

Glocal Conversations Vol 1(1) November 2013 <http://gc.uofn.edu>

Politics, Evangelism, and the Global Impact of Pursuing Domestic Tranquility

MATTHEW L. MIHELIC, J.D.

Abstract

When debating social issues it is often said in Christian circles, that “Jesus was not political.” As those called to live as “citizens of heaven,” Christians frequently question the significance of earthly governments. Churches have historically stepped on both sides of what is thought to be this fine line by choosing to either focus on influencing political issues or to stay indifferent and disengaged. This article argues that good government is the will of God, for the sake of the preaching of the Gospel. The Church has often grown in the face of persecution, but even in the midst of persecution the Apostle Paul instructed believers to pray for good government. The article looks at the original Greek of the Apostle Paul's words in I Tim 2:1-4, as well as using examples from history and across the global spectrum to review the relationship between Church and State as it relates to the advance of the Great Commission.

Bio

Matt Mihelic, J.D

Matt Mihelic is the co-founder of The Rose Initiative, a movement to mobilize the millennial generation to restore a heartbeat culture of life by reviving the spiritual of the Church in America. He is a graduate of the Liberty University School of Law and serves as an adjunct faculty member of the Helms School of Government at Liberty University. As an undergrad, Matt served as the president of the student body at Liberty University where he studied in Government and Religion. He has helped author human rights legislation for the U.S. House of Representatives and his passion for global evangelism has led him to take the gospel to five continents around the world.

Politics, Evangelism, and the Global Impact of Pursuing Domestic Tranquility

Popular Opinion

When debating social issues it is often said in Christian circles, that “Jesus was not political.” As those called to live as “citizens of heaven,” Christians frequently question the significance of earthly governments. Churches have historically stepped on both sides of what is thought to be this fine line by choosing to either focus on influencing political issues or to stay indifferent and disengaged. The question frequently fought over is whether the primary mission of the Church requires Christians to engage their governments to fix social problems or whether Christian involvement in civil government is itself an impediment to the Great Commission.

Even among those who justify political action with the Bible, opinions differ sharply as to what policy ends Christians should direct change. Liberal-leaning activists, who often identify with social gospel campaigns, hold that the primary Christian call is the pursuit of favorable conditions (usually economic) for all in society, yet there are also those who hold that the mission of the church ends merely with maintaining a level of morality in society’s laws.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, Christians who denounce any political influence of the church see politics as a distraction from the main activity of the Great Commission. This view generally holds that Christians should refrain from engaging governments altogether and thereby focus almost exclusively on personal evangelism. Though this position correctly sees the eternal importance of evangelism as the mission of the Church, it also holds that whenever the Church takes a stance that emphasizes Christian activism in government, it always diverts energy and resources away from evangelism and that Christian influence of earthly governments has no eternal value.¹

Both Government and the Gospel

However, governments often do have eternal consequences related to the spread of the gospel and engaging governments for the sake of the Great Commission can be a godly and worthwhile pursuit. Influencing one’s government for good as a means of furthering the Great Commission is not an “either/or” dilemma, but a “both/and” design. The reason for this is not merely because God intends for all nations to know true justice, but because He desires all people to truly know Him.

Though the Church is tasked with making disciples, God has created the institution of civil government, in part, as a means of establishing ideal social conditions for the success of the Christian mission. Thus, the call of Christians to be sojourners in the world includes the pursuit of good government as a means of helping to accomplish the Great Commission.

¹ MacArthur, John, *Why Government Can’t Save You: An Alternative to Political Activism* 14-15 (2000).

Good government and peaceful social conditions are not necessary for the gospel to flourish in peoples' lives and for the Great Commission to succeed. Historically, belief in Jesus Christ has grown in areas where religious freedom has been suppressed. However, such cases do not nullify the principle that good government is ideal; rather, they prove the incredible power of the gospel and the complete sovereignty of God. The record of human experience and the annals of Church history contain story after story of missionary success within nations where the laws protect individuals' right to believe the gospel and to communicate it. There are also countless stories that tell how the spread of the gospel has been stifled in nations with despotic governments.

