Globalism and Foreign Policy

A small but powerful group of internationalists is bent on bringing every aspect of our world society under one, universal political system. The philosophy behind this movement is known as globalism. In this article we will be looking at the subject and describing how it has been promoted by the Bush and Clinton administrations. First, I would like to begin by looking at the goals of globalists. Though they are a diverse and eclectic group of international bankers, politicians, futurists, religious leaders, and economic planners, they are unified in their desire to unite the planet under a one-world government, a single economic system, and a one-world religion. Through various governmental programs, international conferences, and religious meetings, they desire to unite the various governments of this globe into one single network.

Although this can be achieved in a variety of ways, the primary focus of globalists is on the next generation of young people. By pushing global education in the schools, they believe they can indoctrinate students to accept the basic foundations of globalism. According to one leader of this movement, global education seeks to “prepare students for citizenship in the global age.” They believe that this new form of education will enable future generations to deal effectively with population growth, environmental problems, international tensions, and terrorism.

But something stands in the way of the designs of the globalists. As a result, they have targeted for elimination three major institutions whose continued existence impedes their plans to unite the world under a single economic, political, and social global network.

Three Institutions Under Attack

The three institutions under attack by globalists today are: the traditional family, the Christian church, and the national government. Each institution espouses doctrines antithetical to the globalist vision. Therefore, they argue, these institutions must be substantially modified or replaced.

The traditional family poses a threat to globalism for two reasons. First, it is still the primary socializing unit in our society. Parents pass on social, cultural, and spiritual values to their children. Many of these values such as faith, hard work, and independence collide with the designs of globalists. Instead, they envision a world where the norm is (1) tolerance for religion, (2) dependence on a one-world global community, and (3) international cooperation. Because these values are not generally taught in traditional American families, the globalists seek to change the family.

Second, parental authority in a traditional family clearly supersedes international authority. Children are taught to obey their parents in such families. Parents have authority over their children, not a national or international governmental entity. Globalists, therefore, see the traditional, American family as an enemy not a friend.

Well-known humanist and globalist Ashley Montagu speaking to a group of educators declared that, “The American family structure produces mentally ill children.” From his perspective, the traditional family which teaches such things as loyalty to God and loyalty to country is not producing children mentally fit for the global world of the twenty-first century.

One of the reasons globalist educators advocate childhood education begin at earlier and earlier ages is so that young children can be indoctrinated into globalism. The earlier they can communicate global themes to children, the more likely they are at breaking the influence of the family.
The Christian church, because of its belief in the authority of the Bible, is another institution globalists feel threatens their global vision. Most other religions as well as liberal Christianity pose little threat. But Christians who believe in God, in sin, in salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone, stand in the way of globalist plans for a one-world government and a one-world religion.

The coming world religion will merge all religions and faiths into one big spiritual amalgam. Hinduism and Buddhism are syncretistic religions and can easily be merged into this one-world religion. But orthodox Christianity cannot.

Jesus taught that “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me” (John 14:6). Globalists, therefore, see Christianity as narrow, exclusive, and intolerant. Paul Brandwein even went so far as to say that, “Any child who believes in God is mentally ill.” Belief in a personal God to which we owe allegiance and obedience cannot be tolerated if globalists are to achieve their ultimate vision.

National governments also threaten globalism. If the goal is to unite all peoples under one international banner, any nationalism or patriotism blocks the progress of that vision. Globalist and architect, Buckminster Fuller once said that, “Nationalism is the blood clot in the world’s circulatory system.”

Among nations, the United States stands as one of the greatest obstacles to globalism. The European community has already acquiesced to regional and international plans, and other emerging nations willingly join the international community.

By contrast, the United States remains independent in its national fervor and general unwillingness to cooperate with international standards. Until recently, Americans rejected nearly everything international; be it an international system of measurements (metric system) or an international agency (such as the United Nations or the World Court).

The globalists’ solution is to promote global ideas in the schools. Dr. Pierce of Harvard University speaking to educators in Denver, Colorado, said, “Every child in America who enters schools at the age of five is mentally ill, because he comes to school with allegiance toward our elected officials, toward our founding fathers, toward our institutions, toward the preservation of this form of government.” Their answer is to purge these nationalist beliefs from school children so they will come to embrace the goals of globalism.

All over the country programs on Global Education, Global History, and Global Citizenship are springing up. Children are being indoctrinated into a global way of thinking. Frequently these programs masquerade as drug awareness programs, civics programs, environmental programs. But their goal is just the same: to break down a child’s allegiance to family, church, and country. And to replace this allegiance to the globalist vision for a one-world government, a one-world economic system, and a one-world religion.

