

Perspective on Church and State

I bring a great deal of passion to this message on perspective on the church and state. It is an area where I have lived deeply, emotionally and spiritually for over 12 years now and I have waited to this point in our series on "Perspectives on the Church in the 21st Century" to bring this particular word.

We began the series by looking at perspective on the church, looking at the new thing that God is doing with the church in the marketplace. We looked at accountability and covering in the second teaching. Then giving, worship, theology and leadership, each in the perspective of a new thing that God is doing in this new season that we're walking in. It's time, however, to look beyond the context of the internal functioning of the church itself and to extend the principles of this new era, this new expression of the body of Christ, into the arena of governmental affairs.

The term "church and state" is very familiar and emotionally charged. Unfortunately, the majority of that emotion is channeled into a few arenas where we have knee-jerk reactions. Most people who have been exposed to the debate at all understand that the phrase "an ironclad wall of separation between church and state" does not exist in the United States constitution. It is lifted out of a letter, a private letter that Thomas Jefferson wrote to a friend of his.

What the constitution actually says is "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for redress of grievances." That is the first amendment to the United States constitution, and we're well aware that over the years the United States courts have significantly reinterpreted that to create this so-called need for no religion in our government. Those who have studied the history well know that at least eight of the original founding colonies in fact had a state church, as in ministers that were on the payroll of government, and an orthodox established religious community, preferred religious community, within the colonies.

We are very aware that the enforcement of the so-called separation of church and state is done in a very arbitrary manner. The courts have consistently ruled against the presence of Christianity in the civil community and have just as consistently allowed every other religion unparalleled access to express their beliefs and their actions and to protect them in civil affairs.

I present all of that to suggest to you that something is wrong either with our perspective or with our strategy or with both. There has been very little new said over the course of the last 20 years. The arguments that I have shared with you I heard back in the 1980s and we have gone around and around and around the same mountain. We have proven repeatedly



the religious foundations of the nation. We have proven what the founding fathers believed and what they wanted. We have proven beyond the shadow of a doubt what they meant in the original amendment to the constitution. We have proven that the court cases are a violation of the intent of the founders. We have proven that there is unfair application of the so-called new principles from the court cases. Proving all of that has not changed the course of human affairs here in America. Proving that one party is in the right and the other is in the wrong has not been transformational.

So I present this teaching and share this message with great passion saying that if something doesn't work, let's find something that does. I want to present to you a radically different perspective on church and state and how they are to be separated, how they are to be aligned and how they are to function based on a very different view of the historical roots of our nation. I believe the problem in this debate is centered around the fact that the vast majority of Americans in the voting booth and in political office do not have a clue about the difference between a democracy and a republic. Understanding that is foundational for all the changes we would like to see in our government.

Let's go back to the year 1787. America was wrestling with this issue at that time. It was only four years after the peace treaty with England that ended the Revolutionary War, but it was already obvious that government under the Articles of Confederation simply was not working. The disintegration of government, the loss of moral authority, was evident, and the question that hung in people's minds was whether they had won liberty from England's tyranny only to self-destruct with freedom as had been prophesied relentlessly by the powers of Europe that mocked this new endeavor on the distant continent called America.

After an unofficial push from George Washington, the Continental Congress called for a Constitutional Convention. Their intent was to revise the Articles of Confederation. Instead they were discarded entirely and a completely new document was produced. When the convention opened, there were four different plans that were submitted for debate, and a multitude of details were debated in those 100 days of that historic Constitutional Convention. It is crucial for you to understand that although myriad details were discussed, there were two presuppositions that were never visited, that were never even opened for discussion, much less change.

The first presupposition before, during and after the Constitutional Convention was that democracy as a form of government was inherently and absolutely incurably evil. Aaron Burr who was Vice President under Jefferson later said, "The known propensity of a democracy is to licentiousness which the ambitious believe to be liberty." Fisher Ames was the congressman from Massachusetts and it was he who gave us the wording for the First Amendment and the Bill of Rights, and he said, "It has never happened in the world, and it never will, that a democracy has been kept out of the control of the fiercest, most turbulent spirits in the society."

Benjamin Rush, who was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, endorsed that sentiment saying, "Democracy is the devil's own government." James Madison, a major contributor to the Constitution and later President of the United States said, "Democracies have always been spectacles of turbulence and contention, have always been incompatible with



personal security or the rights of property, and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths.”