First Things First

In 1 Timothy 2:1-4, the Apostle Paul writes the following to the young minister, Timothy:

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.²

Paul wrote this passage as an admonition for Christians to pray for others, yet it also appears to communicate two principles that this paper rests upon, that peaceful living brought about by civil rulers is a “good and pleasing” thing to God and that He desires for “all people to be saved.”

After leaving Ephesus, Paul had specifically instructed Timothy to deal with false teachers in the church (1:3). The letter is the result of Paul's desire to send further instructions. Chapter 2 marks the beginning of the letter's practical instructions for authentic gospel living.³

Paul urges those under Timothy's care to δεήσεις προσευχὰς ἐντεύξεις εὐχαριστίας for all people. The words δεήσεις, προσευχὰς, and ἐντεύξεις are each derived from Greek roots that denote “prayer” or “petition.” The word εὐχαριστίας finds its root in εὐχαριστέω which is “to thank” or “be grateful.” It is most logically deduced that Paul's compound use of words to give the single charge to “pray” was intended to convey his point with great emphasis. Paul's instruction for believers to pray and give thanks is not unusual in an epistle. However, the object of this charge is somewhat unique.

Paul instructs Timothy to lead others in praying “for all people.” Then he narrows the recipients of prayer to βασιλέων καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ ὄντων, literally, “kings

² 1 Timothy 2:1-4 (English Standard Version).

³ Dibelius, Martin and Conzelmann, Hans. “A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles,” Fortress Press 35 (1972).
Van Neste, Ray. “Introduction to 1 Timothy,” ESV Study Bible, English Standard Version (2007).

and all the ones being in authority.” Thus, Paul qualifies the recipients of the prayers to those who are in high governing positions.

The following clauses reveal the reason for the prayers: ὑπὲρ βασιλέων καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ ὄντων, ἵνα ἡρεμον καὶ ἡσύχιον βίον διάγωμεν ἐν πάσῃ εὐσεβείᾳ καὶ σεμνότητι, translated, “that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.” “Peaceful” here is derived from the word ἡρεμος, which means “quiet” or “peaceful.” The English Standard Version accurately translates the word ἡσύχιον to be “quiet.” The same word is used by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 where he “urges” the Thessalonian church to “aspire to live *quietly*, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one.”⁴

Paul communicates both in the 1 Timothy and the 1 Thessalonians passages that a “quiet” life is a life of tranquility. In the 1 Thessalonians passage, Paul’s admonition to live quietly is preceded by a command to “love one another,” and followed by “and to mind your own affairs” as though he instructs the Thessalonians to live at peace with others, *socially*. The same intention for social tranquility should probably be understood in the 1 Timothy passage. However, an interesting connection between praying for civil leaders and the peace that Paul desires can be seen here. He uses the conjunction ἵνα (translated “that” or “in order that”) to make the causal connection between praying for “all who are in high positions, *that* we may lead a peaceful and quiet life.”

Paul then writes in verse 3, τοῦτο καλὸν καὶ ἀπόδεκτον ἐνώπιον τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ, which is translated: “This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior...” Paul seems to work from a principle that praying for civil authorities will bring about the quiet and peaceful life which pleases God. This follows Paul’s understanding in Romans 13:1-4 where he tells the Roman believers that the governing authority “is God’s servant for your good.” Here it is seen that because a peaceful societal life pleases God that his “servant,” the civil authority, exists to bring about such conditions. Under this understanding, Paul’s instruction to Timothy is to pray for these authorities so that that they will be successful in carrying out their God-given role of ensuring the peace and quietness for the sake of believers and all people.

After he seems to rely on the principle that governing authorities exist to ensure the societal peace that God is pleased with, Paul then presents a remarkable theological truth: ὃς πάντας ἀνθρώπους θέλει σωθῆναι καὶ εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας ἐλθεῖν. It is translated: “who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Paul’s inclusion of this phrase so closely to his description of God’s pleasure in peaceful social situations seems to indicate his understanding that the two desires of God are somehow related. Paul uses the latter phrase stating God’s desire that all be saved to describe the same God who finds it pleasing that Christians live at peace. Thus, the reasons for Paul’s admonition for Timothy to lead others in praying for governing authorities appears to be fourfold: 1. As a means of seeing peace and order in believers’

⁴ 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 (English Standard Version).

lives, 2. As a means of honoring civil leaders, 3. As a means of seeking the salvation of others, and 4. As a means of bringing about favorable social conditions for the Christian life and mission of the Church.

