying offensive material at the check-out counter
 - o Refusing to spend our money on music, magazines or movies that are displeasing to God
 - o Writing letters to companies sponsoring immoral messages or programming
- c. Serving in our Churches or other ministries promoting family and moral values

3. Giving

We must not only give of our time through service, but we must also give financially. Properly directed Godly giving is required to empower ministries, candidates and representatives to be effective witnesses for Christ.

When we actively begin to fulfill our Disciple's Duties – winning the lost and interceding for our nation before God - we will experience challenges and trials. We must not be discouraged. In the words of 1 Peter 5:14, *“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified.”*

In America, interceding before God also involves recognizing our Dual Citizenship duties and exercising our Christian Citizenship responsibilities.

Dual Citizenship

The term Christian Citizenship acknowledges that Christians have dual citizenship duties.

As citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20), Christians are commanded to be obedient to the Lord Jesus (Exodus 20:1-5). Our Lord's instruction to "render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's" (Luke 20:25) means giving ultimate allegiance only to God. It means paying your taxes. It also means we are to do our duty to civil government. In the United States, that means participating in the social and political processes.

The Apostle Paul instructs us that as Christians we have the responsibility to be good citizens of the state "for conscience sake" because **God has ordained government to punish and restrict evil-doers and to reward and protect moral behavior** (Romans 13:1-7). Christians are to support the civil government unless the authorities require a believer to support or to do evil in direct contradiction to their ultimate allegiance to their Heavenly Father.

If a government violates the will of God, it is our duty to oppose it (Acts 5:29). Part of our submission to government is to hold our government accountable to a higher law-the law of God. Christians are commanded by Jesus to be the "salt" of the earth and the "light" of the world (Matthew 5:13-16). This involves Christian Citizens actively participating in a nation's affairs, preserving as "salt" and illuminating as "light." Thus, the responsibilities of Christian Citizenship include not just obedience to the state, but involvement in society.

When we bring our religious and moral convictions into the political arena, we are standing solidly within the best of our traditions as Americans and Christians. However, in recent years Christians have allowed themselves to be driven from the public affairs of America through false and misleading applications of church-state separation and religious liberty.

President Kennedy once said, *“The great enemy of truth is very often not the lie, deliberate, contrived and dishonest, but the myth, persistent, persuasive and unrealistic.”* One such "persistent" myth that has afflicted our nation is the belief that you cannot, or at least should not, legislate morality.

Nothing could be more false. All governments legislate morality. If we had no laws against murder, the death rate would explode. If we had not laws against theft, property losses would soar. Government *must* legislate morality in order to fulfill its God-ordained purpose. God requires that we, as Christian Citizens, hold government responsible to its purpose of punishing evil and protecting its citizens. In so doing, we do not impose our morality on the murderer and the thief so much as we prevent them from imposing their immorality on their victims.

Our forefathers intended—and the *Constitution* of the United States provided for—a balance between morality and public virtue and a separation of the institution of the church and the institution of the state. This delicate constitutional balance, solidified and anchored by the First Amendment, is endangered at present, and it will not be put right unless people of faith insist upon it.

The First Amendment says, "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.*" All the restrictions are on the *government*, not individual Christians or other Americans of religious faith. The government must not establish a religion and must not interfere with its free exercise.

The simple intent of our founding fathers was to prevent government from establishing a national religion, unlike England. They wanted to assure each citizen's freedom to worship God as they saw fit. To place restrictions on a people of faith and deny their religious expressions in the political and public sectors of our society is to twist and distort the First Amendment's intent and meaning beyond all recognition.

This is amply demonstrated both by the words and deeds of our political and spiritual ancestors. When our forefathers declared their independence from Great Britain, they asserted their firm belief in such moral-political conviction as all human beings being "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights" such as "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." They declared their appeal "to the Supreme Judge of the World for the rectitude of our intentions" with "a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence." One *Declaration* signatory, Samuel Adams, said, "*We have this day restored the Sovereign to Whom all men ought to be obedient, and from the rising to the setting of the sun, let His kingdom come.*" When they issued the *Declaration of Independence*, they never intended to declare their independence from God, only from Great Britain.

Clearly, as American citizens we have the *right* to be involved in the public and legislative arena. As obedient Christians, we have the *duty* to be involved. Surely, there could be no better thing for Americans and for America than for Christian Citizens to awaken to the *exercise* of their *rights* and to the *fulfillment* of their *duties*.