Elbridge Gerry, Vice President under Madison, identified democracy with popular clamor. Governor Edmund Randolph of Virginia wrote one of the four plans submitted at the beginning of the convention, and he specifically pleaded with the Constitutional Convention to avoid “the follies of democracy.”

You must understand that our founding fathers found democracy as thoroughly repugnant as a monarchy. It was never even remotely considered in the foundation of our nation. It is crucial for you to realize that they did not begin their debate in an ideological vacuum. They did not stumble into this thing that we call the Constitution through a series of negotiations and ideas and brainstorming and bumbling through the woods. No, they had a second great presupposition and it was a positive one.

Their presupposition was that a republic was **the only form** of government that would guarantee the liberty that they had fought and died for. Benjamin Rush observed that the debate was never about whether or not to have a republic. It was only about what form the republic would take. He said, “We have just emerged from a corrupted monarchy and, although we understood perfectly the principles of liberty, yet most of us were ignorant of all the forms and combinations of power in republics.” So they were groping to understand how best to formulate power in a republic, but there was no question that they wanted a republic.

Governor Randolph pleaded that they write a document based on republican principles. John Adams said, “All good government is, and must be, republican.” Fisher Ames asked, “Can we not persuade our citizens to be republicans again so as to rebuild the splendid ruins of this state?” History shows that they were indeed persuaded. After the final session, Benjamin Franklin was challenged on the street by a citizen who asked, “Well, Dr. Franklin, what have you done for us?” “My dear lady,” he replied, “we have given you a republic.”

James Madison, one of the primary authors of the Federalist Papers, wrote hundreds of pages defining and defending the concept of a republic and educating the American public to what they had. Aaron Burr stated eight years later, “The American nation undertook to frame and administer a republican government.”

So strong was their commitment to being a republic, not a democracy, that in Article 4, Section 4 of the Constitution every single state, every territory that applied for statehood had to prove that they had a republican form of government. They could not just slide in a different form. Part of the application, part of the credentialing of a territory that wanted to become a state, was prima facie evidence that their constitution was based on the principles of a republic, not a democracy.

What then is this thing that we call a republic? The definition of the term is very important and it is intrinsically American. Although the term existed before America, the American founders have taken possession of the term and redefined it. Benjamin



Franklin personally publicly repudiated all historic applications of the term “republic.” He said that the Greek, the Roman and the European so-called republics were not true republics at all.

So if the American model didn’t come from any other previous historical experiment, where did it come from? The answer, very simply, is it came from a man by the name of John Robinson who was pastor of a Separatist congregation initially in Scrooby, England, and eventually in Leiden, Holland. The republican form of government was developed in the context of the church. It came from biblical principles and, as I will show you later, was eventually transferred to the realm of civil government, but the republican form of government is the result of John Robinson’s research in the Scriptures.

John Robinson certainly did not set out to rewrite political theory. His research was forced by divinely orchestrated circumstances. He was a child prodigy and became not just an ordained minister at a very early age in the Church of England but was also an instructor at Cambridge and was in the leadership of that great institution. After being excommunicated from the Church of England and losing all of his posts because of his profound convictions about truth, he returned to the community of Scrooby in Nottinghamshire where he was from.

He found there other nonconformists that were already meeting. He did not start a congregation. They did not call themselves a congregation, but there was a group of biblicists who had already ceased to attend the Church of England. They were struggling with how to make their way forward because up until that time Christianity in England had been monolithic. If you drive through England today, you will see a spire in every community, rising on a hill and looking in any direction there is a spire. The Church of England absolutely reached the entire nation, and it seems there was an established presence in every little hamlet.

To break away from something that was nearly universal in England was an astounding thing. This group of people had no pattern, no model that they could easily build off of, but they were people of deep conviction, and they had no desire to be freelance rebels. So over the course of months, under the tutelage of John Robinson with his remarkably stunning exercise of the gift of teaching, they pored over the Word of God and compared what they found there to the world around them. They desperately wanted a biblical basis for legitimacy and a biblical form of church government.

