

**JESUS ~~WAS~~^{IS}
INVOLVED IN POLITICS!
WHY AREN'T YOU?
WHY ISN'T YOUR
CHURCH?**

*THE ONLY WAY TO A
HAPPIER, HEALTHIER, SAFER,
AND
MUTUALLY PROSPEROUS AMERICA*

NEIL MAMMEN

RATIONAL FREE PRESS

Preview Version

(due to the deletion of pages, contents page numbers will be incorrect).

This book can be purchased at:

<https://www.createspace.com/3368762>

or at Amazon.com

Jesus Is Involved in Politics! Why Aren't You? Why Isn't your Church?

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Review Edition 4

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New objections and responses to these objections will be updated regularly and posted at: www.JesusIsInvolvedInPolitics.com/Objections.htm

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Published in the United States by

Rational Free Press

8321 Willow Glen PO

San Jose, CA 95155-8321

www.RationalFreePress.com

Other Books by the same author:

Who is Agent X: Proving Science and Logic Show it's More Rational to Think God Exists. 2009, Rational Free Press.

Available at www.NoBlindFaith.com

Dedicated to my Daughters

Caroline Lois

**from your Daddy's arms to our Father's arms
when I see you next, you will no longer be a baby
but you will always be *my* little girl
You reminded me of my future and why I exist
and
that this is *not* our final destiny**

and to

**Mary-Katherine
who daily reminds me
why despite my final home
I cannot give up the fight for a Godly America *today!***

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The guns are silent in this war but frontiers fall while those who should be warriors prefer neutrality.

Not too long ago two friends of mine were talking to a Cuban refugee. He was a businessman who had escaped from Castro. In the midst of his tale of horrible experiences, one of my friends turned to the other and said, "We don't know how lucky we are."

The Cuban stopped and said, "How lucky you are? [At least] I had some place to escape to."

And in that sentence, he told the entire story. If freedom is lost here, there is no place to escape to.

A TIME FOR CHOOSING October 27, 1964

Ronald Wilson Reagan¹

Preface: Setting Fire to the Straw Men

Read this if you have preconceived objections about what I am going to say in this book.

It was a Christian conference and I was standing in the dinner line with someone I'd just met. We got to talking about this book. I explained the purpose and the premise. Suddenly I heard a "harrumph" behind me. I quickly glanced at the person behind us. I could tell by the look on her face that she thought I was completely heretical in my thinking. I turned to her, smiled, and gave her an opening. She laid into me. She'd had it up to her teeth with all those Christians in politics, the huge hypocrites, claiming to be Christian and then having affairs or ending up in prison. "Christians should stay out of politics and focus on loving people!" she exclaimed.

Sometime later, I was teaching a junior high Sunday School class. The topic: How to defeat abortion arguments *without* using the Bible². As part of the sermon, I explained what each of the political parties platforms were on the issue of abortion. Suddenly, one of the counselors jumped up and left the room in a huff.

I found out afterwards that he wasn't upset about me talking about abortion. He was upset that I'd tied it to politics and that I'd had the gall to name the Democrat party as the pro-abortion party *in church*.

¹ www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/reference/timechoosing.html

² If you are interested in this, please go to www.JesusIsInvolvedInPolitics.com and look up "Abortion".

Whenever we deal with divisive issues like Christians in politics, not only do we need to be sensitive to those who may disagree with us, but we also need to clarify certain points for often they presume we are proposing things we are not proposing. I call this preliminary discussion “Burning the Straw Men,” after the well-known flaw in logic.³ I have had people like that lady, hear about this topic and immediately conclude that I’m advocating something that I am not.

What is “politics” anyway?

In a discussion a few months ago, one person objected when I said, “John the Baptist got involved in politics.”

“When?” he demanded.

I responded, “When he condemned Herod, a political leader, for committing adultery with his brother’s wife.”

The person immediately said, “John was not getting involved in politics; he was just speaking out against evil.”

This made me realize that while most of us have an understanding of what many politicians do, we seem to forget what it is they are *supposed* to do. And thus, when I say we as Christians should be involved in politics; they think I am suggesting we get involved in the cult of personality; posturing for position; making ourselves out to be better than others; seeking favored positions in the eyes of men; taking illegal contributions; bribing people and all sorts of other vain and pompous things.

But, as you will find out, I am not talking about that. In fact, I agree with the objection. If that’s what politics is about, we should all stay far away from it. Yet, when I say Christians should be involved in politics, I am talking about what politicians *should* be doing, not what they *have* been doing. I’m talking about lawmakers, not just speaking out against evil men and evil laws just like John did, but taking action against evil men and eliminating evil laws, making just laws, appointing impartial judges, ensuring that justice is served, making sure that people are not oppressed, ensuring that true equality in opportunity is given regardless of results. That every person is free to achieve their greatest potential.

I’m talking about lawmakers who look towards the future and realize how a law today could damage an entire nation by undermining the family structure. I’m not talking about a popularity or self-promotion. I’m talking about getting involved as “servant-leaders”, not “leader-kings”.

You see if that’s what politics is about, surely you can agree with me that not getting involved in politics it’s no longer an option for us who love the Lord, and have compassion for those who suffer unjustly.

³ The Strawman or Straw Man Fallacy is created when the opposing side misrepresents your position and then argues against it. From the concept of building a straw man and attacking it instead of you. Then saying, “See I won.” I’ve tried to avoid Strawmen in this book, but do let me know if I accidentally created one. It was not my intention.

The Straw Man List

Over the years, I have compiled a list of these objections, concerns, and comments, I've listed them here, and I address them individually in the appendix:

1. You are arrogant to think you have all the answers on this issue.
2. Aren't you suggesting that we should create a United States with the Christian equivalent of the Muslim Sharia Law – that is, interpret biblical laws and legislate from them? This would just be a Theocracy, a Christian version of the Taliban.
3. Christians talking politics will scare non-Christians away from the Gospel.
4. Right wing Christian involvement in politics has created a backlash.
5. You are implying that politics is the most important issue facing the world or our country today.
6. All politics is nasty and dirty, and the Church should not be involved in it.
7. You are recommending involvement in politics as a way of evangelization; or you are suggesting that we use political legislation to attempt to change the wickedness of man instead of preaching the gospel to achieve that end.
8. You are recommending using laws as a way to force people to convert.
9. Christians should focus on changing themselves and their churches, not on changing the world or the culture.
10. When I meet non-Christians, should I really be talking to them about politics? Shouldn't I be witnessing to them?
11. All politicians are human, if we endorse one candidate and he turns out to be a bad apple, loses, or messes up, then the church will be marred.
12. God is not a Republican or a Democrat.
13. When people come to church, if the pastor is talking about a political issue that they disagree with, they won't come back.
14. You are promoting Liberation Theology.

If you have any of these objections, let me assure you that most of them are a mischaracterization of my view. If you feel they will prevent you from understanding or accepting the biblical, rational and logical case that I am about to present here, may I ask that you *first* turn to the appendix titled “Burning the Straw Men” and read my responses to these objections. It is my hope that this will allay your fears. Chances are we actually have a lot more in common than you think.

One way to engage that is successful

I've found that when we talk to people, if we seek common ground first (without compromising our true values), we can usually achieve a lot more than if we seek to differentiate ourselves. I was recently at a Tea Party demonstration at my liberal representative Mike Honda's Health Care Town Hall. There wasn't much of a discussion because the hall was stacked with union employees (wearing their Safeway union T-shirts) and very few *conservatives* were able to get in. But *outside* the meeting place, there were a few outnumbered non-union liberals, those who hadn't been able to get in. One had an Obama T-shirt. I was wearing a T-shirt my wife had given me. It said “Old School Conservative” and had a picture of Ronald Reagan.

Somewhere in all the hubbub, the guy, (I'll call him Hans), turned to me, looked at my shirt and said something to the effect of, "Ah, what's the use, there's nothing we'd agree on."

My sister-in-law responded, "So you think that that's a good reason never to talk? I'd think that would be a good reason *to* talk."

Hans was a bit taken aback. I guess he thought we conservatives hated talking about things we'd already been "brainwashed" about.

I said, "Why do you say that? I think there's lot we agree on."

"Like what?" sneered Hans.

"Like Iraq" I said.

"Iraq? Are you saying that we shouldn't have gone into Iraq?"

"Yes," I nodded, "I think we agree that if there were *no* Weapons of Mass Destruction, we should have never gone in? Now we can argue whether there were WMDs or not, but we both agree that if there weren't any we should not have gone in⁴."

He seemed surprised.

I continued, "Can we agree on the other hand, that if Saddam *did* have WMDs he probably would not have used them on us, but he *would* have sold them to Al Qaeda who would have had no compulsion *not* to use them on us, and in that case we *should* have gone in."

Hans responded, "Well yes, but they didn't have any."