**New World Order**

The term “New World Order” has been used by leading establishment media and think tanks. These groups advocate a world government, a merging of national entities into an international organization that centralizes political, economic, and cultural spheres into a global network.

Those promoting this idea of a new world order are a diverse group. They include various political groups, like the Club of Rome, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Trilateral Commission. The concept has also been promoted by foreign policy groups, secret societies, and international
Historically internationalists have used the term to describe their desire to unite the world politically, economically, and culturally, and it is hardly a recent phenomenon. After World War I, President Woodrow Wilson pushed for the world’s first international governmental agency: the League of Nations. Yet despite his vigorous attempt to win approval, he failed to get the United States to join the League of Nations.

But by the end of World War II, the world seemed much more willing to experiment with at least a limited form of world government through the United Nations. President Harry Truman signed the United Nations Charter in 1945, and a year later John D. Rockefeller, Jr., gave the U.N. the money to purchase the eighteen acres along the East River in New York City where the U.N. building sits today.

For the last forty years, globalists have tried to use the U.N. and other international organizations to birth this new world order. Yet most of their actions have been to no avail. Except for its peacekeeping action during the Korean War, most of the time the U.N. has been nothing more than an international debate society.

Although the U.N. has not provided internationalists with much of a forum for international change, that does not mean they have not been making progress in their desire to unite the world. Through political deals and treaties of economic cooperation, internationalists have been able to achieve many of their goals.

How these goals fit within the current political context is unclear. But we already have an emerging world order in Europe through the European Economic Community. This European Community is more than just a revised Common Market. Europeans are beginning to speak of themselves as Europeans rather than as Germans or as English. They have developed various cooperative arrangements including a common European currency.

Even more surprising is talk of a United European Community that stretches from the Atlantic to the Eastern end of the former Soviet Union. In his book _Perestroika_, Mikhail Gorbachev proposed a United Europe stretching “from the Atlantic to the Urals.” And Pope John Paul II, during a mass held in Germany, appealed for a United Europe “from the Atlantic to the Urals.”

Other signs of a change in thinking came when former President Bush delivered his September 1990 speech to a joint session of Congress when he referred four times to a “new world order.” Supposedly the reason for all of this talk of a new world order is a changing world situation. Lessening tensions in Eastern Europe and increasing tensions in the Middle East are the supposed reason for President Bush talking about a new world order. But, as we have already noted, this term precedes any of the recent world events.

Notice how _Newsweek_ magazine described the genesis of President Bush’s vision of the new world order: “As George Bush fished, golfed and pondered the post-cold-war world in Maine last month, his aides say that he began to imagine a new world order.”

It went on to say that “It is a vision that would have chilled John Foster Dulles to the marrow: the United States and the Soviet Union, united for crisis management around the globe.” Perhaps it would have surprised former government leaders, but it is noteworthy that nearly all secular media and most politicians seem ready to embrace the concept of a new world order.

When President Bush addressed the joint houses of Congress, this is how he expressed his vision: “The crisis in the Persian Gulf, as grave as it is, also offers a rare opportunity to move toward an
historic period of cooperation. Out of these troubled times, our fifth objective—a new world order—can emerge; a new era, freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace. An era in which the nations of the world, east and west, north and south, can prosper and live in harmony."

Recently President Clinton has proposed a variation of this idea. He describes it as global multilateralism. When the Clinton foreign policy team took office, they wanted to extend President Bush’s ideal of a new world order. Dedicated to the rapid expansion of U.N.-sponsored “peace keeping operations,” the Clinton team began developing agreements to deploy American troops to hot spots around the globe. The goal was to upgrade the professionalism of the U.N. troops and placement of American troops under U.N. commanders using U.N. rules of engagement.

All seemed to be going well for the Clinton policy until U.S. troops in Somalia got cut down in an ambush, and Americans discovered that the operation was led by a Pakistani General. Suddenly, American fathers and mothers wanted to know why their sons’ lives were put at risk by placing U.S. troops in harm’s way and by placing them under U.N. command.

The Clinton policy of global multilateralism attempts to honor the U.N. request for a standing rapid deployment force under the secretary-general’s command. But what it ends up doing is calling for American servicemen to risk life and limb for ill-defined causes in remote places under foreign leaders with constrained rules of engagement. The loss of American sovereignty and the undermining of strategic interests of the United States is significant.

What’s the solution? We need a foreign policy based upon American interests, not the ideals of the globalists.