In his essay entitled, "The Corruption of America's Freedom" Alan Keyes put it this way: "*Only one group of people in this nation have the heart and have the faith to rediscover that moral commitment and carry it once again, whatever the cost, into the arena of our public affairs. That group is you. If your light and fire of faith does not re-ignite the flame of decency in this nation, then nothing will. That is your challenge, that is your work. This nation's future is in your hands. Turning back to God will be the truth of America's salvation. It will be the rock of America's future. Let's begin to build upon it.*"

No matter America's course one truth still remains steadfast - God will judge our nation and individuals. Our challenge is not to loose heart but to boldly point others and our nation back to God with the absolute truths contained in His Holy Word: "*And let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart.*" (Galatians 6:9) According to this verse, "We SHALL reap!!" But this promise from God comes with a condition, "*..if we do not lose heart.*"

Exercising Christian Citizenship

Citizenship in a free country is a blessing from God. However, accompanied with this blessing is a personal accountability before God to fulfill our Christian Citizenship responsibilities. Since individual citizens influence the course of government, the consequences of rejecting God's headship are as dire to a free nation as are the consequences of such rejection in an individual's life.

When a godly citizenry is silent, apathetic and uninvolved, then wickedness, unopposed, reaps moral havoc on a nation.

"The good influence of godly citizens causes a city [state or nation] to prosper, but the moral decay of the wicked drives it downhill." (Proverbs 11:11)

George Mason, the Father of the Bill of Rights, said, "*As nations cannot be rewarded or punished in the next world, so they must be in this. By an inevitable chain of causes and effects, Providence punishes national sins by national calamities.*"

The words of Psalms 33:12 stand in stark contrast, "*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.*" We also read in Proverbs 14: 34, "*Godliness exalts a nation.*"

Blessed or broken; spirit filled or spiritually corrupt, the choice is being made every day by Christians across America. **Inaction and apathy are choices also.** The future of America depends on Christians fulfilling their citizenship responsibilities:

- o **By Registering to Vote and Voting According to God's Principles, Irrespective of Political Parties or Political Agendas**

According to recent statistics, only one in four of the 30,000,000 self-professed churchgoing Americans participate in the political process in any way. This means that 75%, or nearly 24 million churchgoing Americans are absent from the political process. Their voices and that of the God they profess to know are silenced by their inaction. Thousands of local, state and federal offices lack the moral influence of religious conviction. As a result, anti-God activists are incrementally removing God's headship from the public affairs of America and unleashing unprecedented moral decay on our society. Christians are asleep on watch, surrendering God's headship and our Christian heritage without a skirmish or even sounding an alarm.

- **By Becoming Informed**

Christians must stay informed concerning the social, legislative and political issues of the day. There are many ways to become informed. The Internet has a wealth of information - from individual candidate positions on issues and voting records to copies of bills being considered in legislative bodies (See Attachment - A for a list of informative internet sites that may be used to stay informed). One may also become informed by attending public meetings with candidates, school or town boards. Newspapers, candidate newsletters, voting guides, books and magazines often contain meaningful information on candidates and social/legislative issues. God entrusted America's care to His people. Ignorance and apathy on the part of God's people violates this sacred trust.

- **By Sharing with Others**

Individual citizens have the right of unrestricted communications concerning any and all social, legislative and political issues. However, non-profit organizations such as churches and other ministries have very specific restrictions placed on them through IRS regulations.² Violations of these regulations could result in the loss of an organization's tax-exempt status. Whether an individual or a church, it is vital that Christians be informed and that they communicate with each other. An alert, informed and active Christian citizenry is required to carry religious convictions back into the social, legislative and political processes of our nation.

- **By Electing Godly Leaders to Public Office**

God's Word has much to say about the leaders we elect. Consider the following scriptures and ask, "How important is it to elect Godly leaders?" Does a candidate's personal beliefs and moral standards really matter?"

Psalm 125:3 says, "***The wicked shall not rule the godly, lest the godly be forced to do wrong.***" God warns that ungodly leadership "forces" ungodly actions. The citizens of America choose their leaders through free elections. An informed citizenry, submitted to God's leading, must elect godly leaders. This is their duty before God in a free nation such as ours.

² *Wake Up America, Inc. ministries has prepared an informative document entitled, "Current Event Process," that provides an overview of applicable IRS regulations and a model process that can be used by non-profit organizations to communicate issues of concern to people of faith. This process "conservatively" treats IRS restrictions on tax-exempt organizations and provides full church authority and oversight over all congregational communications. Request copies of this informative document by writing to Wake Up America, Inc., P. O. Box 1187, Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526.*

Noah Webster, one of America's most outspoken founding fathers said:

"In selecting men for office, let principle be your guide. Regard not the particular sect or denomination of the candidate – look to his character...It is alleged by men of loose principles, or defective views of the subject, that religion and morality are not necessary or important qualifications for political stations. But the Scriptures teach a different doctrine. They direct that rulers should be men who rule in the fear of God, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness..."