"We can discuss that later, but can we agree that if we *honestly* believed they had any⁵, we should have gone in."

Hans nodded. "OK," I said, "so there's something we do agree on. Let me tell you what else we agree on."

"What?"

"Healthcare, we both agree it would be nice for everyone to have access to good affordable healthcare."

"Huh? I thought you were here to object to healthcare."

I smiled, "Well, you see while I'd love for everyone to have access to *good* healthcare, I don't think that Universal Healthcare is good healthcare, and I don't think I should force people who don't want to pay for another person's health care to pay for it."

Hans looked at me quizzically "Then who pays for it?"

"We Christians will. You Hans shouldn't have to pay for it."

That blew his mind. "How are you going to do that?" he demanded.

I said, "Christians have been paying for the healthcare for many people in almost every country in the world. Reduce our taxes, enact Tort Reform, costs will go down and we'll take care of the poor like we used to."

"Are you serious?"

⁴ It turns out that Saddam had indeed been buying Yellow Cake Uranium despite what Valerie Plame's husband lied about.

⁵ Like Bill Clinton said they had.

“Yes, ever heard about a missionary hospital? I grew up going to them. Send us your poor and sick, we’ve always taken care of them. Do you agree that if that is a better solution then wouldn’t you rather we did that?”

Hans wasn’t sure, “Would it work?”

“Ah” I said, “I think it would work better than unfeeling uncaring entitlement healthcare. One way to do it would be to let doctors who want to, do what lawyers do now, take a certain number of pro-bono cases and get a tax write off. But that’s what we could discuss. We should also discuss these outrageous lawsuits and doctors sending people for unnecessary testing to cover their hides. So you see it’s not that we don’t agree about who should get healthcare, we just need to figure out the best solution.”

Hans thought for a while. “OK I guess I can see that.”

“We also agree that schools should not be in the business of brainwashing kids.”

“We do?”

“Yes, imagine if one day conservatives took over the public schools would you like us brainwashing your kids to be conservatives?”

Hans agreed, “That would not be nice.”

“In fact, take anything you guys are doing now, like the unions using dues money to promote the Democrats and imagine that one day we take over the unions and do the same thing to you. Would you like it?”

“That is scary,” nodded Hans, his eyes widening.

“My name is Neil. What’s your name? Why don’t we do lunch and I’ll show you more of where we do agree.”

“Yes, that may be interesting.” We exchanged email addresses.

You see once you start focusing on where you *do* agree many people will listen.

In conclusion

To finish the stories I started, in the first case I was fortunate that the line was a long one and I was able to give the lady some gentle assurances and explanations of her objections before we were separated, all of which are in the appendix. Her parting comment was “OK, maybe you can send me your book when it’s out.”

In the second case, the youth pastor⁶ explained that this particular counselor thought politics had no place in church. The pastor continued, “But he knows that *I* think that it’s ridiculous to try and divorce the two. After all what’s the use of talking about abortion if we can’t change the laws about it. That’s like making a big fuss about slavery but never going the next step to make it illegal.”

I encouraged him to have the counselor talk to me.

The counselor hasn’t approached me yet.

Maybe he’ll read this book.

⁶ Pastor Josh Keller.

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Congress never reflects the values of the nation; ...it only reflects the values of those who voted in the last election.

David Barton, www.wallbuilders.com

*Based on voting statistics, it's apparent that Christians could stop **all** abortions in **one** election cycle. The fact that we haven't indicates that we don't care or don't wish to. The blood is upon our hands.*

Me, in a debate on this topic

We Can Win This Battle

Iwant to set the tone from the beginning. The battle for America can be won without ever having to convince a single non-Christian or non-Conservative about anything. The battle for America begins and ends with Christians and conservatives. The task is well within our reach:

Aside from the fact that more than 55% of the country agrees with most of our beliefs, there are more than 60 million evangelical Christians of voting age in America. Some 24 million of them are not even registered to vote. Of the 36 million who are registered to vote, not all do.

David Barton⁷

Note that in 2004, 122 million⁸ people voted. George Bush won by barely 3 million votes. In 2006 only 96M people voted.⁹ Karl Rove even noted that the majority in the house was lost by only about 3000 votes¹⁰.

As a result, we see these trends:

In 2004, almost 28.9 million evangelicals voted and voted biblical values, and consequently 78% of the new senators and 63% of the new representatives who came to Washington that year were pro-life.

In 2006 *only* 20.5 million evangelicals voted, and that year only 10% of the new senators and only 31% of the new representatives were pro-life.

In the two years following the 2004 election most of the key pro-family propositions passed in many of the states. In the years after the 2006

⁷ Dave Barton, www.wallbuilders.com/LIBissuesArticles.asp?id=6449

⁸ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A10492-2005Jan14.html>

⁹ <https://www.census.gov/prod/2008pubs/p20-557.pdf>

¹⁰ From a personal conversation with Karl Rove in 2007.

elections some of the worst anti-family and anti-biblical laws were passed by the U.S. Senate and House¹¹.

With 24 million of us sitting on the sidelines¹², presidential and senate races were being won or lost by a few hundred thousand votes here or there in key states or 200 votes in Florida in 2000. *Chances are that we could have changed every one of those outcomes.*

Lest you forget, it's only because of those 200 votes that President Bush was able to appoint the correct judges and a pro-life congress with a pro-life platform was able to legislate and then defend the constitutionality of a ban on partial-birth abortions. A procedure, which partially delivers a baby that, could live outside the womb, and then sucks its brains out.¹³ A procedure, mind you, that Barack Obama believes should remain legal¹⁴.

These pro-life senators and presidents and state congressmen went on to pass over 500 state and federal pro-life bills, causing one of the greatest decreases in abortion since it's height of 1.6M abortions a year (which destroys the liberal lie that electing pro-life representatives have no effect on abortion or abortion laws).¹⁵ But as we will see, abortion is only the tip of the iceberg.

In many elections, Christians vote for representatives, judges, senators, and even presidents who have moral beliefs and World Views that are specifically and clearly *condemned* in the Bible. They seem to forget that the President of the United States does far more than act as a cheerleader for the country. He leaves a legacy of hundreds of judges (not just the Supreme Court, but every federal judge in every district). Sadly most of the setbacks that Christians have seen in the last century have been due to judges with anti-

¹¹ American Voters and the Abortion Issue, David Barton, www.wallbuilders.com/libissuesarticles.asp?id=6449

¹² While the ratio of those who voted in 2004 to 2006 reduced by the same amount the fact remains that if those Christians were encouraged by their pastors and got out and voted it would not have reduced amongst us and we'd be winning every single race.

¹³ For a diagram showing this despicable procedure go to www.JesusIsInvolvedInPolitics.com and do a search for Partial Birth Abortions.

¹⁴ Despite his own claimed dislike of it. We'll eviscerate the idea that this excuse has any validity in a later chapter.

¹⁵ This just shows that they are ignorant of the facts and are in fact blindly buying the pro-abortion propaganda. Others have tried to argue that the decrease in abortions is only due to other things like ease of access of contraceptives, but numerous studies show this to be untrue. "Since 1992, approximately 17 states have enacted parental-involvement laws. ...Twenty eight states have adopted informed-consent laws, which give women seeking abortions information about fetal development, sources of support for single mothers, and potential health risks incurred by obtaining an abortion. ...Twenty four states have enacted waiting periods. A number of articles published in peer-reviewed academic journals (and studies released by the Heritage Foundation and the Family Research Council) have found that many of these pro-life laws succeed in reducing abortion. ...According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of abortions performed in the United States peaked in 1990 and has declined nearly every year since that time. Among the 47 states reporting abortion data in both 1990 and 2005, the number of abortions had fallen by 22 percent. Many states that passed pro-life legislation have experienced even larger declines." Due to the importance of this information, I have repeated it in this book.

www.article.nationalreview.com/?q=OTExMGJkZGMzMDI3ODY0YWU0ZDA2ZWVmOGRjNmRkZDg=

Christian World Views. With his bully pulpit and a compliant legislature the president effectively holds the purse strings¹⁶ to billions of dollars that *can* go to causes that actively grieve the heart of God and destroy our society from within. He also appoints men and women with incredible power to push their personal agendas, and when those people do not feel kindly to evangelicals or God's moral laws, their agendas and their rulings directly affect churches, the dissemination of the Gospel and our freedom to witness to others. A simple example was Obama's appointment of Kevin Jennings, the founder of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network to be the School Czar. His organization since 2000 has had an agenda in the public schools to recommend a pornographic reading list for underage students. A reading list that includes the glorification of adult on minor homosexual sex.¹⁷ Books that your kids and grandkids will be forced to read. Think a president's World View does not matter?