They had various obvious models of church government. They were well aware of the Catholic Church with the pope as the senior authority and all legitimacy flowing from him. They were aware of the Church of England which was quite similar, only all authority was vested in the king or the queen. They looked at the Presbyterians in Scotland and their concept of a presbytery called out of the community leading the congregation, and they felt that was not for them either. They looked at the other Separatist congregations because by now the persecution was very strong and many groups were being formed. There were many Separatist congregations with different ideologies, and as they watched these congregations be formed and even blossom under the leadership, they said, “This is intrinsically flawed because the leadership and the legitimacy of these congregations rest in the dynamic charismatic personality of the pastors.”



They did not want a legitimacy that was based on the personality of a leader even though John Robinson was deeply loved, deeply respected, even though there was absolutely no question that he would be the man when they settled the issue of legitimacy. So they searched and searched, went backwards and forwards in the New Testament and ended up with four foundational principles that defined their model of church government and subsequently would define the republican form of government. Two of these ideas were as old as the hills, two were fairly new, but combined these four ideas became the basis for religion in the northeast United States.

The first principle was quite obvious - membership. They wanted to avoid the two extremes. On the one hand, with the Church of England everybody that was born into the church and was christened was considered a member. On the other hand there were the independent freelancers that were members of nothing except a relationship with God. So they used the tool of a covenant to bind the people together. As they looked at the Old Testament and New Testament they felt that people could freely choose to enter into a covenant that would be mutually binding and form the basis of membership in this particular community. They were very clear that a covenant was not just about privilege. Becoming a member of the church was not just about receiving. They clearly understood rights and responsibilities and spelled out in their church covenant some very definite mutual responsibilities.

The second principle is the one that's most familiar - the free popular election of leaders. They wanted no outside appointments such as were in the Church of England or the Catholic Church. They wanted no self-appointed leaders like the other Separatist congregations. They looked at the examples in the New Testament and rightly observed that a few – hear me well – **a few** of the leadership positions were filled by apostolic authority. They acknowledged that there was a precedent. There was a pattern for outside apostolic authority to come into a congregation and set in a leader, but they also showed that aside from those situations there was another path in the New Testament showing that people prayed and sought God's will and then the congregation freely elected their pastors, deacons and even missionaries in the case of the church at Antioch. While they did not reject the previous model of apostolic authority setting in leaders and were accepting of that for other congregations, they said they preferred the second plan and were going to freely elect their own leaders.

That is not particularly new or revolutionary to us, but when we come to the third issue we break some new ground. The third principle is that the decisions were to be made by the elected elders, not by the people. Their central passage was Acts 15 where in the greatest, most important, most significant church business meeting in human history, everybody gave their opinion. Passion ran deep. The Jews had a deeply vested interest in the outcome. They were present, they were vocal and they were passionate. The other side had experience. Paul told his story, Peter told his story and in this milieu of severely conflicting opinions and passions, the decision was not put to a vote of the people. The people voted on the leaders and the leaders then made the decision that affected the people.

It was James the Elder who ruled on the matter. It was a decision regarding church practice that had far-reaching implications, and it was made by the leadership, not by the people. It was made in spite of the fact that many of the people were deeply grieved



at the decision and disagreed with it, but this concept of the rules and decisions being made by the leaders is absolutely central to the concept of a republic as we will see shortly. This third principle absolutely must be supported by the fourth one or you have tyranny.

The fourth most critical principle is this. The laws and the decisions of the elders have to be based on the fixed principles of natural law. Again, the decisions of the elders, the decisions of the leadership, are not to be arbitrary or capricious. They are to be an extension, an extrapolation, an articulation of the absolutes in the Word of God . . . the natural law . . . the fixed principles that God has already established.

These leaders that have such high authority were not permitted to be self-serving. They were not permitted to be people pleasers. They had to defend the biblicity of their actions. James in Acts 15 did not merely say "this is how it's going to be." He said, "This is the Word from the Old Testament, this is the principle that I extract from the Word and this is the new application of a timeless principle." He defended the biblicity of his absolute decision. His authority was tempered by having to defend his decision based on principles, not on popular appeal.

This is the piece that we have lost in our culture. The decisions are defended a hundred million different ways except for the most important way of saying this decision lines up with the absolute principles of the Word of God. The church government that John Robinson and his congregation, who eventually became known as "Pilgrims," established was based on the leader having authority, but the leader's authority being absolutely subordinate to the principles of the Word of God. In many ways he was an administrator carrying out, implementing the principles of the Word of God. He did not have freedom to arbitrarily go in any particular direction.