Noah Webster rightly sighted a fundamental truth of scriptures – it is God's desire to have godly leaders directing the governmental affairs of His people. This truth is found in 2 Samuel 23:3, **"He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God."** Notice the words, **"...in the fear of God."** Leaders are to know Him. They are to have a personal relationship with Him that permeates and guides every aspect of their lives. This relationship directs their actions and choices in a manner that is consistent with God's principles and His Holy Word. The fear of God spoken of in this verse is not a fear of righteous judgment for wrong doing but rather a reverential fear – a fear of making choices that are not pleasing and honoring to the God they desire to faithfully serve. Clearly, scripture teaches that elected leaders are to possess a personal relationship with God and govern with a reverence to God and His principles.

Exodus 18:21, 22 provides further insight to a leader's qualifications:

Find some capable, godly, honest men who hate bribes, and....let these men be responsible to serve the people with justice at all times."

According to these verses:

Our leaders are to be "capable." They are to have the demonstrated skills and competence to perform the duties of the office they seek.

They are to be "godly." Mature in their faith; demonstrating a desire to serve God and uphold His principles.

They are to be "honest." People with integrity, genuinely demonstrating a reverential fear of God in the actions and choices they make.

They are to "hate bribes." People holding others and the Godly principles to which they ascribe above personal gain.

They are to be "servants." People seeking to serve God first and others through Christ's example.

They are to be "just." People that consistently apply God's standards of justice in carrying out elected responsibilities.

The spiritual health and prosperity of a nation are directly linked to its leadership. When a citizenry freely elects leaders that acknowledge God's authority then that nation and its people will rejoice. ***"With good men in authority, the people rejoice; but with the wicked in power, they groan."*** (Proverbs 29:2)

Why is it that God puts so much emphasis on leaders?

"When rulers are wicked, their people are too." (Proverbs 29:16)

Leaders influence the people they lead - particularly in spiritual matters. Wicked leaders will seek ways to remove God and His standards from the hearts of the people. They go about redefining truth so as to justify and legalize their personal beliefs and agendas. God's standards are replaced with their standards. The resulting spiritual decline (rejection of God's headship and standards) leads to extreme moral decay. Moral decay brings with it destruction and pain. Many may cry out to God for relief. However, God holds a nation accountable for consciously rejecting Him. Consider the following:

"You will cry out for relief from the king you haven chosen, and the Lord will not answer you in that day." (1 Samuel 8:18)

There are consequences for elevating ungodly people to leadership positions without respect to God and His principles.

"They set up kings without My consent; they choose princes without My approval." (Hosea 8:4) We invite God's anger when we select leaders without consulting Him.

"Putting confidence in an unreliable man is like chewing with a sore tooth, or trying to run on a broken foot." (Proverbs 25:19) To place our confidence in unworthy leaders violates God's will for casting our vote.

Noah Webster said: *"When a citizen gives his suffrage [vote] to a man of known immorality he abuses his trust [civil responsibility]; he sacrifices not only his own interest, but that of his neighbor, he betrays the interest of his country."*

A candidate's character and beliefs do matter before God.

o **By Running for Public Office**

Mature Christians must always be open to God's call to serve their nation, state, or community in public office. As we have already seen, God places great emphasis on Godly Leadership. Public service is a mission field to the nation, state or community we serve. As we seek to serve Christ in public office let the words of Matt. 5:16 guide our actions:

"Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

- **By Communicating and Providing On-going Support to Godly Leaders**

Christian men and women can become disheartened and discouraged as they seek to serve God through public service. After all, the opposition to Godly principles is formable, well organized and well financed. Christians must be willing to support those God calls into public service with their prayers, time and finances. Frequent, meaningful communications are required to discern needs, encourage and sustain those serving Christ. To our shame, many Christians don't even know who their elected representatives are!

- **By questioning any and all legislation relative to its impact on God and His principles.**

Christians have to stay informed concerning current issues (e.g., proposed legislation, candidates for public office, pending judicial decisions, etc.). We must question each issue in light of God's Word and His principles to determine God's mind. Then, we must effectively communicate our concerns or support to our representatives, other Christians, and God in prayer.