With so many Christians not voting, do you see that this battle is actually just among Christians? If Christians can educate and encourage enough others of like thinking and faith to vote and that too to vote according to moral and biblical principles, we can change this country in a single election cycle, and the dire trends we see will be stopped or reversed. But this must start in our churches. For if churches and pastors do not teach how God's moral values should affect our political appointments, all will be lost. If they do, we can move mountains.

Pastors, please note that I'm not going to be asking you to tell your congregation which individual to vote for. I'm going to be asking you to train your congregation to get involved politically and for you to teach them *what* to vote for and what to look for in the character and moral values of anyone they vote for. That should be sufficient for them to discern *whom* to vote for.

The goal of this book

This book is written to help you convince enough others to get out there and be involved biblically. It is written to mobilize the church, some of the very people who will suffer needlessly if they don't get involved. These are also the very people who have the power to easily turn the tide around to genuinely help the poor and oppressed with long term proven solutions that work.

This is a battle for social justice. Will you join in the battle?

¹⁶ He has the veto power as well as the ability to set the direction of government spending like Obama did with the trillion dollar deficits in 2009. This includes amongst other things, government funding of abortions as well as things like the National Endowment of the Arts that has repeatedly used that money to produce anti-Christian art.

¹⁷ www.massresistance.org/docs/issues/fistgate/handouts/index.html

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But Jesus didn't get involved in politics. He didn't try to change the Roman laws. He said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's." If Jesus didn't do it then we shouldn't.

College Coed

Jesus Was Involved In Politics

It was a candle lit room full of college students – a typical emerging¹⁸ type church setting. I had been invited to speak to the young adults. Many had tattoos and weird hair, yet after spending three weeks with them, teaching apologetics and the dangers of blind faith¹⁹ and seeing positive responses, I decided to venture into uncharted waters and try to help these students understand why Christians need to be involved in politics. I was doing well, feeling good about the impact I was having on this particular topic, when suddenly a coed interrupted. “That’s all well and good, but Jesus didn’t get involved in politics,” she declared. “He didn’t try to change the Roman laws. He said, ‘Give unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and give unto God what is God’s.’ If Jesus didn’t do it, then we shouldn’t.”

There seemed to be a stunned silence in the room.

Was this a valid objection? Let’s see if we can respond to it.

If Jesus did not do something, does that mean we should not do it either?

Just because Jesus did not do something that does not mean it is a bad or unwise thing to do. Though the Romans killed and massacred people, Jesus never said or did anything about that. He didn’t condemn them for it.²⁰ He could have stopped their evil practices with a wave of his hand. But he did not. Does this mean we should allow people to massacre others? Of course not.

¹⁸ I.e. the good evangelical kind not the heretical emergent kind. Confused? I know - everybody is. For more information go to www.str.org and look up “emergent church.”

¹⁹ See www.NoBlindFaith.com for more information on a Rational Logical approach to Faith.

²⁰ You cannot arbitrarily attribute our Lord's many statements on love as a vague fuzzy condemnation of the Romans' cruel practices. After all He was not reluctant to let loose specific condemnation on the Pharisees, why then would he be reluctant to specifically condemn the Romans for slavery or abuse. Yet we know He did not condone it.

Also, there were slaves²¹ elsewhere in the ancient world. Jesus never fought for their freedom. He did not even say they should be freed. Was he condoning racism and slavery?²² No. Of course not.²³

Obviously, just because Jesus didn't do something it doesn't mean we should *also* not do it.

The clincher here is marriage. Jesus never got married,²⁴ yet we don't hear the same people arguing that because He was not married, no one else should be. That would clearly be invalid and illogical.

What if Jesus did do something?

The reverse of an invalid argument, however, may be valid. I hope we can agree that if Jesus *did* do something, that is probably a good indication that we should do strive to do likewise. Keep this in mind as we investigate this further.

German and U.S. Politics

Many people seem to be confused about whom the “politicians” of Jesus' day were and how laws were enacted in Judah.

For perspective, let's compare the relationship between Judah and Rome in 33 A.D. to a more recent situation, the lengthy U.S. occupation of Germany after WWII.²⁵ Suppose a German citizen living under American occupation at that time started calling for change in American laws. How effective would that be?

Not very.

Why would a citizen of Germany under U.S. occupation not be allowed to get involved in American politics? Obviously because he could not vote in the United States nor did he have any rights of U.S. citizenship.

²¹ Do note that as far as I can tell the Jews never had slaves the way we think of slaves. The Old Testament only allowed what would be called indentured servitude. I.e. a system in which a person could pay off his debt by becoming an indentured servant of the one he owed money to. When the debt was paid he was free to leave or become a bondservant, someone who loved his master so much that despite the fact that he was legally free, he chose to remain under the master's protection and providence. This was far different from the US version of slavery.

²² By the way the response, “Well Jesus didn't drive a car either.” Doesn't work. Because the answer would be, “Well that doesn't apply because cars hadn't been invented.”

²³ Interestingly in light of the fact that He never spoke out against slavery, my atheist friends say he approved it. But we know that is ludicrous. There are multiple passages in the Bible that condemn slavery e.g. Ex 21:16 Anyone who kidnaps another and either sells him or still has him when he is caught must be put to death.

²⁴ Don't start me on absurd claims of the novel, “The DaVinci Code” which tries to claim that Jesus was married. If you want a rebuttal, see www.str.org and do a search for DaVinci. Or see “The Da Vinci Code: Fact or Fiction”, Hanegraaff, Maier, Tyndale House Publishers, 2004.

Of course, you could argue, “But Paul says we can get married later so the analogy is not a good one.” However, what that merely shows is that just because Jesus didn't do something it's not a sufficient reason for us not to do it. Obviously, Nicodemus's involvement in politics and Paul's approval and Peter's involvement in marriage can be shown as equivalent valid examples of this.

²⁵ It took a long time to train a nation of people under submission to fascists to become good democratic citizens.

Similarly, it would not make sense for an Iraqi citizen today to petition U.S. senators to change American laws – say, for example, to allow a man to have four wives. Although Americans are administering Iraq as this book is being written, Iraqi citizens are not to influence American politicians or even donate money to them. It would be illegal and a waste of time for an Iraqi citizen to try.

Jesus and Roman Politics

When we look at Jesus, we first have to ask, "Was he a Roman citizen?"

No.

What was his citizenship? Well, obviously, he was Jewish. He was a Jew living in a country occupied by Rome. Yet, He and his countrymen were not Roman citizens. They were a conquered people, but they *were* Jewish citizens.

So would the Romans have allowed Jesus to be involved in their legal system? No. In fact, would it make any sense for him to confront Roman senators (never mind that they were physically about 1,422 miles away) in an attempt to alter their laws?²⁶ No, again.

Jesus was Jewish, so we should look at the Jewish political structure. Who wrote the Jewish laws? With whom would Jesus have had to be engaged with if He wanted to affect public policy? Who were His senators, representatives, and judges?

Before we answer that, let's look at the structure of Israel in Christ's time. In doing so, maybe we can dispense with commonly held misconceptions.

Did the Romans run Israel and make all their laws?

The biggest misconception most people seem to have is that the Romans ran Judah, treating it like an extension of Rome. While it is true that they conquered the nation and renamed it Judea, they did not run all of it, nor did they legislate or create all of its civil laws. Most people today seem to have the idea that the Romans were the civil police force, the army, the lawmakers and the judges in territories they controlled. However, even from our own nation's experience we know that this is not the case.

²⁶ But guess who was a Roman citizen? Paul the Apostle!

And though he did not directly get involved in their political system, did Paul get involved in the Roman legal process? You bet he did. He appealed to Caesar, and since he was a dual citizen, he met with both his Jewish representative King Agrippa and his Roman representative Governor Felix. When organizations like the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF), Pacific Justice Institute (PJI), the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) use the legal system to bring about God's moral law and to find new witnessing opportunities, they are emulating Paul's example. As we know, if Paul hadn't appealed to Caesar, he might have gotten out of his imprisonment earlier. Yet he knew that if he wanted to witness to Caesar, his best bet was to work within the political and legal process and gain an audience with Caesar.

We did not run occupied Germany and Japan immediately after World War II and more recently Iraq. We occupied these countries and administered them, but many local government functions were retained. In cases where there was no local structure, a local one was created as soon as possible. And while certain overriding laws were enforced based on U.S. law, it was locals who legislated.

Similarly, Judeans in 33 A.D. had a fully functioning political system that included their *own* executive, legislative, and judicial powers. Not only were Jews self-governing in many ways, but the Romans actually gave them a level of self-governance above what they gave most other conquered nations. The Jews had control over their laws and were allowed to pass their own sentences on most crimes. The only punishment they could not exact was the death sentence, and that was a limitation that had been enacted recently.²⁷ In Jesus' day, the Jews had to get the local Roman governor's permission to pass the death sentence.