Now notice the stark contrast between a republic and a democracy. It is the third and fourth principles that mark the difference. Once again, in a republic you have a provision for membership, you have the election of representatives, you have decisions made by the elected officials not the people and, fourth, you have decisions that are made on the basis of biblical principles. It is the third and fourth criteria that matter the most. In a democracy people vote on the laws. In a republic they elect the representatives who make the laws. George Will said it concisely, "Legislation by referendum is contrary to the essence of republican government. In a republic, the people do not decide the issues. They decide who shall decide."

In California a number of years ago we moved away from a republic towards a democracy. The elected officials were accruing more and more money and spending it in less and less wise ways, so the citizens revised the constitution of the state. They allowed for the initiative process (as they call it) where laws can be initiated by the citizens. If you get enough signatures you can then put it on the ballot, and if enough voters approve it, it becomes state law over the objection of the elected officials. The existence of that procedure has done nothing to improve the condition of the state. The solution, when you have elected officials who are not governing as they should, is to change the elected officials and elect those who will submit to the principles that they are supposed to administer instead of try to change them.



I want you to understand that the American corporation illustrates that one facet of a republic. The stockholders do not decide the issues. They decide who will decide. Now, the stockholders are not always happy. At every annual meeting the elected officials have to stand in front of the stockholders and demonstrate how the decisions they have made are in line with the principles that govern the corporation. They have to defend their decisions. They have to defend the fact that their decisions are in accordance with the principles, but there is no question of the stockholders usurping the authority of the leaders and making the decisions.

You will never see the stockholders of General Motors voting on whether or not to raise the price of Chevrolet. They might recall the entire board. They might change the leadership, but they elect the men who make the decisions. The shareholders don't make the decisions. That is central to a republic. The pilgrims in Pastor Robinson's church never voted on the issues. They only elected the pastors and elders who then made the decisions for everybody else.

The second major difference between a democracy and a republic is the self-centeredness of the people versus the subordination to God's absolutes. In a democracy the decisions are based on what the people want - what feels good to them. That is why a democracy is called "the tyranny of the majority." If 51 percent of the people like it one way, they can impose their will on the 49 percent of the people who don't like it that way. It is arbitrary, it is capricious and it is the product of the ebb and flow of the demographics and the ideology of the people. There are no absolutes. That is why in a democracy people so swiftly vote themselves into oblivion.

The decisions of a republic are to be based on universal, non-optional principles that are stressed in natural law. I want you to consider Israel as a backdrop for the study of a republic. In three out of four areas Israel qualified as a republic. There was most assuredly a covenant that defined and determined the membership in the community. The people did not elect their officials as you would in a republic. God appointed them Himself. The people likewise did not vote on the laws or the issues. It was the leaders who adjudicated and administered and, most importantly, the decisions of the leaders were not based on quick fixes. They were not based on the pain of the people. They were not based on what people wanted. They were based on what people needed and on the principles that God gave.

Now Israel, with the spirit of slavery they had when they came out of Egypt, had a very strong bias towards democracy. They preferred selfish, quick-fix solutions. They did not like the long-term application of God's principles, and this preference towards quick solutions instead of principles hurt them time and again.

Consider the issue of the Promised Land. God said to send some spies. They came back with a majority report and a minority report. This was not supposed to be a democracy. The majority was wrong, and they presented to the people the fact that there were giants in the land, and they were afraid of them. After they had presented their slave-mentality perspective and determined that they shouldn't go into the land because that was more comfortable and they didn't want their children to die, their appointed leader evaluated the situation from the point of view of God's absolutes.



The leader said to the people, "God clearly has commanded us to enter the land; therefore, we must go into the land. Follow me." But it was not to be. Democracy broke out in the midst of Israel and they said, "We're going to vote on it." There is no record of their reasoning from principle or no record of their refuting the biblicality of Moses' stand. They voted from a position of fear and self-centeredness, so there is no surprise. They voted for the immediate easy way out; let's go back to Egypt.