- **By organizing "Community Impact Groups" within your neighborhood, community or Church. Answer the question, "How can I or our group impact our community for Christ?"**

Opportunities to influence our community, state and nation are limitless. Every community confronts, daily, a plethora of moral, social and civil issues, many unique to that community. The challenge is to be realistic and specific concerning the group's purpose and the goals to be achieved. The group must first consider the specific moral, civil and social issues within the community they serve. Asking the question, "How can we most effectively impact our community for Christ?", the group then selects those issues to be confronted, realistically bearing in mind the resources available. The overriding function of this group is to provide spiritual and organizational leadership to responsible and effective action taken on the issues selected.

Additional details on starting a Community Impact Group are provided in Focus on the Family ministry's publication, "Working Together To Impact Your Community – The Pastor's Advocate Series."

Summary

Christians should and must participate in the social and political arenas. “Christian and Citizenship” are inseparable terms. We ARE obligated to do our duty to our country as part of our duties to God. The Rev. Charles Finney put it this way;

“The church must take right ground in regards to politics ... The time has come for Christians to vote for honest men, and take consistent ground in politics or the Lord will curse them ... God cannot sustain this free and blessed country, which we love and pray for, unless the Church will take right ground. Politics are a part of a religion in such a country as this, and Christians must do their duty to their country as a part of their duty to God ... God will bless or curse this nation according to the course Christians take in politics.”

Our very freedom depends on Christians fulfilling their citizenship duties. Patrick Henry stated:

“It is when a people forget God, that tyrants forge their chains. A vitiated state of morals, a corrupted public conscience, is incompatible with freedom.”

The deafening silence of Churches and Christians across America must be broken! The pulpits of America must once again ring out the truth of our civil responsibilities before God as communicated in His Holy Scriptures. Rev. Jonathan Mahew, 1749 said it this way:

“It is hoped that but few will think the subject of it an improper one to be discoursed in the pulpit, under a notion that this is preaching politics instead of Christ. However, to remove all prejudices of this sort, I beg it may be remembered that all Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Why, then, should not those parts of Scripture which relate to civil government be examined and explained from the desk, as well as others?”

The time has come to restore God’s headship and re-instill religious conviction in the public affairs of our nation. The words of Rev. Charles H. Spurgeon are as true today for our nation as when he spoke them nearly 150 years ago in England:

“I often hear it said, ‘Do not bring religion into politics.’ This is precisely where it ought to be brought! We have had enough of clever men without conscience. Now let us see what honest, God-fearing men will do.”

That is our call today-‘Now, let us see what honest, God-fearing men will do.’ Christians must shake off their shackles of silence and honor their Disciple’s Duty by participating in the political process - voting for and supporting godly leaders.

Make a Commitment to Christian Citizenship

Everett Hale said:

I am only one, but I am one,
I cannot do everything, but I can do something,
What I can do, I should do, and
With the help of God, I will do.

Abraham Lincoln said:

"Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land, are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty."

Which of the following important commitments are YOU willing to make before God?

1. With God's help, I will seek to lead others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. As the Holy Spirit leads, I will share my faith and "what great things the Lord has done" in my life with those around me-family, friends, co-workers, and those I come into contact with daily.
2. I will pray daily for my elected officials, for a spiritual awakening within our nation and for God's will in critical issues facing our great nation!
3. I will register to vote
4. I will keep informed concerning candidates for public office, key legislative issues and other issues that would draw our nation further away from God and His principles.
5. I will write and/or call elected officials to express my support or concerns on key issues.
6. I will seek out and support Godly candidates.
7. I will attend precinct meetings within my community
8. I will join others in our community to promote morality, especially in our schools.
9. I will keep my church and others informed on issues and legislation.
10. I will give financially to Godly candidates and organizations that are promoting Christian values.
11. I will run for public office and serve God and my country if God calls me to do so.

If you are making one of the above commitments before God, please let others know – make it public. Then prayerfully consider one or more of the following actions:

- o Publicly post and sign the attached "Declaration of Dependence" (Attachment B), proclaiming, unashamedly, your commitment to and firm reliance on our sovereign Lord. Encourage others to do the same.
- o Establish a community or church prayer group to seek God's guidance and support in carrying out your commitment and to pray for the healing of our nation. This group should meet frequently and consistently to pray for identified national, state and community issues of concern for people of faith.
- o Form a "Community Impact Group" to monitor national, state and local issues, judicial decisions and proposed legislation. Keep others informed, including your Pastor, prayer

group and local church congregations. Seek meaningful ways to identify, communicate and support Godly issues and oppose ungodly ones. Ask, "How can we make a difference in our community for Christ?"

