

The Bulletin

Meeks St. Church of Christ

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“The Separation of Church and State”

By Andy Sochor

There is an ongoing debate in our society about the “separation of church and state.” Though the phrase is not used in any of this country’s founding documents, many understand it to be a fundamental principle upon which this nation was built.

However, the debate springs from the differences people have in interpreting this phrase. As Christians, our concern should not be which position is the “conservative” or “liberal” position. Our concern should be what the Scriptures teach. So in this article, we will examine what the word of God says on this topic.

The Church and the State Must Be Separate

The church and the state are two distinct entities. The church is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23). As Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, he prophesied that the kingdom of God – the church (cf. Matthew 16:18-19) – would “crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever” (Daniel 2:44). When Jesus established His church, He never intended for it to be allied with or attached to any human government.

The State Is to Be God’s Minister

Though the Lord’s church is to be separate from the state, the Scriptures are clear that civil government is to be “a minister of God” (Romans 13:4). God has ordained a role for government – to punish evildoers and praise those who do right (Romans 13:3-4) and to provide and maintain an environment in which its citizens are free to live “tranquil and quiet [lives] in all godliness and dignity” (1 Timothy 2:2).

Many governments ignore or reject their divinely-given role, or they attempt to usurp the authority that belongs to God alone. But the fact that they have been given work to do as God’s minister is plainly taught in His word.

Christians Must Be Godly in All Things

Some who say they are advocating the separation of church and state are actually arguing for the separation of morality from public life. The church has been given work to do by God – evangelism and edification (1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 4:16).

However, in their individual lives, Christians must “let [their] light shine before men in such a way that they may see [their] good works” (Matthew 5:16). This means that God’s people will pray, discuss the Scriptures, promote and practice morality, condemn and avoid immorality, share the gospel, and stand for their faith in all that they do. A Christian does not automatically stop doing these things and letting his light shine when he enters a school, government building, place of business, or any other place where unbelievers may be present.

Righteousness Exalts a Nation

The wise man said, “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people” (Proverbs 14:34). The righteousness that exalts a nation is not legislated by the government and imposed upon an unwilling populace.

Rather, the righteousness that exalts a nation is the result of individuals in that society choosing to practice the righteousness of God. Churches, in sounding forth the word (1 Thessalonians 1:8), will be promoting this righteousness since the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel (Romans 1:16-17). In doing this, the church will proclaim righteousness, even on issues such as abortion and homosexuality.

This does not mean that the church is getting involved in politics (after all, these are moral issues). The problem is that politicians have involved the state in issues of morality. Murder is wrong (I Timothy 1:9; Revelation 21:8); therefore, abortion is wrong no matter what the state says about it. Homosexuality is wrong (Romans 1:26-27; I Timothy 1:10); therefore, same-sex “marriage” is illegitimate no matter what the state says about it.

The list could go on. But we must remember this point –righteousness exalts a nation, not godless governments attempting to legislate matters that have already been settled by God.

Conclusion

The Lord’s church – the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:31-32) – must be kept pure (Ephesians 5:27) from the corruption that is inherent in human government. However, as Christians, we are the “salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13).

Therefore, we must influence the world around us toward greater morality, righteousness, and godliness. This will always be good, right, and necessary, regardless of the protests from the liberals, secularists, and haters of God that abound in this society.

“The Value Of Positive Peer Pressure”

by Greg Gwin

I wasn't ready to do it yet. I really didn't want to get started at it. But, my neighbor had already mowed his grass two times, and my yard was looking pretty shabby. I figured if he mowed a third time before I mowed the first time, it would really make me look bad. So, even though I wasn't really in the mood, I got the mower out of the garage and went to work.

How often have you been motivated in a similar fashion? Maybe it was at work or at school. Perhaps it was a project or chore that you really dreaded. But someone else did something that made you realize that you needed to get to work.

We often talk about "peer pressure." Most often, we mention it with a negative connotation. In this regard, we are talking about how others can influence us to do evil. We are "pressured" to talk, act, and dress as worldly people do. There is great danger in this, and we have rightfully warned about these negative influences. *"Evil companions corrupt good morals"* (I Corinthians 15:33).

But, there is a positive side to "peer pressure" that we may be tempted to overlook. When we are around good people who are doing good things, we are motivated to follow their example. We are urged to get busy in the work of the Lord. We are encouraged to live right. We are moved to imitate them and be like them. This is good and helpful.

We are to *"exhort one another daily"* (Hebrews 3:13) and to *"consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works"* (Hebrews 10:24). Christian, are you setting a good example for others? Are you motivating them in positive ways? Are you helping your brothers and sisters to be more like God wants them to be? Think!

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Meeks Street Church of Christ https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgiXJxZC1oraOugO9qIfBtw?view_as=subscriber

And Our Facebook Page.

For sermon videos, articles, and announcements.