God judged them for their venture into democracy. He would have none of it. The sentence for dabbling in democracy and voting on whether or not they should obey was death to an entire generation. That is how vehemently God disdains and despises democracy. After he ordered them to march back into the desert, they repented of their wrong vote instead of repenting of their democracy. Democracy fever swept through the camp again. They took another vote and said, "Okay, today we're going into Canaan." God's appointed leader said, "Don't do it," and they said, "We're smarter than you." So they went into Canaan and a whole lot more people died because God's sentence upon democracy is death. Anytime human will and short-sightedness transcend the absolutes of the Word of God, the sentence is death. Immediately or later, democracy carries with it a penalty of death and destruction **every single time.**

I want you to imagine running your family as a democracy. Would your children vote for going to school? Would they vote for a good diet? For a regular schedule? For proper hygiene? Most of your families would self-destruct if you opened the door to democracy, and that's why God gave children parents. He wanted them to run a republic in the home - not a tyranny, but a republic. God clearly says that parents are answerable to His absolutes. They are not to exasperate their children with random, willful selfishness. Parents are responsible to God, and they have to defend their decisions as being a rightful implementation of the principles for the home that He has established. God gave children parents to force wise but hideously unpopular decisions upon the children. He designed the family as a republic.

Israel's final adventure with democracy was their biggest debacle. They voted to reject the republic. They told God they were tired of the judges that He was appointing, and they demanded an absolute monarch instead of a republic. God warned them that it was unwise. He assured them that it was a point of no return and they would not be able to go back to a republic easily. He said the kings would not rule by principle but would tax them, draft them, enslave them and exploit them. He appealed to them to stick with the government that He had given them, but democracy prevailed. They voted themselves into slavery to a monarchy and for 3,000 years they have suffered monarchy-caused problems.

Is it not a fascinating irony that a little over 50 years ago when Israel became a nation once again, the very first thing they did was to establish a republic because they had had a bellyful of the consequences of democracy fever. They reformed their nation, and they have returned to the principle that served them well at the beginning.

Pastor Robinson's four-point model of a republic was severely tested at a couple of different points. The first was when the Pilgrims were in Leiden, Holland. They were



run out of England by King James and were welcomed into Holland, that great Gift of Giving nation that provided the necessary resources for the founding of America. There was a great deal of discussion in a congregation at Leiden, Holland about what to do. Should they stay there or should they move? There was a proposal made to move to Dutch Guiana on the coast of South America because their Dutch hosts would give them land there.

A proposal was made to move to America. That proposal was immediately scoffed at by the congregation because they were a congregation of outlaws. They were absolutely, completely under the sentence of death. They could not return to England, and the idea that the hostile king of England would possibly grant them land in the colonies was ludicrous beyond belief. So they argued and discussed and everybody shared their opinions, but at the end of the day it was the elders who ruled.

Although they were welcomed into Holland with civil liberties, Holland did not grant them much latitude in terms of economics. The labor unions known as guilds in Holland were effectively strangling the economics of the Pilgrims. They saw their children growing up in extreme economic bondage, and they said, "We don't want to stay here. We want to do something different." Dutch Guiana looked good except for one minor detail. God was not smiling on the plan. God spoke to the elders and said they were to go to America. They spoke to the people and said this was what God said. The people said, "You must be nuts!" and the elders said, "We are the elders."

So they put together a plan. They presented a petition to the King of England for land in America, and against all human logic the king who had driven them out of England said, "Hmm, rebels in America. Now there's an idea I like. Do it." So they had free permission and full blessing from the king that hated and reviled them to start a colony. Now hear me well, there were about 300 people in the church in Leiden, Holland. There were 60 of them who chose to go to the new country and start this new colony. If they had put this to a vote of the people, if the idea had been subject to democracy, they never would have been in Plymouth, Massachusetts. But because this was a republican form of government, the elders heard from God, looked at the biblical principles, obeyed the Lord and led the congregation.

When the Mayflower arrived off the coast of New England, they had a second challenge. Understand that Pastor John Robinson was not with them. He was such a brilliant thinker, such an eloquent articulator of the principles of God's Word that the merchant adventurers who funded a portion of this colony-planting expedition would have none of him. They were terrified of his knowledge of the Word of God, so he was excluded, but that was an exercise in futility because he had successfully contaminated his key men with an understanding of a republic.

So they arrived off the coast of New England, but their charter was for the northern parts of Virginia. When they realized that they were not where they were supposed to be, they went back to sea, tried to sail down the coast and a major storm came up and drove them back north. When they anchored off the coast of New England, the storm stopped. They tried to go back south and the storm came up again. They went back, anchored and the storm stopped. They said, "Okay, we think this is God. We're not going to the northern parts of Virginia where we were



sent. We're going to look at establishing a colony here." Immediately rebellion broke out because there were a large number of non-pilgrims on board, unsaved people, people that did not share their values. They said, "Okay, if you're not in Virginia, you have no authority over us. We're going to do our own thing."