**Practical Suggestions**

We must challenge the goals and vision of globalists. In an effort to unite all peoples under a one-world government, one-world economic system, and one-world religion, globalists will attack the traditional family, the Christian church, and the American government. We, therefore, must be willing and able to meet the challenge. Here are some important action steps we must take to prevent the advance of globalism in our communities.

First, we must become informed. Fortunately a number of books have been written which provide accurate information about the goals and strategy of globalism.

Second, find out if globalism is already being taught in your school system. Materials from groups like the Center for Teaching International Relations at the University of Denver are already being used in many school districts. Look for key words and names that may indicate that global education is being used in your district.


Third, express your concerns to educators and leaders in your community. Often educators teaching globalism are unaware of the implications of their teaching. Globalism in attempting to unite nations and peoples will have to break down families, churches, and governments. Educate them about the dangers of globalism and its threat to the foundations upon which your community rests. Encourage them to be better informed about the true goals of globalists and the danger they pose to our
Fourth, Christians should be in prayer for those in government. We are admonished in 1 Timothy 2 to pray for leaders and others in authority. Pray that they will have discernment and not be lead astray by the designs of globalists.

Finally, I believe Christians should question the current interest many of our leaders have in developing a new world order. What are our leaders’ calling for us to do? Are they proposing that the United States give up its national sovereignty? Will we soon be following the dictates of the U.N. Charter rather than the U.S. Constitution?

These are questions we should all be asking our leaders. What does President Clinton intend with his policy of global multilateralism? What role will the United States play? Aren’t we merely being moved towards the globalists’ goal of a one-world government, a one-world economy, and a one-world religion?

Moreover, what will this new world order cost the American taxpayer? From the operations of Desert Storm to the more recent military actions in Somalia, Bosnia, and Haiti we can see a trend. American troops do the fighting and the American people pay the bill. If we do not re-evaluate our foreign policy, it may end up costing the American taxpayer plenty.

If you have concerns, I would encourage you to write or call and express your thoughts. Congress and the President need to know that you have questions about current attempts to move us into a new world order.

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World Hunger

Kerby Anderson helps us consider the fundamental reasons behind the prevalence of hunger in our world today. He points out our responsibility as Christians to make our resources available to help those caught in this crises. He tells us we need to be praying and working to end world hunger.

Frequently we see pictures of starving children and are overwhelmed by the awesome task of feeding the world’s hungry. Why, we wonder, is there so much hunger in the world today? The answer can be broken down into three categories: poverty, population, and priorities.

Poverty, Population, and Priorities

The first reason for hunger is poverty. The poor are hungry, and the hungry are usually poor. In First World countries, we talk about our quality of life or our standard of living. But in Third World countries, the focus shifts to the mere sustaining of life. A major problem in Third World countries is capital investment. There is very little money that can be spent on agricultural development or even basics like seed and farm tools.

A second reason for hunger is population. Nearly every country has experienced a growth in population, but the greatest impact has been on the world’s poorest countries because they have
been experiencing exponential growth in their population.

Notice how exponential population growth shortens our response time to crises. This planet did not reach a population of 1 billion until about the turn of the century. It took the world thousands of years to reach a population level of 1 billion. By 1950, the world's population grew to 2 billion. So the population doubled in just 50 years. By 1975, we had 4 billion people, so the doubling time decreased to just 25 years. Many experts estimate that we will have 6 to 8 billion people by the end of this century.

This exponential growth puts an enormous strain on our ability to provide resources and services to a starving world. Imagine if your own city or town had its population double every 20 to 25 years. That would mean you would have to double the number of houses, double the number of grocery stores, double the number of roads, and double the number of sewage-treatment plants.

Such growth would be a significant strain on the budget and resources of a First World country. Imagine the strain this would put on a Third World country. So the problem of world hunger is exacerbated by population growth.

A third reason for world hunger is priorities. Those of us who live in an industrialized society place a high priority on comfort and convenience. Our standard of living places a significant strain on the world economy.

In the First World countries, we only have a 1 percent growth rate. But that 1 percent growth rate affects the planet eight times as much as the 23 percent growth rate of the lesser-developed countries. The reason for this is that we use a lot more resources to maintain our standard of living. Currently it costs 30 times as much in terms of energy and resources to feed a North American as it does to feed a Pakistani.

Certainly this is something Christians must consider in terms of their own economic lifestyle. At a time when people are not getting enough to eat, we are living a lifestyle far beyond what many could even imagine.

We have a great challenge before us. We must not only consider what we can do to feed the hungry, but we must also consider what we should do to limit our indulgent lifestyle.