A Unique Perspective, to Say the Least

It is important to note that Paul wrote the Epistle to Timothy in a political context that was not particularly friendly to religious liberty. In the first century, the Romans allowed for freedom of religion to the extent that it did not disrupt the social order of the Empire.

His personal experiences would not have themselves given Paul motivation for supporting governing authorities. He bore scars on his back from such governments, he had spent years of his life being jailed at the direction of corrupt Roman rulers, and he would eventually be executed by the order of Nero. However, in 1 Timothy Paul sees God's hand in establishing civil authorities, and he sees their critical role in establishing the conditions under which the Church may thrive, and the gospel flourish.

The Nations

Currently, of the 16,601 known people groups in the world, 7,114 are unreached.⁵ Of these unreached people groups, 6,078 (85%) are in "10/40 Window" countries. According to the U.S. Center for World Missions,

The 10/40 Window is the rectangular area of North Africa, the Middle East and Asia approximately between 10 degrees north and 40 degrees north latitude. The 10/40 Window is often called The Resistant Belt and includes the majority of the worlds Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists.⁶

The task of world evangelism is accomplished least in places that are often ideologically opposed to the gospel. They are frequently in regions with much social turmoil and where religious diversity is commonly suppressed. According to the organization, Gospel for Asia, over the last ten years the persecution of Christians in the 10/40 Window has increased by 400 percent.⁷ Christians in the 10/40 Window have less government protection for their beliefs than throughout the rest of the world. The general trend is that a majority of unreached nations are in areas where governments fail to ensure peaceful social conditions for the communication of the gospel.

Understanding Persecution

⁵ Joshua Project. What is a People Group? (Dec. 28, 2012) <http://www.joshuaproject.net/assets/articles/what-is-a-people-group.pdf>.

⁶ Joshua Project. What is the 10/40 Window? (accessed Dec. 28, 2012) <http://www.joshuaproject.net/10-40-window.php>.

⁷ Pepinster, Catherine. Christianophobia: Christianity Under Attack, by Rupert Shortt. The Independent. (Dec. 26, 2012) <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/christianophobia-a-faith-under-attack-by-rupert-shortt-8274142.html>.

Countless stories can be told of God's power at work in the persecuted Church worldwide. Indeed, much of the story of the early church in Acts records accounts of incredible ministry success amidst considerable persecution. On occasion, one may hear it said that nominal Christianity in the West needs "some real persecution" in order to awaken it from a lukewarm complacency.

In one sense, this is true. Persecution throughout the history of the Church has inspired believers to greater boldness in faithful living and the proclamation of the gospel. It has redirected believers to eternal priorities while also distinguishing who is a true believer from who is not. But it is inconsistent to, on one hand, see that God's purpose for government is to ensure domestic tranquility and, on the other hand, believe that God's desire for evangelism is that it will always be sought along with persecution. The better understanding is that the nations which need evangelistic witnesses most are often where persecution will be the greatest. God wills that the gospel be preached amidst persecution, yet He also wills that good governments prohibit such persecution whenever possible.

The call of the Church is to preach the gospel in all corners of the earth despite oppressive governments, no matter the degree of persecution. However, nowhere in the biblical text is persecution itself commanded to be sought. Instead, the *godly living* that will bring about persecution is. Believers are called to pursue the cause of Christ. Persecution is guaranteed to come,⁸ but if God also wills that governments be just, and if such governments generally facilitate great peace in which the gospel flourishes, then should Christians not seek such conditions under which more people are able to hear and respond to the gospel?

Not a Theocracy

Never should a Christian's pursuit of good government result in a theocracy. Theocratic governments mandate that their populations conform to and practice a state-established religion. When tyrants seek to use religion to acquire power and control populations the cause of evangelism is generally harmed, rather than helped. The Christian faith is a movement of the heart, a domain over which no earthly government may claim jurisdiction. Freedom of conscience, not government control, allows an individual to hear the gospel and follow Jesus Christ.