The elders said, "Oh, that sounds like rebellion to us, and we don't do that." So before they allowed people to go ashore, they sat there on the ship and hammered out a document that we call the Mayflower Compact. Using the ideas they had drawn from religious government, they laid the foundation for civil government in this new colony. So Plymouth Plantation became a republic.

Joseph Zimmerman correctly observed, "Plymouth was directly ruled by the governor of the colony and was not allowed to develop as a direct democracy." With 100 people, or 60 by the end of the first winter, it would have been very easy to put every idea to the vote. Democracy would have been possible, but they understood that it had to be a republic. This was the reason that God settled the Pilgrims there before the Puritans came. That's why He brought them there instead of Dutch Guiana. God needed to place a seed in the land that was incredibly contagious. Ten years after the Pilgrims were established with their republican form of government, God then allowed that immense flotilla of 1,500 Puritans under Governor Winthrop to come and to settle in Boston not far from the Pilgrims. Their framework for civil government was the monarchy and their framework for the local church was the Church of England.

In a remarkable incidence of God's providence, despite all the brilliant planning by the Puritans, they overlooked the minor detail of a doctor. So in their first year in the new country with the typical illness during that winter, these 1,500 Puritans were dependent on Dr. Samuel Fuller from the Pilgrim community, and he spent the winter doing two things - healing their bodies and contaminating their theology. By the end of one winter, the power and persuasiveness of Dr. Samuel Fuller had converted 1,500 Puritans into embracing a different form of church government, that is how this thing we call congregational church government was birthed in the new country by a bunch of people that were profoundly committed to the Church of England when they landed here.

Out of that came the New England town hall meetings. All across New England the structure of the local church was replicated in the civil community. In the town meetings of their small towns, all 50 voters would come once a year, and the leadership had to defend their actions. "Why did you foreclose on his farm when he was behind on the taxes? Why didn't you foreclose on his farm?" They had to show that they were following biblical principles in what they did. The town meetings were not about democracy. The voters were not allowed to vote on the issues, but they held their leaders' feet to the fire, insisting that they defend each decision they made and show that it was a righteous implementation of the biblical principles under which they were supposed to govern.

The Pilgrims were rapidly absorbed into the larger colony of the Puritans. Plymouth disappeared very quickly, yet God brought John Robinson to Scrooby, took that congregation to Leiden, Holland, and brought the best of them to the new country to establish a seed that is still growing in this nation. Decades later when it was time for the Constitutional



Convention, it was these concepts of John Robinson that the people worked with and applied to make the American Constitution. They understood that the American republic would elect leaders who would pass laws based on the absolutes of natural law, not based on the whims of the people.

The writers of the Constitution so feared democracy that they built one of their greatest safeguards in with the Tenth Amendment: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the states are reserved to the states respectively or to the people." Let me read that again: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the states are reserved to the states respectively or to the people." For 150 years what that meant is that the federal government was limited in what it could do, specifically it was limited in what it could spend money on. This was crucial because wherever you can provide money, control follows. Therefore, in the Constitution there are 16 specific things clearly spelled out that the federal government has the right to spend federal tax dollars on.

There was a classic case in the 1830s with Congressman Davy Crockett. There was a bill presented suggesting that the widow of a naval officer be given a specific sum of money in gratitude for the wonderful work that her husband had done for the nation. Davy Crockett vigorously opposed it. He pointed out to Congress successfully that that was not one of the 16 things they were authorized to do even though the naval officer was commendable, even though she was a widow, even though she was in need. Even though it was a kind, gracious, wonderful thing to do, it was not permitted by the Constitution.

He appealed to the congressmen for each one of them to give some money out of his own pocket. He recommended that each man give one week of his own salary to this widow, but he said, "We cannot allow need to redefine the Constitution. We cannot be ruled by emotion." His argument carried the day. America remained a republic. The people governed by principle, they accepted the limitations of the Constitution and only spent money under the 16 things the constitution allowed them to.

