



# 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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## **The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates**

In his book, *The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates*, Matthew J. Trehwella explains that lesser magistrates such as governors, mayors, and sheriffs are to interpose—or step in the gap—between a tyrant or bad law and the people. Interposition is a Christian doctrine first formalized by the pastors of Magdeburg, Germany. The word magistrate is an old term referring to any in civil government with authority, either elected or appointed.” For example, Daniel was a lesser magistrate or governor under King Darius.

Trehwella writes, “When Jesus said *Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s* (Matthew 22:21), He was making it clear that civil government has limitations. The State is not the ‘be all and end all.’ It cannot declare just anything to be its own . . . nor change the immutable laws of God.”

Trehwella writes, “When an unjust decree is made by a higher authority, the lesser magistrate must choose to either join the higher magistrate in his rebellion against God, or stand with God in opposition to the unjust or immoral decree.” He sounds the alarm, saying, “The interposition of the lesser magistrates is absolutely critical for the preservation of liberty. The hour for them to stand is upon us. We have a Federal government that . . . has caused much harm to the Christian institutions and traditions of our people. They are steeped in governmental mischief. They have foisted upon us endless regulations. . . .They appear clearly intent upon scrubbing the nation of any Christian influence.

“The Bible says ‘If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat,’ so this government creates a society

where you don’t have to work and you still get to eat. The Bible says marriage is between a man and a woman, so this government wants to make it between a man and man or a woman and a woman.” In the U.S., says Trehwella, the “Federal beast has . . . busied itself with a plethora of public policy changes to expand its homosexualization of America.” But, “Of all the tyranny and injustice perpetrated by our nation’s Federal government, abortion is the worst because it involves the actual killing of an innocent person.” God’s Word declares “You shall not murder.”

The Magdeburg Confession “is near prophetic.” The pastors stated, “Therefore, if now the leader or Caesar proceeds to such height of insanity only in that of natural knowledge which governs the society of civil life and uprightness, *that he abolishes the law concerning marriages and chastity, and himself sets up a contrary law of roving unclean lusts . . .* doubtless, no clear-thinking person would have any hesitation about the divine right and commandment that such a leader or monarch ought to be curbed by everyone in his most wicked attempt, even by the lowest of the lowest magistrates with whatever power they may have.” (Excerpted from *The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates*.)

**What can we do?** Recognize that God has set in place four governments: self-government, family government, church government, and civil government, each with its own role, function, and jurisdiction. Think of how easily chaos or tyranny ensues when one invades the jurisdiction of the other. Do not believe that Romans 13 tells us we must give complete obedience to civil government. Think of the Jewish midwives who did not obey Pharaoh when commanded to kill the baby boys. Think of Daniel, himself a lesser magistrate, who openly prayed and thus defied King Darius. Think of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego, St. Paul who avoided arrest by Romans by jumping out a window, and Peter and the disciples in Acts 5 who would not stop preaching Jesus Christ. Put into practice the historical way of the church: When the State commands that which God forbids or forbids that which God commands, men have a duty to

obey God rather than man. Read *The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates*, and also *Unlimited Submission* and *Bringing Back the Black Robed Regiment* by Dan Fisher.

**Please pray** to resist the tyranny of man... in Jesus name.

### **The Family: Cornerstone of Society**

Theodore Roosevelt was convinced that the family was the fundamental cornerstone of society. Anything that eroded the family's strength or vitality, anything that sought to undermine its authority or integrity, and anything that subverted its holy purpose or virtue was a dastardly threat to everything that he held to be good and right and true.

In his 1905 State of the Union address he highlighted his grave concern for America's deteriorating moral climate in general and the family's diminished cultural relevance . . . [he described] a rather simple agenda for protecting the family against the encroachment of those men and women he called "the foes of our own household." He said, "There are those who believe that a new modernity demands a new morality. What they fail to consider is the harsh reality that there is no such thing as a new morality. There is only one morality. All else is immorality. There is only true Christian ethics over against which stands the whole of paganism. If we are to fulfill our great destiny as a people, then we must return to the old morality, the sole morality."

His analysis was utterly scathing: "All these blatant sham reformers, in the name of a new morality, preach the old, old vice and self-indulgence which rotted out first the moral fiber and then even the external greatness of Greece and Rome."

In a very real sense, Roosevelt was the original family values social conservative.

It is not surprising then, that when a new wave of abortion advocates made their way onto the American scene and into the public arena, Roosevelt was one of their chief opponents—in fact, apart from the hierarchy of the Catholic church, he was one of their only opponents.

He railed against their "frightful and fundamental immorality," calling their cause a submission "to coldness, to selfishness, to love of ease, to shrinking from risk, and to an utter and pitiful failure in sense of perspective." He argued: "Artificially keeping families small inevitably involves prenatal infanticide and abortion—with all its pandering to self-indulgence, to shirking of duties, and its enervation of character."

But he did not simply hurl invectives their way—he acted. He was instrumental in mobilizing Republicans, Democrats, and Progressives against the awful specter of commercial child-killing building a solid coalition that was to resist the siren's call of abortion for another three-quarters of a century. As he said: "The foes of our own household are our worst enemies; and we can oppose them, not only by exposing them and denouncing them, but by constructive work . . . by service; not by rhetoric . . . ."

He went on to assert, "The most dangerous form of sentimental debauch is to give expression to good wishes on behalf of virtue while you do nothing about it. Justice is not merely words. It is to be translated into living acts."

The infamous Margaret Sanger, who founded the vast Planned Parenthood abortion network, rightly saw Roosevelt as "a holdover from the old Christian religion," and thus a serious obstacle to her revolutionary program that called for "no gods and no masters." She railed against him as "a disgraceful blight upon any modern scientific nation's intent to advance."

For a leader who had staked his reputation and risked his career for the sake of traditional family values, that was high praise indeed. For no commendation can be greater than the condemnation of one's fiercest sworn enemies. (Excerpted from *The Courage and Character of Theodore Roosevelt: A Hero Among Leaders* by George Grant.)

**What can we do?** Fear and love God in such a way that we are despised by the world for our "living acts" that preserve marriage and family.

**Please pray** to resist the enemy of fathers, mothers, and children... in Jesus' name.