In 1784, James Madison found himself in a fiery battle over religious liberties in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The General Assembly was debating a bill that would collect tax money for all Christian churches in the name of "public morality." James Madison, along with Christian clergy from minority denominations, recognized the bill as an attempt to use taxpayer money to prop up the Episcopalian church. At the behest of his colleagues, he penned his now-famous work, *Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments*.⁹

⁸ John 15:20.

⁹ Loconte, Joseph. James Madison and Religious Liberty. The Heritage Foundation. (Dec. 28, 2012) <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2001/03/james-madison-and-religious-liberty>.

Madison, a strong Christian himself, held that Christianity was in no need of specific government support, and he spared no expense in saying why:

Because the establishment proposed by the Bill is not requisite for the support of the Christian Religion. To say that it is, is a contradiction to the Christian Religion itself, for every page of it disavows a dependence on the powers of this world: it is a contradiction to fact; *for it is known that this Religion both existed and flourished, not only without the support of human laws, but in spite of every opposition from them*, and not only during the period of miraculous aid, but long after it had been left to its own evidence and the ordinary care of Providence. Nay, it is a contradiction in terms; for a Religion not invented by human policy, must have pre-existed and been supported, before it was established by human policy.¹⁰

Madison goes on to say that such a law will weaken the faith of those who currently believe the gospel. In his view, any religion that needed to be propped up by the government would eventually lose the trust of its followers:

It is moreover to weaken in those who profess this Religion a pious confidence in its innate excellence and the patronage of its Author; and to foster in those who still reject it, a suspicion that its friends are too conscious of its fallacies to trust it to its own merits.¹¹

Madison further expounds why such a bill would limit the ability of the church in Virginia to effectively carry out the Great Commission:

Because the policy of the Bill is adverse to the diffusion of the light of Christianity. The first wish of those who enjoy this precious gift ought to be that it may be imparted to the whole race of mankind. Compare the number of those who have as yet received it with the number still remaining under the dominion of false Religions; and how small is the former! Does the policy of the Bill tend to lessen the disproportion? No; it at once discourages those who are strangers to the light of revelation from coming into the Region of it; and countenances by example the nations who continue in darkness, in shutting out those who might convey it to them. Instead of Levelling as far as possible, every obstacle to the victorious progress of Truth, the Bill with an ignoble and unchristian timidity would circumscribe it with a wall of defence against the encroachments of error.¹²

Madison recognized that Christianity is a movement of the individual's heart and mind. God's redemption compels truth and love. No government is capable of producing these in the life of a person. To him, authentic Christianity was the response to God with one's entire self, which required that man's mind be left free from coercion. Thus, Madison's goal as a Christian lawmaker was to level every obstacle to "the victorious progress of

¹⁰ James Madison, Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments (1785).

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

the Truth,” including laws which specifically establish Christianity. For that victory to be realized, Christians should pursue a society that ensures freedom of conscience.

Only four decades after the American founders enshrined religious liberty in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, a young Frenchman named Alexis de Tocqueville arrived in the United States in 1835. He came to study democracy in order to import his findings back to France. French Rationalist thinkers of the era had assumed that popular self-government by democracy could not be sustained where religion, Christianity in particular, flourished. What de Tocqueville discovered, however, was quite the opposite.

Hugh Heclo records, “[I]n supposedly backward America, where one could observe the ‘natural quiet growth of society,’ Tocqueville saw that the forces of religious faith and democratic liberty could exist in harmony and mutual support.”¹³ He attributed the success of democracy to the success of religion, Christianity in particular. And he saw the beneficial relationship of a free society to a flourishing church as mutual. He gave much of the credit to the Puritans for setting into motion what he called America’s “marvelous combination...the spirit of religion and the freedom of religion.”¹⁴

Today, American churches send large numbers of Christian missionaries overseas. Though morality in the U.S. has seen a steep decline, religious liberty still protects the teaching of the gospel and disciples are being made nation-wide. As de Tocqueville observed, the blessings of the Christian Church in America have thus far come with the blessings of predominantly peaceful social conditions.