Most people these days imagine that the Romans policed Jewish society. This could not be further from the truth. The Jews had their own police officers, public jail (see Acts 5:17-29), temple guard and King Herod had an entire army of his own. Dr. Paul Maier,²⁸ a well known author and historian who has translated the works of the 1st century historian Josephus; has indicated²⁹ that there is a high degree of probability that the soldiers who killed Jewish babies in Bethlehem after the birth of Christ- were not Roman soldiers but *Jewish* soldiers or possibly hired mercenaries working for the *Jewish*³⁰ King Herod.

So, contrary to widely held views, Judah had a fully functioning political system. This was a political system in every sense of the word. Not

²⁷ A great historical "faction" novel (i.e. fiction based on facts – unlike the DaVinci Code which was fiction based on false facts) to learn the Jewish and Roman political structures and tenuous relationships is "Pontius Pilate: A Novel" by Paul L Maier. It's an easy read and allows the reader to learn much about the Roman and Jewish relationships in the days that Christianity began. It covers many of the facts about the Roman and Jewish legal systems. While I'm at it, let me pitch one of the best Christian mystery novels ever written. It's "A Skeleton in God's Closet" by Paul Maier. But beware don't start reading it unless you have plenty of time. I was so engrossed that I was loathe to put it down and I missed out on much of my sleep for 2 days.

²⁸ For more information on Dr. Maier please visit www.wmich.edu/history/facultystaff/facultyprofiles/maier.html

²⁹ Personal email correspondences dated December 2006. Paul is a good friend.

³⁰ Actually, Herod was not a true Jew he was an Idumean (i.e. an Edomite, a descendant of Esau). Idumea or Edom was south of Judea and the Dead Sea. John Hyrcanus who was both King and High Priest during the tumultuous years between the Old Testament and the New Testament conquered the Idumeans and "converted" them and the northern Galileans into Jews by the sword. 100 years later King Herod's father Antipater become friendly with the Roman General Pompey and later Caesar, and managed to get himself appointed as administrator of Judea. After Antipater was killed, his son, Herod ingratiated himself into Octavian's favor and convinced Octavian to appoint him as "King of the Jews". Thus in 4BC when the story and prophesy of Jesus being born in Bethlehem came up, Herod, a non-true Jew, not from any line of kings, who had merely been appointed by Rome to be King was triply scared. Baby Jesus would be first, a real Jew and second, one who was from the actual line of King David and third, one who had been prophesied by the prophets. This puts Herod's fears of baby Jesus into better perspective; here then was a true contender to his purchased and manipulated throne.

only was there a lot of infighting to get to be a lawmaker, but even the post of High Priest was often contested and occasionally bought through money and favors.

If Jesus had wanted to become involved in this Jewish political system, he would have been able to do so. But did he? That is, did he engage the official powers of his culture in trying to bring about desired change? Who were his senators and representatives? Who were his lawmakers?

Well, at this point you are probably precisely 30 seconds ahead of me. Yes, the Jewish legislators were known as *the* – exactly – *the Sanhedrin*.

The Sanhedrin

Here's the definition of the Sanhedrin and what it did:

The Sanhedrin (Hebrew: סנהדרין, Greek: συνεδριον, synedrion, meaning "sitting together", hence "assembly") is the name given to the council of seventy-one Jewish sages who constituted the supreme court and legislative body of Ancient Israel. The make-up of the council included a chief justice (Nasi), a vice chief justice (Av Beit Din), and sixty-nine general members who all sat in the form of a semi-circle when in session³¹.

We see that the people of Judah had a legislative system similar in many ways to our system,³² except they had combined their judicial and legislative arms. The members of the Sanhedrin were not democratically elected – yet one can still be “politically active” or engaged with powers that be, even though they are not elected.

Thus, the Sanhedrin was a legislative body, with lawmakers, similar to *our* lawmakers (our senators and representatives). But who were its members? Who were these guys that were the senators and lawmakers of the Jews? Do we ever hear about them in the Bible? Did Jesus ever talk to them? Or, in line with what many Christians claim, did he stay far away from “all that stuff” because it was too worldly?

I am sure that by now you are again precisely 30 seconds ahead of me. Exactly! The politicians, the senators and lawmakers of the Jewish governing body, the Sanhedrin, were the scribes, *the Pharisees and the Sadducees*. In fact, some translations of the New Testament use the word “lawyer” instead of “scribe.”

Wait now, besides the apostles, what leaders did Jesus interact with? Who did he advise, admonish, condemn, and chastise? Who did he warn about corrupt laws and incorrect or twisted interpretations of the original Hebraic law? Whose execution of the law did he consider evil?

³¹ www.123exp-read.com/t/00284113926/ Also see www.thesanhedrin.org/en/main/organization.html and www.thesanhedrin.org/en/index.php/The_Re-established_Jewish_Sanhedrin for a full organizational structure and information of the ancient and re-established Sanhedrin.

³² Actually this is because we based our legislature on theirs, including the semi-circle seating.

Why, it was the members of the Sanhedrin, of course. They were his senators and lawmakers.³³ They were his politicians. Jesus was so involved in the politics and with his politicians that one can't even teach about Jesus without including his politicians. In fact, the most quoted passage in history John 3:16 was made specifically to a politician, Nicodemus.

Objection: Civil or Religious?

“Ah but” you may complain, “The Sanhedrin were only in charge of the religious laws. But this is simply false as the Jewish historian Reifmann tells us:

“[A]ll religious matters and all civil matters not claimed by Roman authority were within [the Sanhedrin’s] attributions; and the decisions issued by its judges were to be held inviolable”

Reifmann, Sanhedrin, Heb. (Berdichef, 1888) xi, 2-4³⁴.

Historian Dave Breed says:

*“[W]e know that Paul was a Pharisee, and a member of the Sanhedrin, and that the Sanhedrin had **legislative, executive, judicial, civil, criminal** and ecclesiastical power under the Romans, only Roman Citizens having a right of appeal to Rome. Paul’s writings abound in references to Roman Law which, judging from their content, he must have[also] known considerable about; see Acts 25:8; Gal. 3:15; I Tim., Chap. 1; and Wilfley³⁵.”*

The Trial of Christ, by David K. Breed, [1948], Appendix A pg 79³⁶

Thus we see that the Sanhedrin determined not only religious laws but also legislative, executive, judicial, civil, criminal and of course ecclesiastical i.e. religious laws. Now except for the ecclesiastical part of that, does this not reflect exactly what our politicians and judges are responsible for? In other words, the members of the Sanhedrin were the lawmakers and *politicians* of Judea.

In the correct historical light now, we see that Jesus was always talking to various members of the Sanhedrin, trying to influence them, calling them to account, showing them that many of their laws, both civil and religious, were wrong and overly numerous. So we see:

Jesus was involved in Politics!

Pharisees

Please note that this was not an outright condemnation against *all* the Pharisees, as we know of God-fearing Pharisees who had Jesus’ approval and

³³ Naturally, I use the word loosely. As we discussed they did not have a democratic system so these folks were not elected. Rather they were appointed. However, they were the people who made the laws and who interpreted the laws and that is the function we are interested in. Jesus was involved with the lawmakers of his nation though he did not get to vote for them.

³⁴ As quoted in www.newadvent.org/cathen/13444a.htm

³⁵ Xenophon P. Wilfley, Esq., *St. Paul the Herald of Christianity*.

³⁶ From www.sacred-texts.com/chr/toc/toc13.htm

blessings. Jesus' admonitions were targeted at just those *particular* Pharisees³⁷ who were hypocrites, who were into power and publicity, who were looking not at the intent of the law but only at the letter of the law and manipulating it to oppress people. Jesus was chastising the bad politicians and working with the good ones. Why does this sound familiar?³⁸

Jesus persisted in telling those Pharisee lawmakers who were hypocrites that their laws or their interpretations of it were unjust (for example the woman caught in adultery). Then, in addition to being involved politically by calling out these leaders, He also used civil disobedience to show the injustice and bankruptcy of various laws³⁹ when he and the Apostles went about picking and husking wheat on the Sabbath, and later when he and the Apostles healed on the Sabbath.

Jesus and the Apostles were working with, lobbying their lawmakers, and showing them they were unwise and their laws were wrong and needed to be changed. Though He did not get involved in their political system by running for office (remember too that this was not possible as no one was elected), we could say that Jesus was among other things a lobbyist with a personal staff of 12 aides.

What would Jesus do?

Another common misunderstanding is that Jesus would never call his political leaders names. But the Bible shows Jesus even goes as far as calling Herod the political ruler of all Israel, a fox⁴⁰.

Luke 13:31 At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you."