Unfortunately, in 1937 the times were very different. We had no Davy Crockett to educate a new generation. Our knowledge of principles was miniscule. Our ability to reason from those principles was severely weakened, and the great depression created desperation among politicians as well as among the people. Congress decided to step in, and they passed an entitlement program. This was in absolute bold defiance of the Constitution and the history of the United States. The federal government does not have the authority to spend money on one single entitlement program. It is not one of the 16 things they are authorized to do. This is the responsibility of states, counties and cities.

It was excluded from the Constitution because it is a violation of natural law. The Congress and the President were immediately challenged in court. The case went to the Supreme Court and it's called *Helvering vs. Davis*. It is a watershed decision in American history because from that day forward we ceased to be a pure republic and have been sliding down the slippery slope towards democracy. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the government. They allowed this entitlement program to be implemented, and they used a pitiful set of logic to justify it. Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution says: "Congress is empowered to care for 'the general welfare of the United States.'"



Now the Tenth Amendment amended the body of the Constitution. The Tenth Amendment supersedes the body of the Constitution and even though Article 1, Section 8 says that Congress can care for the general welfare of the people, the Tenth Amendment that was subsequently passed said that any specific rights not given to the federal government belong to the states. The judges ignored precedent, ignored logic, ignored history and bowed to political expediency and the pain of the nation. They ruled that the phrase “general welfare” would allow the federal government to ignore the Tenth Amendment and give entitlement programs to those who are needy.

This violated biblical principle, and it has opened the floodgates for every kind of entitlement program from then on. It was a clear case of political opportunism versus principled thinking. Chief Justice Hughes summed it up concisely: “We are under a constitution, but the constitution is what the judges say it is.” He was publicly announcing that America had abandoned its commitment to principle, that the republic was becoming a democracy and was running headlong toward destruction.

Alex Tyler put it this way: “A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves money out of the public treasury. And from that moment on the voter always votes for the candidate promising the most benefits from the public treasury with the result that democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy, always to be followed by dictatorship.” And he is right. History is clear. The republican form of government works when it is supported by the principles of natural law. Democracy does not work because of human greed, laziness and an aversion to pain. Just like democracy will not work in your home with young children, so democracy will not work on a national level. If we as a nation do not quickly return to being a republic, we absolutely will destroy ourselves with debt and there is every reason to believe that a dictatorship will quickly follow.

Our founding fathers understood that a republic was only as strong as the integrity of the elected representatives. If the elected leader of a republic, whether a pastor or a president, would not rule according to biblical principles, the system would be subverted. Hence, during those 100 days when they were debating, they were not debating in a Constitutional Convention between a republic and a democracy. They were only seeking to put in place some checks and balances to control any leader who might stray from his allegiance to absolute principles. When everything was said and done, they had visualized the worst case scenarios. They had built their checks and balances, they shrugged and said maintaining morality was really the ultimate safeguard against tyranny.

George Washington said, “Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. True religion affords the government its surest support.” John Adams said, “It is religion and morality alone which can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand. The only foundation of a free constitution is pure virtue.” Samuel Adams stated, “Neither the wisest constitution nor the wisest laws will secure the liberty and happiness of the people whose manners are universally corrupt.” Noah Webster said, “The principles of all genuine liberty and of wise laws in administration are to be drawn from the Bible and sustained by its authority.”



Abraham Lincoln said, "The only assurance of our nation's safety is to lay our foundation on morality and religion." Philip Schaff, a contemporary historian, summed it up this way: "Republican institutions in the hands of a virtuous and God-fearing nation are the very best in the world, but in the hands of a corrupt and irreligious people they are the very worst and the most effective weapons of destruction." He was so right, and those weapons of destruction are at work now as the tyranny of the majority is expanding day by day and hour by hour.

What can we do then? Where does that leave us? What is our response and what about the relationship between church and state, understanding that we are no longer a republic, understanding that we are some mutant creature halfway between a republic and a democracy? First of all, we as individuals need to begin to walk in moral authority in this issue. First and foremost, we must lay down the issue of entitlement and understand and embrace the principle of responsibility because entitlement is just as pervasive in our churches as it is in our government. People come to church with their hands out, and leaders who do not have the backbone of John Robinson will sell themselves to their congregation because they are in competition with the church down the street.

Whether you are the leader of a church, a businessman or a layman, you must identify every shred and facet of entitlement spirit in your mind, in your organization and refuse to embrace that to any degree you can. I fully understand that it is nearly impossible at this juncture in our history for any citizen to fully opt out of the entitlement programs of the federal government. But even though we cannot hit the center of the bull's eye, that does not mean we shouldn't move toward a higher and higher level of personal responsibility rather than look to church or state to be responsible for us with entitlement programs.

Secondly, your moral authority will increase when you learn to use language rightly. There is a difference between a republic and a democracy and, although the word "democracy" is loosely used, although so many people think the two are interchangeable, I would encourage you to begin to use the language rightly, to educate those around you as to the difference and begin to hold your leaders accountable when they misuse the language.

Besides earning moral authority, we need to look at our position relative to government. In the models in Scripture with different forms of civil government, God, by and large, did not intend the religious institution to control the political institution. I do believe in separation of church and state in the sense that the clergy in the land are not supposed to rule over the civil government. However, the battle in America right now is on a much more fundamental level, and that is the question of whether the religious institutions have a right to **influence** civil government and on that point I will take my stand and never back down.

In the early history of the United States, after every election they had what was known as an election-day sermon. In each little community the election was done in the morning, ballots were counted, the officials knew who they were by noon and they came into the local church. They sat down in the front pew. The pastor stood in the pulpit and lectured them on how they should run the government and how they should bring biblical principles to bear on the situations facing the community.



The pastors had no control over the elected officials. They had no ability to compel the elected officials to do the things they told them to do. But God's design was that the clergy of the land would have extraordinary authority, moral authority, leadership authority over the people in the land, and no man could even hope to be elected without the support of the clergy because the clergy could and did influence the people.

In the United States this continued into the mid 1900s. There was a man in East Texas who was an overtly sinful man, and he ran for the United States Senate. The preachers in the land opposed him and asked the people, "Do you really want this iniquitous individual representing you in office?" They were walking in their righteous heritage, for it is the God-given, constitutionally-given right of the clergy, the spiritual people, the leaders in the spiritual community to speak into the civil process. Not to control it but to influence it through moral authority. The man was elected. His name was Lyndon Baines Johnson and when he got into the Senate he was so infuriated at the religious leaders who opposed him based on his lack of ethics that he managed to attach to a bill a prohibition causing non-profit corporations to be limited in their ability to speak into government affairs. That was a perversion of American heritage.

We are still today called upon to walk in moral authority on two levels. First of all, we should have followers. There has been such abuse of leadership that Americans are jaded with their spiritual leaders, distrust them and are offended by them. That only opens a wide-open door for men and women of integrity because Americans are desperately looking for leaders with a fathering spirit. That is why prior to this teaching I released a teaching on perspective on leadership. There is a leadership model that carries with it moral authority, and when we walk in that fathering spirit, we will have followers. As we have followers, it is up to us to educate them, to teach them on the issues of the biblicity of a republic and to appeal to them to look at each law not through the grid of whether it feels good, not through the grid of whether it will be convenient for them, but through the grid of how does it measure up with God's absolutes.

As the church begins to develop the leadership it is supposed to have, we will have followers. And as we have followers who listen to the clergy, we will change the shape of American government. The door is still open a little bit, but time is against us. You need to understand that in the American community, the segment that is best positioned to make the change is the African-American community because they still understand that their spiritual leaders are to define the tone of their civil engagement. That is why the civil leaders in the African-American community come out of the church. It was the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, the Rev. Andrew Young, the Rev. Benjamin Hooker - all of these men came out of the church.

So I speak to you, my African-American brothers and sisters, and say that God has placed in your hands greater authority today to change the future of the nation than He has in the white community that has so torn down the structure of leadership God intended. I say to you, "Arise, step into your destiny!" I say to the men and women that are leading African-American congregations, "Look at the truth, look at the biblical absolutes, repudiate entitlement and embrace God's law. As you teach your people, as you empower them, as you cause them to elect leaders



who will make laws based on principles, you will change the future of this nation that was formed as a republic and not as a democracy.”

If you continue to support democracy, you will destroy this nation. We were designed to be a republic ruled by leaders who implemented God’s absolutes. Nothing less than that will allow the survival of this nation. That is the truth that we need about church and state - spiritual leaders intentionally influencing their congregations to be intelligent voters and citizens, repudiating entitlement, embracing responsibility and electing the officials that will implement God’s absolutes.

Arthur Burk
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