



Christian Citizenship

"You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world" (Mt. 5:13-16). One way to be salty and let our light shine is by being good citizens on earth. Our vocation as citizens of both the secular kingdom and God's kingdom gives us the responsibility to proclaim God's Word and care for our neighbors. We are called to engage the "public square" with our message of Christ's mercy for all. Please pray for God's will to be done... in Jesus' name.

No Apologies for Protecting Children

Many Christians are conflicted when entering the voting booth. The reason is often because truths about human life, marriage and family, male and female, citizenship, economics, and education are set apart as being controversial. Katy Faust of Them Before Us reminds us, however, that "when your vote is motivated by protecting children, there is no reason to apologize." Faust says that "it's not only possible, but necessary, to view every national, cultural, and economic issue through the lens of child protection. Because they are the demographic that pays the greatest price when we get these policies wrong."

Faust explains that a "pro-child mindset" is the framework for all of politics. This means that adults must do hard things. The only alternative, says Faust, is "for children to do hard things on behalf of adults. And in nearly every sector, whether we are talking about national security, the national debt, energy policy, cultural issues, policing, life, and family, that's exactly what we have been doing for decades. Individual children and all of society have suffered as a result."

Here, offered by Faust, are the four reasons why putting kids first on your ballot is your strongest and most defensible position. **1. This is about justice, not judgment.** A just society protects its most vulnerable. But in nearly every issue, children are being asked to bear adult burdens. Whether it's the unborn child lost to abortion, the fatherless child manufactured by design, the healthy child's body altered to fit an ideology, the child trafficked due to porous borders, unsafe neighborhoods through defunded police, or a child's future already marked by crushing debt via unchecked spending, our culture is prioritizing adult desires, ideologies, and comfort at children's expense. A pro-child vote says no child should be sacrificed so adults can avoid or delay

responsibility. Adults are meant to do hard things, so children do not have to." **2. Pro-child politics are a seamless garment of voting priorities.** . . . Why don't you want to spend more money so schools can have an iPad for every student? *Because digital technology often hampers education rather than enhancing it.* Why do you support age verification requirements for online porn platforms? *Because porn functions like an addictive drug for developing minds.* Why do you want strong immigration policies? *Because mass unchecked immigration harms not only our nation's children, but the ones being smuggled across the border as well.* . . . The metric of defending the next generation is the proper filter for every referendum, state initiative, and political candidate. **3. This message crosses political lines.** This is not about parties. It is about priorities. Most people believe children should not be sterilized or exposed to graphic sex-ed. Most people believe kids deserve a mom and a dad. Most people believe schools should support parents, not undermine them. Most people want economic conditions that allows moms and dads to be present with their children, and to live in a city and nation that is secure. Pro-child policies are how a just society puts its shared values into action. They turn our common instinct to protect children into concrete steps that build the strong communities, states, and nation we all know we need. **4. You are done apologizing for common sense.** No child is born in the wrong body. No child should be manufactured or discarded in a fertility lab. No five-year-old should be taught to question their sex. No government should push mothers and fathers out of the picture. No nation should prefer the security of another country above [that of] its own children. . . . A child's dignity and humanity should not be erased in the name of ideology. People aren't parasites; we can steward our environmental resources well. . . . We should be judged by the content of our character, not the color of our skin. (Excerpted from "Pro-Child: The Only Politics That Make Sense by Them Before Us and Katy Faust, October 21, 2025.)

What can we do? As a family or congregation, ask: Which should be the primary lens for our vote? The (R) or (D), or the (C) (children)? Stop apologizing for common sense. When a Christian citizen is labeled "hateful" after defending a position rooted in biological

reality, moral truth, and human history, reframe the conversation according to “pro-child politics.” Turn the cultural “whatever is convenient for me” (the adult) to the generational hope of children. Learn how to defend the rights of children by visiting www.thembeforeus/churches-small-groups.com. Read Ps. 103:13; 127:3-4; Mal. 4:6; Mk 10:13-14.

Please pray to be a voice for children, in Jesus’ name.