32 He replied, "Go tell that fox, 'I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.'

Jesus was not saying that Herod was *clever* like a fox; it was actually a direct insult. In the Middle East, a fox was considered a varmint, they lived in the ground, were pests and ran away and hid after raiding your chickens. Jesus meant to imply that his own earthly ruler, Herod was a slinking cowardly, wicked and dirty *rat*. Jesus was describing the truth about Herod's character. Surely, then it is also our job to do that with our leaders. But that was just the start, we all know that He not only calls his senators, the Pharisees, hypocrites but He also calls them putrid rotting white washed tombs and slimy snakes.

³⁷ Over the years Christians have unfortunately used the word Pharisee in a generic derogatory way. This is an inaccurate use of the term. There were numerous good Pharisees like Nicodemus, Joseph, Gamaliel (see Acts 5:34-40) and many of those purposely not invited to the trial of Jesus. It's like saying that all lawyers are sharks. Yet we all know godly lawyers.

³⁸ Please note very carefully here that you cannot attribute to Christ the requirement to force others to pay for the poor. In other words, there is no way you can attribute socialism to Christ. We will deal with this in some detail later on.

³⁹ There are specific guidelines on how civil disobedience was carried out in the Bible that are not in the scope of this book.

⁴⁰ My gratitude to George Bettisworth for reminding me about this example.

*Matt 23:27 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean...
33 "You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?"*

What an appropriate description of many of our current day politicians. Snakes, if you recall were symbols of evil and the devil. No, the romantic notion of Jesus as this sweet non-confrontational "speak love only" kind of person is not only unbiblical and historically inaccurate but it's just plain silly.

What would Jesus do? He'd call an evil man an evil man. He'd call a hypocrite a hypocrite. He'd admonish evil or immoral politicians and call them out. He'd speak out against evil and immoral laws. He'd be harsh when he needed to. We need to do likewise. Jesus was involved in political commentary *and* informed people if they were at risk of going to hell.

Objection: But Judah was not a democratic nation

You are correct that Judah was not a democratic nation, but that does not change the political nature of it. It is important not to confuse the existence of democracy or democratic elections with politics. After all if a person were to get involved in influencing the King of Spain to create or change laws to help the poor or help the merchants or even to help yourself by being granted a dukedom, that would still be considered politics though one did not get to elect the king or the nobles. In truth, politics is usually much more prevalent and much worse in a dictatorship or a monarchy. And, to their detriment, some of the companies I've worked at have had more politics than a small country and yet nobody got to elect anyone there.

So, while Jesus and most Jews did not get to elect any of the Sanhedrin,⁴¹ they could still attempt to influence them on how they legislated and ruled. Politics, judging and lawmaking were all involved.

Objection: But Jesus was dealing with their religious laws, not their civil laws/Jesus was only addressing their mistakes in theology/Jesus was only addressing their hypocrisy.

Now one might try to fall back on this position and argue that while the Sanhedrin *did* deal with civil laws, Jesus on the other hand was only dealing with them about *religious* laws or theological issues, and not *civil* laws. But this is simply not accurate. Jesus was not *only* concerned about our spiritual destiny he was also concerned about oppression and social justice. Politics has a direct effect on the suffering of innocents. Jesus addressed both

⁴¹ Of course, I say this knowing that God the Son had full power to put whomever He wanted into leadership of the Sanhedrin, but then again that wouldn't have been an election but an appointment, and by the same argument, He could have forced them to interpret the laws correctly. Why bother to argue with them then?

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Who is Caesar today?

Author Gary DeMar adds this:

“It might also help to realize that we do not live under Caesar. Our civil rulers took an oath to uphold the Constitution which is the “supreme law of the land.” Neither the president nor the members of Congress are Caesar. If we have a “Caesar,” it is the United States Constitution. But even the Constitution recognizes its own limits and the right of the people to (1) express their grievances, (2) vote corrupt and oath-breaking rulers out of office, and (3) change existing laws⁴².”

This makes logical sense, so in our case when it comes to “giving” to Caesar and submitting to the authorities, the supreme authority is not the president, or the judges or the congress, but the Constitution of the United States of America. In reality for Americans this verse now reads:

Render unto the Constitution what is the Constitution’s and unto God what is God’s.

Please remember that the next time you imagine that it is not your place to speak out against injustice or immoral laws because it involves contradicting an elected official. Your “Caesar” i.e. your “God appointed authority” has commanded you to speak out and act against elected officials who violate it. Our God appointed authority has ordered us to vote out of office and reject those who violate the Constitution. And God orders us to work to reduce the authority of evil men to protect the weak. If you wish to “give unto Caesar” then you must do so by voting, being involved, and protecting Caesar (the Constitution) from those who would destroy the Constitution and this country. Notice how our constitution prescribes the forcible removal of those in power if they violate the very Constitution.

Jesus was involved in Politics and He still is!

Having discussed our Lord’s involvement while He was on earth physically, we should at least spend a few sentences discussing if our Lord is *still* involved politically. I think that’s easy to answer. Do you think our Lord was involved or cared about the political involvement of William Wilberforce when Wilberforce worked for 47 years to free the slaves? How about when racism was made illegal? Do you think it grieved Christ when abortion was made legal in the United States? Do you think He cared? How about when Hitler took power in Germany and all the Christians stayed out of the political process? Can we agree that whenever a society legislates on a biblical moral issue, our Lord cares? Whenever a society passes a law that would hurt the poor or the innocent, I think Christ cares. If Christ was concerned with the least of us, can He *fail* to be involved in politics?

⁴² www.americanvision.com/establishmentandlimitsofcivilgovernment.aspx.

Another excellent source, Dave Barton suggests with a representative democracy, Caesar is the “people” of the United States.

I said that we live in a pluralistic society, that I can't impose my own religious views on another, that I was running to be the U.S. Senator of Illinois and not the Minister of Illinois.

Barack Obama,⁴³ 2006

A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

You Can't Legislate Morality?

I was sitting in a Thai restaurant with an engineering colleague arguing about abortion. He was one of the best and the brightest, a liberal Christian with a Ph.D. from a very prestigious university, an author of multiple patents, with a deep analytical mind. We were going through the talk that I use in churches titled "How To Win Arguments Against Abortion, Without Appealing To The Bible Or Religion."⁴⁴ Halfway through the conversation and after a bite of red curry chicken, he looked at me and said, "But, you know, you can't legislate morality."

I use this highly learned and achieved man to show that this opinion is held at all levels of education and intelligence. I've heard it from a great many people. In fact, just recently, a well-known liberal politician said that he didn't want to be in the business of legislating morality for others. People spout this at me all over the place. It's usually the first objection. Sad to say, it often comes from Christians. I even had a Christian criminal attorney spout it at me. I usually try to give them a way out, and I always ask, "Is that something you've thought about at length, or is it just something you've heard someone else say and are merely repeating?"

Now, if we can't legislate morality then indeed Christians may not have any overriding justification to be involved in politics. But what if we do

⁴³ This quote is taken directly from Obama's 2007 campaigning website:

obama.senate.gov/speech/060628-call_to_renewal_keynote_address/index.html Visited March 23, 2007.

⁴⁴ Available at www.JesusIsInvolvedInPolitics.com

and must legislate morality? If we do legislate morality, Christians, would you agree that you might indeed have a vested responsibility to be in politics? After all, if politics is about legislation and legislation is about morality then surely there is a tie there between the source of our moral values and our religion and faith in God. Especially so, if as we've said the consequences are severe punishments from God and increased pain and suffering for the poor, defenseless and minorities.

So can you legislate morality or not?

“*You can't legislate morality.*” If you think about it, that statement is one of the silliest and most illogical statements in the world. Why is it illogical?

Exactly! Because if we don't legislate morality, what on earth are we legislating? Platitudes? Fuzzy feelings? What? Cultural values? What are our representatives and senators legislating? Traditions?

What *are* they legislating? Well generally, they legislate things like, “Rape is against the law.” “If you are a child predator, we will put you in prison!” “Killing is against the law.”

But why do they legislate things like this? Because it's what? It's *wrong* to kill. It's *immoral* to kill.

We have laws that say things like “stealing is illegal.” Isn't stealing a moral issue? In fact isn't it also a commandment of God, as in “Thou shalt not steal!” How about the laws that said that slavery was illegal? Was that just because it was economically bad to have slaves? On the contrary, it was economically *good* for the landowners to have slaves. After all what could be better than free labor? And at the time, there was a social and societal value that said owning slaves was acceptable. In fact, it was a social and status symbol. So, we couldn't appeal that slavery was wrong on social grounds or on tradition. But we *know* it was wrong to have slaves. We know it was *morally* wrong to have slaves. The new law against slavery was solely based on the concept that slaves are human and have rights and that it was what? It was *immoral* to take away their rights.⁴⁵ Moreover this was a *religiously* based moral value.

Are you saying even the minor laws are moral values?

