

An Election Season Challenge

By adminlen On October 11, 2012 · Add Comment

This coming November, Americans will once again have the opportunity to freely vote for whom they will at the ballot box, and incumbents and newly elected officials alike will once again assume what they perceive to be their duties under the law, or in some case, what they think they can get away with to serve their own interests. Citizens will either complain or rejoice, depending upon the outcome of the election, and then most of them will go back to living out their daily lives without giving much thought to their ongoing duties as citizens.

The reality is, the duties that I refer to go far beyond just voting, funding decisions, representation, foreign and domestic policy making, and so on. Even more vital is that the ethical standards for the exercise of these duties have not been left for man to figure out on his own. The Founders of our nation acknowledged this fact time and again in their writings and speeches, pointing to the truth that this nation was founded on Christian principles for Christian people, and that if and when those principles were abandoned – primarily the principle that all people and governments are accountable to their Creator – tyranny would be the result. In those days, there was no separation of church and state nonsense as it is defined today. The only separation was that the state couldn't dictate one's denominational affiliation to anyone. But everyone accepted without question the right of the Christian church to actively speak to the culture, and that culture had an obligation to listen. And so for generations, beginning prior to the Revolutionary War and continuing well afterwards, the Election Day sermon tradition was carried out in villages and cities all through the colonies, especially in New England.

Inhabitants of the colonies would be incredulous at the current reticence of the Church to speak to the culture and alarmed at our culture's rejection of the tempering role of Christianity upon society. Not only did pastors in each town preach every Sunday, but in keeping with the Calvinist conviction that all human activity falls under the jurisdiction of God's Word, sermons were preached at significant public events such as anniversaries, thanksgiving days, fast days, and election days. Politicians often walked in procession from their offices and halls to the church, to sit and listen diligently (often for hours at a time) to sermons that urged them to the faithful discharge of their duties before the sovereign God of the Bible who placed them in their positions. Citizens were likewise called upon to resist tyranny in all its forms, thus reminding those politicians that their power was derived and not absolute. Those sermons were also printed in newspapers for all to read, and often distributed in pamphlet form as well. In all civic actions, citizens and rulers were charged to promote virtue, suppress vice, and support people of "proven wisdom, integrity, justice, and holiness." So effective was the preaching of the Calvinist Presbyterians and Congregationalist preachers in New England to stir Americans to action against the abuses of the English monarchy that the remark was made on the floor of Parliament that "Cousin America has run away with a Presbyterian parson."

In short, the Church did not allow the naysayers of that time (and they were there) to relegate it to irrelevancy just because they didn't like the demands of the gospel upon society. They preached to that society, and preached without mincing terms. In an effort to assert the rights of King Jesus here in our own time and place, PBPC will host an Election Seasons Challenge at the church on November 9, 2012, from 7-9 P.M. We have sent personal invitations to elected and appointed officials, candidates and incumbents, local through national, and challenged them to come and hear what God has to say to them about governing. And, we're getting invitations out to the citizenry at large as well, because God's Word has things to say to them about their obligations as citizens. I've invited a few other pastors in our area to participate with me, and we'll record the sermons so that anyone who isn't able to come (or officials who just decide not to do so) will still be able to get the message.

If you're in the area, we hope you'll come and support this effort. It's non-partisan, and not a debate. We'll have a time for refreshment and visiting after the messages are brought. We're holding this challenge right at the church, 6530 Washington Street in Bonners Ferry. If you want to help out in some way, or just get more information, give us a call at 208-267-3327. Our prayer is that this will be a small step in the right direction of calling our country back to submission to God and His law as the ground for all good society. Please pray with us to that end.