EndNotes

1. David Barton, **America: To Pray or Not To Pray?** (Aledo, Texas, Wallbuilders Press, February 1995)
2. **Working Together To Impact Your Community, The Pastor's Advocate Series-Ministering to the Needs of Your Minister, Focus on the Family, Edited by Ron Reno and Dan Davidson**
3. **Steeling the Mind of America, Volume 2, New Leaf Press, February 1997**
4. **Bill Bright, Your 5 Christian Duties As a Christian Citizen, New Life Publications**
5. **The Rebirth of America, Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation, 1986**
6. **Citizen Christians: Their Rights and Responsibilities, Richard D. Land, published by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention**

A Disciple's Duty **Attachment A**

Informative Internet Sites

This list does not constitute an endorsement of the organizations represented. Rather, it is a list of Internet sites that address contemporary issues generally of interest to people of faith or that support communication with our elected federal representatives. This should not be considered a complete list of sites available to stay informed. For example, state, city or community information sites are not listed.

Issues Information

- Focus on The Family - Citizen Link (www.family.org/cforum)
- Townhall.com (www.townhall.com)
- Traditional Values (www.traditionalvalues.org)
- American Center for Law and Justice (www.aclj.org)
- Library of Congress Legislative Information (<http://thomas.loc.gov>)
- Concerned Women for America (www.cwfa.org)

Identify/Communicate with Your Representatives

- U.S. Senate Home Page (www.senate.gov)
- U.S. House of Representatives Home Page (www.house.gov)

A Disciple's Duty
Attachment B

Declaration of Dependence

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for a people to proclaim their absolute dependence upon Almighty God, and to reaffirm the national covenant established with Him by their forefathers then a decent respect to that covenant demands that they declare before God and mankind the causes which impel them to such a proclamation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, declared by all of God's creation from the beginning of time and by the absolute truth of God's Holy Word, that all men are created equal, in the glorious image of the Creator, endowed by Him with certain inalienable rights. That among these are the right to physical life including the unborn, the right to experience spiritual life with complete liberty from the bondage of sin, and the right to pursue Happiness and Joy through a growing relationship with Him. We humbly acknowledge that the granting of these rights is the sovereign province of God having demonstrated His grace and love towards man through His Son, Jesus Christ. That these rights are not secure apart from a saving faith in Christ. We further acknowledge that rejecting God and the provisions of His headship results in God's righteous judgment and punishment upon the individual and upon that nation which emboldens such rejection. For a free nation derives its power from the consent of those governed. For it is the right, it is the duty of those governed to exercise Christian citizenship to oppose those civil changes which would jeopardize that nation's covenant relationship with God. The recent history of America is a history of repeated injury and usurpations, all having in direct object the removing God's headship and Christian principles from the minds and hearts of her citizens and the distinct purpose to destroy the covenant relationship with God that made this nation great. Let the facts be submitted to a candid world.

We have refused our Assent to Laws, most wholesome and necessary to our national covenant with Almighty God. Contrastingly, we have Assented to Laws, most detrimental to that covenant.

We have ejected God from the public affairs of this nation through Judicial Legislation, accepting the myth of Separation of Church and State without exercising adequate civil recourse to restore and permanently protect our national covenant with God.

We have afforded little or no organized opposition to anti-God organizations whose sole purpose is to fatigue those standing for God and His principles into absolute silence using judicial threats and action.

We have repeatedly dissolved support to those Public Representatives, who opposed with Godly firmness, invasions against our national covenant and Christian principles thereby, rendering those Representatives ineffective and discouraged.

Christians have remained content in their exile from public affairs, and indifferent to those things deemed “secular,” the Nation remaining in the mean time exposed to all dangers of eradicating God’s headship and our national covenant from without, and convulsions from within.

Secular humanists and others have combined to subject our national covenant with God to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and so amended our laws to disallow any acknowledgement or reliance on that covenant or God.

In every stage of these oppressions, the absolute Truth of God’s Holy Word has been incrementally and purposefully removed from the public consciousness of America. Unconstrained, these actions and inactions have catapulted our nation into unparalleled states of moral decay and wickedness.

We, therefore, Representatives of the Almighty God and proud Citizens of this great nation, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the solemn name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, solemnly publish and humbly declare, our absolute dependence on Almighty God and do reaffirm our commitment to the national covenant that acknowledges His headship over the affairs of this nation and the hearts of man. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance and faith in Almighty God and His Son, Jesus Christ, we mutually pledge before God and each other our Lives and our Fortunes in “Reclaiming America Through Jesus Christ.”

Signers of this Declaration are as follows: