

Plato

"The penalty good men pay for indifference to public affairs is to be ruled by evil men."

Christian alien ambassadors have multiple citizenships which often conflict.

Citizens of the Kingdom of God


1 Peter 1:1
"To those who reside as aliens . . . chosen of God"

Citizens of the World of humanity

Citizens of the Country of residence

American Culture Wars

Judeo-Christian		
* Supernatural revelation	* Reason over superstition	* Natural insight only
* The problem is internal (sin nature)	* Respect for the individual	* The problem is external (society)
		Enlightenment



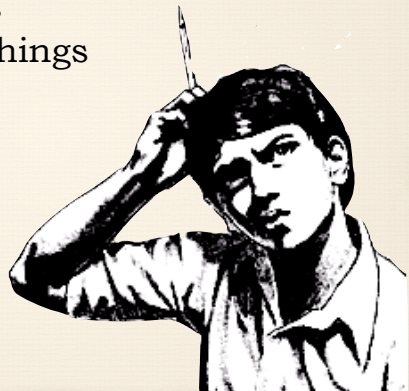
Anna Quindlen

"the essence of America is free enterprise and human rights. It's why people come here in the first place."

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Matthew 22:21

"Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."



✓ **Christendom is represented by four general responses to its relationship with the state.**

<p><i>Liberal</i></p> <p>The state sets the agenda for the church</p> <p>Become completely political</p>	<p>Anabaptist</p> <p>The church is to avoid the state</p> <p>Be salt & light from the outside</p>
<p><i>Roman Catholic</i></p> <p>The church sets the agenda for the state</p> <p>legislate Christian morality</p>	<p>Puritan Reformed</p> <p>The church is to reform the state</p> <p>Reform the culture through conversion</p>

A question to ponder:

How much and in what sense
are we to be:

Aliens
Analysts
Activists
Ambassadors



Jeremiah 29:7

“Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.”

1 Timothy 2

“¹ First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, **so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.** ³ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,”

- **Are we called to be ambassadors for peace more than social reform or retreat?**

Matthew 17

“²⁴ when they had come to Capernaum, those who collected the two-drachma tax came to Peter, and said, “Does your teacher not pay the two-drachma tax?” ²⁵ He said, “Yes.” And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect customs or poll-tax, from their sons or from strangers?” ²⁶ And upon his saying, “From strangers,” Jesus said to him, “Consequently the sons are exempt. ²⁷ **But, lest we give them offense,** go to the sea, and throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for you and Me.””

- **Are we to yield our rights for the sake of peace because we are citizens of a higher Kingdom?**

1 Peter 2

“¹³ Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. ¹⁵ For such is the will of God that by doing right you may **silence the ignorance of foolish men.** ¹⁶ Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but *use it* as bondslaves of God. ¹⁷ Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.”

- **Is submission to EVERY human institution a way of demonstrating our faith and hope in Christ? Is it the way of showing the way?**

Romans 13

“¹ Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. ² Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. ³ For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same; ⁴ for it is a minister (**deacon**) of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister (**deacon**) of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil. ⁵ Wherefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience’ sake. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants (**liturgists**) of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. ⁷ **Render to all what is due them:** tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.”

This text leaves me feeling uneasy.

1. **Because of what it says.** It seems to suggest that we should obey human authorities as though they were speaking from God.
2. **Because of what it does not say.** It does not balance this out with instructions about our rights and responsibilities to stand against human authority when it is abusive.
3. **The historical context.** Nero was the Emperor of Rome at the time and Jesus along with his followers were victims of state abuse.
4. **The teaching of Jesus.** Jesus seems to say the same thing - Matt.17:24-27.
5. **The teaching of Peter.** The other Apostles seem to say the same thing - 1 Pet.2:13-17.

Many are tempted to conclude:

1. **Paul did not write this.** It was added to Romans at a time when the church was trying to escape persecution. **But this is rejected because of no textual support.**
2. **Paul was naive.** It was written during the early part of Nero's rule. **But Paul was very aware of abuse of civil power - Jesus' crucifixion, believer's persecution, etc.**
3. **Paul's advice is in light of the eminent return of Christ.** **But this does not fit with the rest of the N.T.**
4. **Paul is referring to leaders only as they obey God.** **But Nero was on the throne.**
5. **Paul is referring to a local, temporary problem.** **But Vs 1-2 seem to exclude this view.**

Observations

1. Should this be best understood as:
 - a. a guard against misunderstanding 12:2 - as disengagement with secular (worldly) authority.
 - b. a reason for not taking justice into our own hands. This is God's hand of justice 12:19.
 - c. a respect for civil authority in a general sense.
2. Is "Respectful cooperation" versus anarchy the issue. This leaves room for civil disobedience. (Acts 4:18-20, 5:29)
3. Not all "God ordained" authority is godly. Both Paul and Peter would be martyred under the Roman Emperor Nero.



What these passages teach

1. **Respect** human authorities as instruments of God - this does not mean we must sanction everything they do.
2. **Support** human authority (not **anarchy**) - this includes taxes, customs, prayer, honor, & respect.
3. **Recognize the limits of human authority** - respect spiritual boundaries.
4. **Note what is not said** - "except when . . ."

Implication #1 This world is not our only home

1. Don't place your **hope** in the state or politics.
2. **Jesus' example** - he was not naive.
3. We are aliens and then ambassadors.

Implication #2 Rendering to Caesar = involvement

1. Our tools are - **voice, vote, virtue.**
2. **Jesus' example** - he was not a Zealot.
3. We are analysts and then activists.
4. The USA is a blessing and a threat.

The things that are Caesar's



Submit

Support



Separate

Scrutinize



The “general welfare” is a doorway to legislating behavior.

“We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, **promote the general welfare**, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

***U.S. Constitution
(preamble)***

***Promoting the general welfare
“rendering to Caesar”***

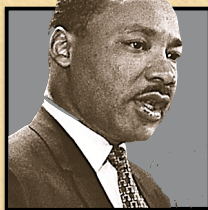
- ✓ The government seeks to involve itself only in those issues which have a **tangible affect on the function of society**.
- ✓ It seeks to **maximize personal freedom** in most matters by not getting involved.
- ✓ Political issues are seldom simple and they almost always involve **compromise & tolerance**.

***Promoting the general welfare
“the pursuit of happiness”***

- ✓ The pursuit of happiness was viewed as the cultivation of **virtue**.
- ✓ “**General religion**” was viewed as an essential element in cultivating virtue.
- ✓ The Constitutional **leverage** that Christians have in ethical public policy is in an appeal to the service of the general welfare of humanity & classical virtue.

- ✓ Advocates for both Abortion and Gay marriage tend to frame the debate so as to obscure the root issue.
- ✓ Abortion is framed as a “Choice” issue when it is really a “Civil Rights” issue.
- ✓ Gay marriage is framed as a “Civil Rights” issue when it is really a “Choice” issue.
- ✓ Both are “General welfare” issues.

Martin Luther King Jr.



“Morality cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. Judicial decrees may not change the heart, but they can restrain the heartless.”