



# 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.**

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## Christmas: The Culture of Freedom

In his article "The Manger & the Republic," Joe Wolverton II, J.D., writes that the world was transformed, "not by an emperor's decree, not by a conqueror's sword, and not by a politician's plan, but by a Child lying in a manger. That Child ordered the universe of men. He revealed the true hierarchy of power: first God, then man, then government. When man exalts government above God, freedom dies; when man exalts himself above both, chaos reigns."

Wolverton explains that our Founding Fathers "knew that no paper constitution could preserve a people who rejected its moral foundation. John Adams declared, 'Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious People. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.' If politics is downstream from culture, then culture itself is downstream from faith. The life of a nation flows from what its people worship. If they worship the living God, they will honor His image in one another. But if they worship themselves, they will soon trample one another in pursuit of power and pleasure."

Wolverton believes that the "first duty of patriots is not to win elections, but to revive the moral soil from which freedom springs. Christmas reminds us of this truth every year. It is the celebration of divine humility, and humility is the first virtue of a free people."

As a constitutional law scholar, Wolverton observes that "Rome did not fall because its Senate forgot how to legislate. It fell because its people forgot how to live. Bread and circuses replaced duty and sacrifice, and the citizens, once fierce defenders of liberty, begged for rulers who would feed and entertain them." Do we see that this same "contagion" has infected America today? "We have traded temperance for indulgence, reverence for entertainment, and faith in

God for self-worship. We call vice 'expression,' sin 'choice,' and selfishness 'freedom.' We drown in information but thirst for truth."

The crisis of our time is not primarily political, writes Wolverton. "It is spiritual. When men cease to fear God, they begin to fear one another. When they no longer look upward for moral authority, they look outward for control. The more corrupt the people, the more power the government must claim to manage them. It is a deadly cycle, and every step away from virtue brings us closer to tyranny."

We are standing on the ruins of the moral order, says Wolverton, and we call "the rubble progress. [Modern man] scoffs at faith while expecting the fruits of it—justice, peace, and dignity—to remain. . . . Schools that once began the day with prayer now begin it with propaganda. Art that once celebrated beauty now wallows in blasphemy. Families that once gathered around Scripture now gather around screens. Even Christmas itself, the holiest of feasts, has been repackaged as a festival of greed and distraction. The birth of Christ has been buried beneath a mountain of wrapping paper and noise. . . . The loss of sacred meaning always precedes the loss of freedom. . . . The Founders understood that moral virtue is not optional—it is oxygen for the soul of a republic. A corrupt people will inevitably vote for corrupt leaders, and those leaders will in turn create the corrupt systems that enslave them. Look around. We kill the unborn and call it compassion. We mutilate children and call it medicine. . . . We call ourselves free, but we are bound by invisible chains: addiction, envy, pornography, anger, fear, debt. We have traded our birthright for indulgence, and the price is servitude. The modern man brags of autonomy while being governed by appetite. He cannot rise early, hold his tongue, or keep his word, yet he declares himself sovereign." Benjamin Franklin saw the danger. He wrote, "Only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters."

Against this corruption stands Bethlehem, writes Wolverton, "radiant and defiant. The birth of Christ was the invasion of Heaven into history, the divine rebellion against every tyranny, visible and invisible. The King of Kings entered the world not in wealth but in weakness, proving forever that freedom and dignity

are not bestowed by rulers, but inherent in every soul created by God. He came to liberate mankind from the most ancient oppression—the bondage of sin and death. All political liberty flows from that first liberation. For a man who knows he is redeemed cannot be made a slave in conscience. St. Paul, chained in a Roman dungeon, could still write, ‘The word of God is not bound.’ Totalitarians tremble before that truth. The tyrant may seize property, silence speech, or imprison bodies, but he cannot imprison a soul that belongs to Christ. This is why every godless regime despises Christmas. It announces that Caesar is not lord and that man’s worth is not measured in obedience, but in being made in the image of God. The angels’ song—‘Peace on earth, goodwill toward men’—was not the promise of tranquility but the proclamation of a higher order: reconciliation between Creator and creature. From that peace within the soul springs the courage to resist oppression without. (Excerpted from “The Manger & the Republic: Why Freedom Dies When Faith Fades,” *The New American*, December 2025.)

**What can we do?** Two cities confront us: Babylon and Bethlehem. Wolverton encourages us to choose the road to Bethlehem. We do this by building Christendom at home because the first government is the family, the first constitution is the marriage covenant, and the first church is the household altar. We do this by teaching humility (the manger), hope (the star), vigilance (the shepherds), and courage (the Wise Men). We can build strong families where fathers lead in prayer and mothers make a home; sons learn to be protectors and daughters learn to build virtue. We can “defend schools that teach truth rather than ideology” and “encourage artists and writers who honor beauty rather than mock it.” As a family, study history to learn the consequences for every nation that has ever mocked God. Never censor truth to preserve lies. Repent. Then believe: “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Corinthians 3:17).

**Please pray** that our families be fortresses of faith, our churches bastions of truth, and our neighborhoods shining lights of hope... in Jesus’ name.

## Jesus in the Womb

At Christmas, we look upon Nativity scenes and artistic images of the Child, wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger. But Jesus’ earthly life did not begin there. It began earlier. Unseen by anyone... except God the Father. When the angel Gabriel came to Mary, he did not tell her that she would one day be a mother. He told her she would conceive. She already was a

mother! When Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, Scripture describes something breathtaking and unexpected: “When Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb” (Luke 1:41). John the unborn child recognized the Messiah before there was water turned into wine, healings, or the Cross.

Language matters. Andrew T. Walker writes: “The New Testament uses a single Greek term— *brephos*—to refer to both an unborn child and a newborn infant. Scripture does not treat life in the womb as a different category of humanity than life outside it. When Mary greets Elizabeth, ‘the *brephos* leaped in her womb’ (Luke 1:41), and when Christ is born, the shepherds are told they will find ‘the *brephos* wrapped in swaddling cloths’ (Luke 2:12). The same word covers both moments.”

Walker continues, “In God’s eyes, ontologically, the child hidden in the womb and the child held in a mother’s arms bear the same dignity. Biologically, the unborn child is alive and genetically distinct, yet simply in a less developed state than the born child. Theologically, both are His creation, made in His image. Ethically, human life is worthy of safeguarding because of these truths. Scripture and nature speak with one voice. The biblical witness does not fragment human worth by stage of development; it affirms one continuous, God-given life that is in a constant state of development.”

Christianity has always stood firmly against abortion, infanticide, and child abandonment. In his book, *How Christianity Changed the World*, Dr. Alvin Schmidt explains that “the low value of human life among the Romans was a shocking affront to the early Christians . . . [who] knew that God so honored human life that He Himself assumed it by becoming incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son (John 1:14).” (With appreciation to Them Before Us and their Substack article “The Unborn Gospel” Dec. 16, 2025.)

**What can we do?** Assure your children that God knows people before they are born. God said to Jeremiah, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you” (1:5). God calls and appoints people before they are born. St. Paul writes, “But when He who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by His grace. . . .” (Galatians 1:15). Help your children to see all pregnant women not as future mothers, but already mothers. Elizabeth said, “Why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” (Luke 1:43). We can behold mother and child before birth.

**Please pray** to protect human life... in Jesus’ name.