Even when we legislate things like “Do not litter,” why are we legislating it? Because we think that littering destroys the environment. And we think that destroying the environment is a what thing? A bad thing. Would that make destroying the environment an *immoral* thing perhaps? Of course it would. It's also a beauty thing, but that then moves into the issue of the fact that you are defacing public property. That's a moral issue again because you are spoiling something that also belongs to many people not just you.

⁴⁵ I always like to put it this way: In the 1870s when they said slavery was wrong was it wrong because it was against man's law? No, it was wrong because it was against God's Law. That's a moral issue solved by a political action. That is, a moral issue solved only when Christians got involved politically.

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Infanticide, which might seem contrary to human nature, was almost universal before the rise of Christianity, and is recommended by Plato to prevent over-population. [Notice how this is the same cry by today's pro-abortionists].

...“In antiquity, when male supremacy was unquestioned and Christian ethics were still unknown, women were harmless but rather silly, and a man who took them seriously was somewhat despised⁴⁶.”

Atheist Bertrand Russell (emphasis added)

But Christian Involvement In Politics Always Fails!

Look how we've failed every time we've tried to get involved in politics? What good has the Moral Majority done? How useful was the Christian Coalition? We've failed every time we've tried to get involved in politics. We should focus on changing the culture and hearts, not laws.”

A Christian friend was attacking every single Christian group he could think of who'd ever dared to be politically involved. It's natural for many of us to think this way. After all newspapers and TV are always too willing to show us the failure of Christian leaders, and the U.S. seems to be getting worse not better despite the many attempts by Christians to change the laws.

What we easily forget is that not only do papers not report *all* the news, but most of us also have a very sparse knowledge of history. Let's take a brief look at what Christian involvement in politics has *actually* done in the last 2000 years for the causes of social justice.

Has Christian involvement in politics really always failed?

This idea is simply false. I'm tempted to ask people who state this if they would have tried telling that to the Christian William Wilberforce who

⁴⁶ Bertrand Russell, *Unpopular Essays*, 1950, New York: Simon & Schuster.

stopped slavery in England almost six decades before it was stopped in America? Yet even he had to try every year for almost 47 years before he was fully successful in achieving social justice. Compared to that, the battle against abortion, another battle for social justice has yet another 11 years to go.⁴⁷ How about those who worked to get Lincoln elected so that they could rally to ban slavery? How about asking Rev. Martin Luther King if Christian⁴⁸ political involvement didn't work to change the laws about civil rights? But that's just looking at the big successes, how about all the little successes, like laws that said the king was not above the law, laws the British imposed on India that prohibited the killing of Hindu widows on their husband's funeral pyre (again social justice). We mustn't forget too the original laws to limit marriage to one man and one woman that over rode the native traditions that allowed leaders and chiefs to have multiple wives. How about the Christian influenced law in Northern Europe in the 1200s that insisted that the wife had to consent to marriage, rather than the customary marriage by capture and kidnapping that had prevailed until then. I kid you not!⁴⁹

Don't forget too, the laws that stopped social injustices like infanticide, child marriage, temple prostitution, forced prostitution and child prostitution, the law that forbade a wife from being treated like property.⁵⁰ The laws that forced the fair treatment of prisoners⁵¹ and of course child labor laws.⁵² All these were laws that came about due to Christian political activism. We could go on, as there are thousands of laws in all Christian and post Christian cultures that were based on the moral values of Christians who were involved in politics and took it upon themselves at great costs to change the law and their societies. The same societies that now assume that all those values are self-evident and forget the very people and the very religion, which brought those *just* and *moral* laws into existence. All these laws took years and years and numerous heartbreaking tries to implement and they only came about because Christians took a stance politically, legally and judicially and just as important financially. Don't forget that all these laws were fought and rejected over and over again by those very same societies that later embraced these ideals. And in each case, there was a huge backlash of unpopularity and malice against these particular Christians.

⁴⁷ And we are gaining much ground; so far we've succeeded in turning a majority of Americans against abortion on demand. A Gallup Poll in May 2009 shows 51 percent of Americans identify as "pro-life" and 42 percent as "pro-choice." www.gallup.com/poll/118399/more-americans-pro-life-than-pro-choice-first-time.aspx

⁴⁸ Yes, the first people to rally to this cause were Christians and pastors, not New Agers or atheists. The Civil Rights cause was first preached in the churches across America. Sadly, some churches preached the resistance to this movement as well, in full violation of the Scriptures.

⁴⁹ <http://stason.org/TULARC/travel/nordic-scandinavia/2-5-6-Christian-and-pre-Christian-laws.html>

⁵⁰ Cod. Theod., lib. II, tit. 17, lex 1; lib. III, tit. 17, lex 4

⁵¹ Cod. Theod., lib. IX, tit. 3, lex 1

⁵² Alvin J Schmidt, *How Christianity Changed the World* (formerly called "Under their Influence") Zondervan, 2004 pg 142.

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BARTLET: *I like your show. I like how you call homosexuality an "abomination!"*

JACOBS (Dr. Laura-like radio psychologist seated nearby): *I don't say homosexuality is an abomination, Mr. President. The Bible does.*

BARTLET: *Yes it does. Leviticus!*

JACOBS: *18:22.*

BARTLET: *Chapter and verse. I wanted to ask you a couple of questions while I had you here...Here's one that's really important, because we've got a lot of sports fans in this town. Touching the skin of a dead pig makes one unclean. Leviticus 11:7. If they promise to wear gloves, can the Washington Redskins still play football? Can Notre Dame? Can West Point? Does the whole town really have to be together to stone my brother John for planting different crops side by side? Can I burn my mother in a small family gathering for wearing garments made from two different threads? Think about those questions, would you?*

The West Wing TV script (which was lifted from an urban legend email by the writers)

Which passages of Scripture should guide our public policy? Should we go with Leviticus, which suggests slavery is ok and that eating shellfish is abomination? How about Deuteronomy, which suggests stoning your child if he strays from the faith? Or should we just stick to the Sermon on the Mount - a passage that is so radical that it's doubtful that our own Defense Department would survive its application? So before we get carried away, let's read our [B]ibles. Folks haven't been reading their [B]ibles.

Barack Obama⁵³ *repeating the urban legend.*

Why The Law Was Given: Do We Need To Follow All Those Laws About Pork Or Not Using Old Cloth With New Cloth?

Ah," the atheist arrogantly said to me, "Yes, you're the kind of person that wants us to listen to God's laws, the God who says slavery is good, who says we should stone people for working on Saturday and who thinks that gays should be executed."

I'd just sat through a debate at Stanford University watching Christopher Hitchens get decimated by Jay Richards of the Discovery Institute. Hitchens had spent his time on stage not responding to a single debate issue.

⁵³obama.senate.gov/podcast/060628-call_to_renewal_1/. Please note, this chapter was written at least a year before Obama was elected.

Instead he'd spent his allotted minutes telling everyone what large male organs he had, how he hated Mormons and how all Christians were idiots and making a few crude sexual jokes along the way. Jay had stuck to the topic and delivered a very systematic statement about why God existed and the ideas behind Intelligent Design. One of these defenses was the existence of objective moral values⁵⁴.

After the debate, I'd gone up on stage to talk to Jay⁵⁵ and had gotten dragged into an argument with a very belligerent atheist. He was wearing a very very faded "Silicon Valley Atheists" T-shirt and seemed primarily angry at Hitchens for doing such a lousy job. (Of course he used different language.) I'd made the mistake of asking him what Hitchens could have said to refute Jay. That's when he launched into attack mode. I later found out that this was his standard spiel on the internet.

Whenever we talk about the law, we run into these sorts of complaints. Many of my friends add "But wait, doesn't the OT (Old Testament) also have the weird dietary laws and even weirder laws about not patching old clothes with new cloth and so on?"

Or we get the ignorant ramblings of an email letter plagiarized by TV show writers of *The West Wing* to try and shame people who believe the Bible is God's Word as shown in this chapter's heading quote.⁵⁶

Since we are not living in a Jewish theocracy, our country is not under the laws of Moses.⁵⁷ So, my non-Christian readers let me put your minds at ease. At no point are we insisting that the Old Testament laws are to be reinstated in our society or that they all have legal power today. Not even my God fearing Jewish friends want this.

However, as we said often in this book, there is a valid case for analyzing these laws and seeing what common sense guidance we can glean

⁵⁴ If Objective Moral Values exist then God exists. Objective Moral Values do exist so God exists. See <http://www.leaderu.com/offices/billcraig/docs/washdeba-craig1.html>. Read the whole debate. It's worth the time.

⁵⁵ I'd become friends with Jay when I'd hosted him for an Apologetics Speaker Series at two of our local churches. Pastors and student leaders, if you ever need a great speaker on Intelligent Design or the concepts of the Free Market, let me heartily endorse Jay Richards. www.acton.org. Say Neil sent you.