The Early Christians and Cremation

In *Cremation, Embalmmment, or Neither?*, Rev. Dr. Alvin J. Schmidt explains that the Christian rejection of cremation influenced pagan Rome to abandon cremation. Earth burial became the only acceptable way to dispose of deceased humans, resulting in a major cultural change in the West. Christians rejected cremation, explains Schmidt, because “they desired burial similar to Jesus. Given that Jesus, right after His crucifixion, was buried or laid in Arimathea’s tomb, the early Christians also desired to be buried or entombed in God’s good earth. It was another way of their wanting to follow Jesus, not just while they were alive but also when their earthly sojourn had come to an end.” Schmidt adds that “as with Christ, all were buried without embalmmment.”

Christians “also had noteworthy examples of individuals in the New Testament who were buried in graves. For instance, Acts 8:2 states, ‘Devout men buried Stephen’ [the first Christian martyr]. . . . John the Baptist, whom Herod Antipas had decapitated, was buried by his disciples (Mt. 14:12). Not a single person whose death is noted in the New Testament was disposed of in any other manner than by inhumation.”

The “early Christians,” Schmidt reminds us, “strongly opposed infanticide, child abandonment, abortion, and suicide because they believed in the sanctity of the human body. In their minds, the sanctity of the human body did not come to an end when the person died. They saw the human being as the crown of God’s creation, for according to Gn. 1:27, man was made in the image of God, and although that image was tarnished by man’s fall into sin, they sincerely believed the words of the Psalmist. ‘You have made him [man] a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor’ (Ps. 8:5).”

The early Christians held to the biblical doctrine that the dead were “asleep” in their graves. This doctrine, writes Schmidt, “harked back to the prophet Daniel in the Old Testament. He declared that all the dead ‘who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake’ (Dan. 12:2,

emphasis added). Jesus also taught death as sleep.” Schmidt references Mk. 5:39, Jn. 11:11, 1 Cor. 15:20, and 1 Th. 4:14.

A return of the pagan practice of cremation presents a problem for Christians. Schmidt quotes from pro-cremationist author, Stephen Prothero, who stated, “Cremationists undermined the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead . . . not so much by refuting it as by threatening to render it obsolete.” In the minds of many today, said Prothero, “It is the soul that is immortal, their [cremation] rite seemed to say, not the body.” This should be sobering for the Church. “If cremation leads some Christians to no longer believe in the resurrection of the body but only in the survival of the soul,” writes Schmidt, “then these individuals have departed from historical, biblical Christianity. For to be a Christian is to believe in the physical resurrection of the body of which Christ’s bodily resurrection was the ‘first-fruits’ as St. Paul told the Corinthians. It was Christ’s resurrection from the dead that brought Christianity into existence through the faithful efforts of His apostles who had personally seen the resurrected body of their Lord a number of times (about twelve) over a period of forty days, from Easter to Pentecost. The post-resurrection appearances of Christ transformed His disciples from weak followers to fearless proclaimers of what they had seen and heard.” (Excerpted from *Cremation, Embalmmment, or Neither?* by Alvin J. Schmidt.)

What can we do? Read *Creation, Embalmmment, or Neither?*. Purchase a copy for your pastor. Memorize 1 Co. 15:16-17. Learn what St. Paul told the Christians in Corinth (1 Co.3:16 and 6:19-20). Consider the washing of the body in Acts 9:37. Now, consider that cremation is an act of violence. German surgeon Carl Ludwig Schleich said, “To destroy human cells by burning them is totally contrary to nature. Thus, we must decide to outlaw cremation, for it is the greatest error in civilization.” (p.96). Learn that “ashes to ashes” is not a biblical phrase. Read Gn. 3:19 and Ec. 3:20. Read “This Body in the Grave We Lay” (LSB 759, v. 2). Schmidt writes, “The words ashes to ashes are not in the Bible. The Bible never speaks about dead humans turning to ashes.” Let us pray never to put God to the test (Mt. 4:6-7). “Jesus rejected Satan’s temptation because He knew such an act was putting God to the test. To Jesus, it was not a question of what God **can** do but what He, as God’s obedient Son, must **not** do. The incident of Christ’s temptation is a powerful parallel to the argument one sometimes hears from some well-meaning Christian advocates of cremation” (p.106). Rejoice in 1 Co. 15:16-17! AMEN.