Good Laws in Church History

The principle which sees good government’s linkage to the Great Commission was a distinguishing mark of the Protestant Reformation’s success. During the critical early years of the Reformation, Martin Luther was aided by the protection provided by German princes to carry out the work of “reforming” the doctrine of the Protestant Church. In fact, he translated the first Bible in the German language from literally inside the protection of a castle belonging to a German prince. As the introduction of God’s Word to the German people, this Bible fueled the Reformation with incalculable fervor.¹⁵

John Calvin also knew the benefits of civil governments that establish peaceful conditions. Previously trained as a lawyer in France, Calvin was forced to flee his home country due to the violent persecution of Catholic authorities against French reformers. It was in Geneva that he finally found political sanctuary and established his ministry as a pastor and theologian until his death in 1564. From there, his weekly lessons spread across Europe, making Geneva the center of the Reformation.

¹³ Hugh Heclo, *Christianity and American Democracy* 8 (2003).

¹⁴ *Id.* at 11.

¹⁵ Cunningham, Loren, *The Book That Transforms Nations: The Power of the Bible to Change Any Country* 93 (2007).

Calvin taught that part of the God-ordained role of civil rulers is to ensure domestic tranquility: “We say, therefore, that they [the governing authorities] are the ordained guardians and vindicators of public innocence, modesty, honour, and tranquility, so that it should be their only study to provide for the common peace and safety.”¹⁶ Calvin interpreted 1 Timothy 2:1-4 to mean that Paul, indeed, saw the civil leaders as those who are entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the Church: “In these words, he recommends the condition of the Church to their [the governing authorities] *protection and guardianship*.”¹⁷

Today, the work of the reformers echoes around the world. Protestant doctrines such as the “priesthood of believers” undermined the Catholic practice which allowed only official clergy to interpret Scripture. Individuals then understood God’s desire to relate directly to them in a personal, loving relationship and that this relationship could be established freely through faith in Jesus.¹⁸ Those who led the return to these biblical doctrines sought the protection of rulers who created the peaceful conditions that allowed the work of the reformation to continue with little hindrance.

India

When William Carey arrived in India as a missionary in 1793, he knew that his work would be criminal. The British East India Company had been granted a royal monopoly on the “East Indies” and, due to a desire to control the population, had banned all Christian missionary work in the vastly Hindu nation.¹⁹

William Wilberforce, the famous British Parliamentarian, helped Carey launch a movement to see the law changed. The two men were vigorous in pursuing the cause and eventually both houses of the British Parliament voted to open the legal doors for the gospel into India.²⁰

Today, the church in India is one of the fastest growing in the world. There are an estimated sixty million professing Christians in India who worship in 400,000 churches and house churches. Indian churches send tens of thousands of missionaries beyond their borders.²¹ William Carey and his colleagues ignited a movement of missionaries in India who were able to preach legally. Wilberforce, who is best known for his victory in England’s abolition of its slave trade, declared the pursuit of Christianity’s legal

¹⁶ Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion, Volume 2* 659 (2002).

¹⁷ Id. at 655

¹⁸ Cunningham, Loren, *The Book That Transforms Nations: The Power of the Bible to Change Any Country* 89 (2007).

¹⁹ George Smith, *The Life of William Carey* 348 (1885).

Cunningham, Loren, *The Book That Transforms Nations: The Power of the Bible to Change Any Country* 52 (2007).

²⁰ Id. at 54.

Glen Sunshine, *William Carey (1761-1834)* Christian Worldview Journal (Dec.30, 2012)

<http://www.colsoncenter.org/the-center/columns/indepth/17309-william-carey-1761-1834>.

²¹ Cunningham, Loren, *The Book That Transforms Nations: The Power of the Bible to Change Any Country* 55 (2007).

protection in British India to be for him “that greatest of all causes, for I really place it before the abolition, in which, blessed by God, we gain the victory.”²²

Korea

The border of North and South Korea marks the starkest contrast of political freedom in the world today. South Korea stands as a vivid display of a nation that has been transformed by the gospel amid peaceful social conditions. The story north of the 38th Parallel is quite different.