⁵⁶For a point by point rebuttal of the nonsensical claims of *The West Wing*, see the response by Hank Hanagraaf of the Christian Research Institute (CRI) at: www.mastershouse.org/issues/_&_answers/homosexuality_hanagraaf2.htm

⁵⁷ Now we understand that we are personally no longer under the laws of Moses. We are now under the Laws of Christ. Gal 5:18 says... if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

But does that mean we can do anything we want? Not at all. If we are led by the Spirit of God, then we won't do things of the flesh. And what are they? Paul tells us clearly:

Gal 5:19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

And what are the consequences if we are led by the Spirit?

Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

from them. So while they don't have legal power in our country, they do have great value. And I will propose some guidelines that we should and have indeed used to arrive at our "new" laws in a later chapter.

But now, let us look at the old laws since the question is valid. As we do that, we notice that the Old Testament laws can be divided into four groups: Ceremonial laws, Judicial Laws, Regulatory/Civil Laws and Moral laws.⁵⁸

The Ceremonial Laws

One breakdown of the description of the difference of the laws can be found on the Southfield Reformed Presbyterian Church website. Here is their description of the ceremonial laws:

"The ceremonial laws refer to the sacrificial rituals (the temple cults): the priesthood, the sacrifices, the Levitical holy days (i.e., the feasts), the temple, the music, the utensils, circumcision, ritual washings, and so on. The ceremonial laws strengthened the faith of the Jews in the coming Messiah, by typifying both Him and the redemption from sin that He would bring. The ceremonial laws were directed to those in Israel. They were restorative, for they reflected God's mercy and salvation. They were anticipatory, for they looked ahead to the perfect, final salvation wrought by the Messiah. And they were temporary, for as types and shadows they could not really remove the guilt of sin and bring perfection. God always intended to supersede the whole ceremonial system by Jesus Christ."⁵⁹

So, we see that the ceremonial laws described to the Jews are rules and ordinances that were to be observed in the worship of God. Many of my orthodox Jewish friends observe them out of tradition, yet none believes those laws should be the laws of this land. Why? Again, it's because we are not the theocratic nation of Judah. Moreover, these laws also don't apply to Christians because Christ has decreed that we do not need to worship at the Temple anymore. He has also told us that we already have a high priest (Himself) who supplants all other high priests. And we have an advocate who represents us before God the Father (the Holy Spirit). So, most ceremonial laws do not apply to Christians, and they certainly don't apply to non-Christians (we will see an exception though later). While many of my Jewish friends do adhere to them, they don't wish to impose it on you for they believe those laws were for the Jews alone.

The Ceremonial laws do however have symbolic value. Often these rules and regulations reminded the Jews that they were a chosen people, blessed by God and they were not to mix certain things together as an example of their uniqueness. And part of this was God's plan of how He was going to preserve the Jews as a unique group from which His great love would be shown to all mankind centuries later. Many are the races and groups that

⁵⁸ Some scholars divide these into only three groups. See www.reformed.com/pub/law.htm for an excellent analysis of this. Last visited 3/6/07

⁵⁹ www.reformed.com/pub/law.htm

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But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Matt 5:39-42, The Sermon on the Mount

Or should we just stick to the Sermon on the Mount - a passage that is so radical that it's doubtful that our own Defense Department would survive its application? So before we get carried away, let's read our [B]ibles. Folks haven't been reading their [B]ibles.

Barack Obama, repeated⁶⁰

But What About The Sermon On The Mount?

Jesus said: Turn the other cheek. Isn't there a tension between the Sermon on the Mount and all the Old Testament commandments?"

A liberal friend was trying to show me that everything that Christ said in the New Testament should at best override all the Old Testament commandments and any judging and at the least make sure that Christians never support their nation going to war.

Barack Obama in the quote implies that if we were to legislate from the Bible, our own Department of Defense (DoD) would have to be shut down⁶¹. Is he right?

⁶⁰ http://obama.senate.gov/podcast/060628-call_to_renewal_1/ I know it sounds like I'm picking on a sitting president, but honestly, all this was written long before he won the 2008 elections. He just said a lot of things that attacked everything I believed in and were rich with fundamental errors in critical thinking. Do remember he fired the first shots in these quotes, I'm just responding to his attacks.

So what about the Sermon on the Mount? Is there a tension? Can the DoD survive its implications?

Some people do indeed need to read their Bibles a bit more and in *context*, you see, in the introduction to the *very* same Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says that He didn't come to wipe out the law but to *fulfill* it.

Matthew 5:17 Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. 19 Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

What is “the Law and the Prophets?” Well to a Jew that would be the Torah and the Prophetical books. To a Christian that would be what we call the Old Testament. And that includes the Moral Laws⁶² and the prophetical warnings and condemnations.

So why would Jesus precede the Sermon on the Mount with this statement. Obviously, there is *no* chance that He intends the Sermon on the Mount to eliminate anything from the Old Testament.

So how do we resolve this seeming contradiction? Perhaps it's not a problem because it's not a contradiction. Here's how I teach this to others:

⁶¹ I'm still not sure what his “solution” to this was? Was he suggesting we change our military or stop reading the Bible? After his “surge” of troops in Afghanistan, I think he must have meant we must stop reading the Bible.

⁶² We should note that Christ also satisfied all the ceremonial and judicial law requirements through His life and death. I.e. He satisfied the ceremonial laws by fulfilling the prophecies that their symbolism was pointing to and He paid the ultimate punishment satisfying all judicial laws.

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The state cannot get a cent for any man without taking it from some other man, and this latter must be a man who has produced and saved it. This latter is the Forgotten Man."

William Graham Sumner

We can judge the character of a man by the way he is willing to take your money forcibly to give to the poor; but refuses to voluntarily give his own money to the poor.

My admonition to Christian friends who were planning to vote for Obama in 2008 after it was revealed that for years Obama made over ¼ million but gave less than \$1,050 to charity most times.⁶³

A friend: *I think we should take care of the poor and provide free healthcare.*

Me: *Of course, we should. So how much money did you give to the poor last year? How much did you donate to hospitals locally or overseas?*

Friend: *(embarrassed silence)*

Me: *(laughing) You didn't give any money to the poor did you? You see that's the problem. You personally don't want to give money to the poor. You want the government to take money away from others and force them to give it to the poor. I on the other hand want the Christians and the church to do it voluntarily. I don't want to force you to do it. You don't need to do it. Just reduce our taxes and leave it to us.*

A lunch conversation. We are still great friends by the way.

Is Jesus A Socialist?

I have a picture on my computer. It's of a group of protesters at a rally, one of them, a young lady is holding up a very large sign that says, "Jesus was a Socialist!"

While we may think the sentiment is nice and Jim Wallis, Tony Compolo and many liberation theologians would like us to believe that it is true; the reality is that it's a complete misunderstanding of what our Lord told us to do.

Remember how we discussed in an earlier chapter (*What about the Sermon on the Mount?*) how there is no logical way to apply the Sermon on the Mount to governments. It was directed to us as *individuals*. Imagine again how ridiculous it would be if you went to a judge because someone had assaulted and mugged you; and the judge insisted that we follow Christ's admonition so you were now legally obliged to let the mugger hit your other

⁶³rhog.blogspot.com/2008/03/saint-barack-stingy.html

cheek and take your clothes. Those who have a very limited understanding of the Bible tend to make the same mistake when they look at all the other teachings of our Lord. The complaint that I hear over and over again is that Jesus told us to love our neighbors. Thus the conclusion they come to is that we should collect taxes and feed the poor with that money. We should then raise more taxes and give those who need it, free healthcare and housing. It would be the most loving thing to do. It's what Jesus would want us to do.

Now I fully agree, Jesus did say, you and I should give to the poor, take care of others, sacrifice for our neighbors who aren't even related to us, provide medical assistance to the stranger, food to hungry, shelter to the homeless and visit to the prisoners.

*But he said **you and I** should do it. He never said the government should do it?*

He said, *You* the individual, follow me. You do as I tell you to do. You, give money to the poor yourself.

He never said **force** the person next to you to do it. He never said force *others* to do it. That's stealing and coercion. It does violence to Christ's words and I admonish Compolo and Wallis for twisting scripture in this way.

Our Lord did not say take money away from the selfish and give it to the poor, nor did he say take money away from the rich and give to the struggling. He never even said take money from the *filthy* rich.

I cannot find anywhere where Jesus said, "Take from someone to give to yet another person." Jesus said, *you* the individual should give sacrificially. You the individual should go into all the world and preach the gospel. You the individual should take from what God has given you and freely give. But he also said through the apostle, "The Lord loves a cheerful giver." Not a *forced* giver. Compolo is confusing Jesus with Stalin or Mao.

No, Jesus was no socialist. He was a "humanitarian"⁶⁴. He was into personal responsibility. He was a "personal charitist" to coin a new word. If you can show me where Jesus ever said that the government must provide charity through violence, force or coercion, then you would have a case.