News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, June Lawson (Lisa Busby's Mom), Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Daniel Holloway, Betty Hurst, Peggy Harville (cancer), Clois and Estell Wright, Linda Hunt, Mollie Harris, David Taylor, Randy Beaty, Sam Johnson, Sherry Doles, Mrs. Jennie Daniel (Dan and Lynlie's neighbor), Anna Hearn, Randy Ferrell, J F Dancer, & Earl Mitchell.

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer:	Russell Briggs
Preaching:	Brian Meade
Sermon #1:	<i>"Preaching Like Paul"</i>
<u>Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:</u>	Jerry Kennemur
	1 Corinthians (Mike Willis)
	<i>Page 49, Question #1</i>

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements:	Russell Briggs
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:	Paul Johnson
	<i>2 Corinthians 5:17-19</i>
Song Leader:	Lee Busby
Lord's Supper:	Paul Busby
Assisting:	— —
Preaching:	Brian Meade
Sermon #2:	<i>"What It Means To Be In Christ"</i>
Closing Prayer:	Fred Johnson

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

August 4th:

Auditorium Bible Class:	Paul Busby
	Ecclesiastes & Song of Solomon (Mike Willis)
	<i>Page #10, Question #15</i>
Invitation:	Doug George
Song Leader:	Russell Briggs
Closing Prayer:	Tim Harris Sr.



Speaker: **Billy Randolph**
Location: **Meeks Street Church of Christ**
Date: **October 17th -- 22nd**
Starting Time: **7:00 PM Nightly (Except Sunday)**

“Preaching Like Paul...”

Lesson Text: Titus 1:1-3

Intro. Some say we are nothing like the first century church in many ways.... But, in what ways? Culturally? Technologically? Generationally? Scripturally? What about our preaching? Do we preach like Paul? What matters, and why?

I. Paul Was Not An Impressive Preacher.

A. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.

- Is the focus of preaching today on impressing people with excellence of speech, superior oratory, or Charismatic personality?
- Many preachers today want to impress you with how much they know....
- Would churches of today even consider someone like Paul as their preacher?

B. God is not against eloquence- **Acts 18:24.** But motives must be good- **Phil. 1:15-16.**

II. Paul Preached With Simplicity.

A. Simplicity- The quality or condition of being easy to understand or do. (**Webster**)

B. 1 Corinthians 14:19; Colossians 1:9.

- Many today preach using words that are too bombastic? Grandiloquent? Magniloquent? Sonorous? Flamboyant?
- Why not keep it simple? Plain and easy to understand?

C. Paul had a simple message- **1 Corinthians 2:2; 6-8.** Why?

III. Paul Preached The Whole Counsel of God.

A. Acts 20:18-31.

- Do we preach like Paul when preachers of today never want to speak on certain topics? When there are Bible topics left unspoken?
- What about warning the brethren of false brethren and false teaching?
- Would Paul preach the feel-good, cotton candy, flowery preaching of today?

IV. Paul Was A Consistent Preacher.

A. 1 Corinthians 4:17. Greatest indictment of denominationalism!

- Same message for all people (Jews and Gentiles).
- Paul did NOT preach it “flat or round” depending on the audience!
- Are preachers of today consistent in the message of truth?

V. Paul Did Not Seek To Please Men.

A. Galatians 1:10. That was not his business!

- Do preachers of today cater to men, or please God?
- If they do, what would it look like? **2 Timothy 4:1-5.**

VI. Paul Preached In All Humility.

A. Acts 20:18-19.

- Are the show-boating, glory-seeking, crowd-pleasing, preeminence-loving preachers of today preaching like Paul? (A warning for us all...)
- **Philippians 2:5-9.**

“What It Means To Be In Christ”

Lesson Text: **Romans 16:1-16**. What is the common theme?

I. “In Christ” Means Relationship With Christ.

A. John 15:1-10.

- How are we in Christ? Love? Commandments? His People?
- How would one be in the army? The Band? The Police Force?

B. It Means Ownership- John 10:27; Citizenship- Phil. 3:20; Sonship- Gal. 4:6.

C. Colossians 1:12-14.

Notes _____.

II. “In Christ” Means New Creation.

A. 2 Corinthians 5:17.

- He is to put off the old self- **Colossians 3:5-9; Ephesians 4:22.**
- He is to put on the new self- **Ephesians 4:23-24; Colossians 3:10.**
- “Walk in newness of life” **Romans 6:4.**

Notes _____.

III. “In Christ” Means Reconciliation.

A. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19.

- **katallasso** (Gr) “To change from enmity to friendship.” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary)
- **Romans 5:8-11.**
- We were enemies because of sin- **Isaiah 59:1-2; James 4:4.**
- Now we have Peace- **Romans 5:1; Romans 8:1.**

Notes _____.

IV. “In Christ” Means All Spiritual Blessings.

A. Ephesians 1:3.

- Prayer- **John 9:31; John 16:24; 1 John 5:14.**
- True worship- **John 4:23-24.**
- Hope of Heaven- **1 Corinthians 15:18; 1 Thess. 4:16; Revelation 14:13.**

Notes _____.

V. “Into Christ” We Were Baptized.

A. Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3.

- Man’s greatest need is met by being in Christ!

Notes _____.