Korea’s history during the early half of the 20th century is predominantly one of great Christian persecution.²³ At the beginning of the century, Korean Christians numbered only one-half of one percent of the population and there were laws that specifically prohibited teaching the Bible.²⁴ Following World War II Kim Il Sung became the dictator of North Korea and killed thousands of Christian believers. When he launched a war in 1950 to unite the nation under Communism an estimated 5 million people were killed, injured, or went missing- more than half of them civilians.²⁵

Though North Korea remained under communistic oppression, South Korea began anew with a national government that established religious liberty for the population as well as a host of other freedoms. Now, only sixty years later, it is the home of ten of the eleven largest churches in the world, including the largest Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist churches.²⁶ Modern reports indicate that approximately thirty percent of the general population identifies themselves as Christian.²⁷ At approximately twelve thousand missionaries, South Korea sends out the second greatest number of missionaries overseas, following only the U.S.²⁸

North Korea, in contrast, holds one of the worst human rights records on the planet. Its people face chronic food shortages and the country remains the world’s only dictatorship where the ruler is worshiped as deity.²⁹ Most North Koreans have never met a Christian and what they know of Christianity is informed by the propaganda of the

²² George Smith, *The Life of William Carey* 348 (1885).

²³ Synan, H. Vinson, *The Yoido Full Gospel Church*. Pentecostal-Charismatic Theological Inquiry International Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research (Dec. 30, 2012) <http://www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj2/synan.html>.

²⁴ Cunningham, Loren, *The Book That Transforms Nations: The Power of the Bible to Change Any Country* 74 (2007).

²⁵ Lear, Steven, *Their god is Dead in North Korea*, Voice of the Martyrs (September 4, 2013, 4:30 PM), http://www.persecution.com/public/media.aspx?mediapage_ID=NDk4.

Cunningham, Loren, *The Book That Transforms Nations: The Power of the Bible to Change Any Country* 74 (2007).

²⁶ Id. at 78.

²⁷ Luis Lugo & Brian Grim, *Presidential Election in South Korea Highlights Influence of Christian Community*, Pew Research Center (July 13, 2013, 8:04 PM), <http://www.pewforum.org/Politics-and-Elections/Presidential-Election-in-South-Korea-Highlights-Influence-of-Christian-Community.aspx>.

²⁸ Norimitsu Onishi, *Korean Missionaries Carry the Word to Hard Places*. Seoul Times. (Dec. 30, 2012) www.theseoultimes.com/ST/db/read.php?idx=1193.

²⁹ Christian Solidarity Worldwide, *North Korea* (Dec. 30, 2012) http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/country.asp?s=gi&urn=North_Korea.

Communist government. The people of North Korea are taught that Christians are insane and, therefore, often refer to them only as “crazy people.” According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), persecution of Christians in North Korea is among the worst in the world. Those who profess faith in Jesus are considered public enemies, facing labor imprisonment as well as execution.³⁰

Accounts of an increased gospel presence surface from the underground church in North Korea, yet it remains that the vast majority of Koreans above the 38th Parallel have no exposure to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The glaring difference between it and South Korea is the political freedoms that South Korea has enjoyed for six decades. Christians worldwide should heed Paul’s charge to pray for the governing authorities in North Korea. It remains to be seen what can be done there by Him who desires all men to be saved and come to know the truth.

All Authority

To the question, “Is Jesus political?” the answer is ultimately, yes. Governments often do, in fact, have eternal consequences related to the spread of the gospel. The pursuit of good laws and the Great Commission is thus neither an “either/or” dilemma but, indeed, a “both/and” design. As such, the Christian call to be sojourners in the world entails the pursuit of righteous government as a means of promoting the Great Commission by bringing about the domestic tranquility within which the gospel flourishes.

Near the time of His crucifixion, Jesus’ disciples asked Him when the “close of the age” would occur. After describing great persecutions that believers will face, He says, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end shall come.”³¹

Jesus declares that the task of world evangelism set forth in the Great Commission will, indeed, be accomplished. In considering the impact of governing authorities over the success of the gospel in certain nations, it should be acknowledged that the Prince of Peace rules the universe. His final coming will establish eternal “peace” and “quietness” because the government rests on His shoulders. He alone holds the ultimate authority in India, North Korea, and every corner of the earth. Christians have been given a charge in this life to join the winning side and to engage governments, in their own way, to do the same. The fulfillment of His Great Commission will never waiver, nor shall it fail.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Matthew 24:14 (English Standard Version).

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