But why did Jesus *never* say this? For one, there is corruption amongst man. The minute you bring a whole set of corrupt individuals into play who are not easily monitored or made accountable, things get lost, people get hurt, money and resources get wasted. Mini empires are built, graft happens. Worse yet, people receiving this mindless free handout with no personal touch, get used to getting something for nothing, which our Lord knew was bad for the spirit and well being of a person. As we've shown it is even be bad for the intelligence of a child. Recall that Patrick Fagan's studies have shown a direct link between a reduction of IQ and the length of time a child's parent was on welfare.

It is also bad for the persistence of faith, we've seen the more socialistic a country, the less Christian they are. Look at the nations of the

⁶⁴ When I say humanitarian, I do not mean it in the "humanist" sense of the word.

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"The situation in the churches is characterized by weariness with the struggle, by uncertainty of purpose and by lack of courage."

Author revealed below.

Looking at the lack of Christian involvement in politics, seeing that many of us don't even vote, we come to the terrible terrible realization that the only reason the massacre of unborn babies is still legal in America is because of us Christians. The blood of these innocents is really upon our hands because if we wanted to change it we could, but we haven't.

My response to a self proclaimed pro-lifer who hadn't bothered to vote.

"...we have filled every place among you—cities, islands, fortresses, towns, market places, the very camp, tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum—we have left nothing to you but the temples of your gods."

Quintus Septimus Florens Tertullian. A Christian Apologist mocking the Romans.

Conclusion: We Can Win This Battle

Many years ago, at one of my first startup companies, we were asked to bid on a large project for a TV Head End (where channels are aggregated and distributed). As the Chief Technology Officer, I was given the RFQ (request for quote). That's a document that describes the product the customer wants. We are to read it, understand it, create architectural documents and give them a quote for designing and building it.

Reading it, I was startled. The requirements for the project matched, feature for feature, an architectural document I had personally written a few months earlier, when I was coming up with our own product idea. Every feature I put in the document was a feature the customer wanted. I turned to our marketing vice president and said, "This is an amazing coincidence." He laughed, "Where do you think they got the feature set from?" They had obviously gotten it from *my* document. They wanted a quote on what I was already designing. Our VP then turned to the executive staff at the table and said, "Gentlemen, this is ours to lose."

Do you get that? The deal was "ours to lose". Our competitors had a high barrier to entry, in other words. They would have to work hard to win this deal. We were the only people who could "lose" it. Failure to win the contract would be solely our responsibility. "This is ours to lose."⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Yes, we did win the contract.

It's ours to lose

I started this chapter with a quote about the church becoming weary. Do you know who said this? It wasn't a Christian.

It was Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Gestapo in Nazi Germany. He said this in 1938⁶⁶ when the church fell silent about the way Germany was slowly changing. He said it as he saw the church give up the fight and meekly align itself with the party. He was saying this was a good thing for the Nazis.

Do you see? This is what people who oppose Christian values want you to believe – that the fight is no longer worth the effort. It is a lost cause. It's not worth going out to vote. Or it's not worth voting based on Biblical Principles.

Be encouraged, the truth of the matter is that a large majority of Americans, even those who are not evangelical or Catholic or God fearing Jews *do* agree with our values. For instance⁶⁷:

1. 89% believe religion and morality are important to them and their *family*.
2. 79% believe religion and morality are important to this *country*.
3. 64% believe there is not enough religion in schools. Only 8%, a small minority, believe there is too much religion in schools.
4. 87% approve of the reference to "The Creator" in the Declaration of Independence. Only 6% disapprove (This minority, clearly, do not realize that if you take out the Creator, the entire Declaration and Constitution falls apart.)
5. 88% approve of the reference of "One Nation under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. Only 7% disapprove.
6. 78% approve of the Ten Commandments appearing in court houses across America. Only 12% disapprove.
7. 81% oppose removing crosses and other such monuments from public parks and other public property. Only 8% strongly approve.
8. 94% approve of a moment of silence allowing children to pray silently if they want to in public schools. Only 3% strongly disapprove.
9. 90% approve of a Christmas tree or Menorah being placed on public property during the holiday season. Only 5% strongly disapprove.
10. 82% oppose banning all prayer in public schools. Only 9% approve.
11. 79% oppose forbidding high school children from saying thanks to God in a graduation speech. Only 14% strongly approve banning it.
12. 83% oppose the left's model that the best way to protect religious freedom is to make sure no religious expression is permitted in public buildings.

Other polls show that over 51% of America is pro-life, with almost 86% agreeing that abortion should be either illegal or should be restricted compared to the almost no restrictions currently.⁶⁸ Similarly, other polls show

⁶⁶ The Nazi Persecution of the Churches, 1933-1945 John S. Conway. Regent College Publishing (February 1, 1997) pg 220.

⁶⁷ Facts taken from AmericanSolutions.com, 2009

⁶⁸ www.msnbc.msn.com/id/30771408/

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About the Author

Neil Mammen, a first generation American immigrant is an Engineer during the day and an Apologist at night. As an engineer, he spends his time architecting and designing networking & video delivery systems, computer chips, boards & FPGAs with **TentmakerSystems.com** and other US and international engineering companies. He received his BSEE in Computer and Electrical Engineering at the age of 20 and his MSEE in Solid State Physics and Computer Engineering at 22. Neil has cofounded 4 startup companies in Silicon Valley and one company internationally. He has about 20 issued and pending patents in areas varying from Networking, Traffic Shaping, and Packet Processing to Highway Alert Systems and LED Local Dimming TV methodologies.

Neil is also the founder of **NoBlindFaith.com**, an apologetics ministry focused on training everyday people to use apologetics in evangelization. Apologetics is the investigation and defense of the truth of Christianity using facts, reason, science, history, archeology and philosophy. He is a speaker at various venues and Apologetics and Missions Conferences around the US teaching Apologetics, Theology and the defense of Christianity as a Rational and Logical Faith. Neil has been featured on: NPR debating Eric Rothchild of the ACLU and Eugenie Scott at the Commonwealth Club; KFAX Radio (with Stand for Truth Ministries speaking about Stem Cell Research); and on various other radios shows including the Lars Larson Show and the American Family Radio. He is on the board of the Values Advocacy Council and has spoken at local churches for the Family Research Council.

Some of Neil's blogs can be found at **CrossExamined.org**.

Neil can be scheduled as a speaker for conferences, church services or retreats anywhere in the world:

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References for Neil Mammen as a Teacher

If you are looking for someone who teaches apologetics and doesn't apologize for it, Neil's the guy you want to call. I recommend his teaching highly and so do the people of our church. He is witty, funny, engaging, insightful, deep, easy to listen to, hard to ignore.

Bill Buchholz, Senior Pastor, Family Community Church

Neil's messages not only reflect professional and Scriptural integrity, but his sense of humor adds the well rounded touch that keeps our congregation anticipating his next visit or series.

David Underwood, Senior Pastor, Liberty Ridge Church

Neil has a gift that spans all age groups. This is because I can name none that exceed Neil's preparedness when he takes the pulpit. Neil has sound Doctrine and Theology. His style is relevant yet it remains biblically sound. You can expect dynamic visuals and creatively enhanced teaching that pulls each hearer in!

Chuck Aruta, Senior Pastor, New Beginnings Church

Neil is both dynamic and exciting to listen to. He is able to captivate an audience of any age from Jr. High to adults! Neil has a unique ability to take deep and sometimes complicated spiritual truths and communicates them in a relevant way. He speaks both to the mind and the heart. Not only can I speak to his ability as a speaker, I can also speak of his character (and his love of gadgets). Neil lives his life with integrity and his love for God is evident. He is generous, hospitable and faithful, both in his relationships with people as well as with God.

Adam Miller, Youth Pastor, West Gate Church

I love Neil's passion to communicate truths that matter. Whether he is speaking of the rationality of the Christian worldview, or the mandate for Christians to engage culture with a broad and winsome presence in all fields and vocations, whether speaking to students or adults, his thought is clear, his presentation entertaining and compelling, and his authentic and whole-hearted commitment obvious to all who interact with his prophetic message.

Jeff Reed, Senior Pastor, Hillside Covenant Church

Neil is a committed follower of Jesus Christ and an enthusiastic, gifted communicator. He is a wide reader and a keen discerner of culture. He knows the contemporary, as well as the historic challenges to the Truth of God's revelation found in the written word and the Living Word, Jesus Christ. He knows how to expose the lie and to expound God's Truth in a convincing, winsome way. Neil is articulate and courageous in presenting his convictions and he helps others to follow his example. I recommend him as a speaker for church services, seminars, and retreats.

Galen Call, Senior Pastor, Los Gatos Christian Church/Venture Christian Church