**Exploitation**

I would next like to focus on some of the most publicized causes of world hunger. The first is exploitation. There is a tremendous amount of exploitation in the world, which has led to the problem of hunger. Christians should not be surprised. Many Old Testament verses in the books of Proverbs, Amos, and Micah speak of poverty that results from exploitation and fraud.

Many countries were exploited by colonial powers in the 19th and 20th centuries. But while this is true, let me also hasten to add that liberals have perhaps made too much of the colonial connection.

P. T. Bauer, in his book *Dissent on Development*, shows that many of these countries that had some contact with the Western world actually did better economically than those countries that did not have any contact at all. Hong Kong and India, which were ruled by colonial powers, did better economically than countries in the deepest part of Africa that had little contact with Western economies.

When these countries gained independence, they did not have to start from scratch. The colonial powers left behind roads, schools, and hospitals, all of which provided an infrastructure to build
But another aspect of exploitation that is often ignored is not the colonial connection but the Marxist connection. Countries such as Ethiopia with authoritarian Marxist governments bring great suffering on their populations because of government policies that prevent food and compassionate aid from reaching their people.

**Misfortune and Persecution**

A second cause of hunger is misfortune and persecution. Again this should come as no surprise to Christians. In the book of Job we have an example of poverty that comes through misfortune. In other places we see how poverty results from persecution. And sometimes poverty comes because of God’s judgment on a people who disobey Him.

Because we live in a fallen world, we must not be surprised when misfortune strikes. During the last two decades, for example, we have had fairly stable weather patterns. Now that the weather has become more erratic, we wonder what is going wrong. Although many doomsayers want to blame these changes on the much-publicized greenhouse effect, most of these climatic fluctuations are typical. We have been lulled into thinking that weather is predictable and must remind ourselves that the earth still “groans in travail” because we live in a fallen world. Hurricanes, monsoons, and droughts are going to exacerbate our problems with world hunger.

As we look at these problems, we can see that the problem of world hunger is going to increase rather than decrease. As our weather continues to be erratic and as terrorism and persecution intensify around the world, problems with hunger will intensify.

We are going to have to find ways to help the people and countries that are suffering. Part of the solution may be for our government to provide help through foreign aid. But another important and often neglected part of the solution is for Christian organizations to provide food and resources to the needy. The problem of world hunger is massive, and all of us must do what we can to solve the problem.

**Governmental Control**

Along with these well-known causes of hunger are a few less-publicized, more obscure causes. One of these causes is governmental control. Hunger and poverty are often due to the very structure of governments. This is important to realize when we begin to talk about cures for world hunger, because we as a country are often limited in what we can do to lessen hunger in a foreign nation.

The statement by Jesus that the poor will always be with us takes on a new meaning when we realize how intractable many problems like world hunger are. Lack of food and unpredictable weather patterns aren’t the sole causes of hunger. Many times governmental control makes hunger worse.

Even a cursory look at the world market shows that those countries that provide the greatest economic freedom also have the greatest amount of economic success. Hong Kong, for example, is a country that has received no foreign aid. But because it has a relatively free market, it enjoys one of the highest standards of living of any country in Asia.

Economic freedom allows personal incentive and pushes the economic engine of development. We can see this in the example of the former Soviet Union. In addition to the large governmental plots of agricultural land, smaller plots were allocated to the individual farmer. It is estimated that nearly 25 percent of all the Soviet agricultural produce came from these small, private plots of land. Soviet
production on small plots of land demonstrates the power of incentive created by economic freedom. If a government focuses all its time and attention on the commonality of property, it will lead its country down the path towards poverty and hunger.

**Indifference**

Another cause of hunger is indifference. Individuals and their governments should be more concerned about world hunger than they are now. The affluence of North America often keeps us from being concerned about those who do not have enough to eat. Although the United States has set the standard for many other nations in its compassionate giving, still more could be done.

Particularly troubling is the lack of compassion of Third World countries for their neighbors. The OPEC countries, for example, have vast financial resources, which they are unwilling to share with countries in the region not blessed with such geological resources. They need to show compassion to their neighboring countries.

**The Culture of Poverty**

A third cause of hunger is the culture of poverty. Proverbs 10:15 says, “The ruin of the poor is their poverty.” The reason for poverty is often the prior existence of poverty. Poverty breeds more poverty, and more poverty breeds more hunger.

Those people who come from an impoverished situation do not have the means by which to better themselves. They are not getting the necessary calories and nutrition, so they are caught in the web of poverty. Moreover, they are being raised in a culture of poverty that perpetuates dependence and prevents advancement.

This is where the gospel can have an impact. Poverty and hunger are not just economic problems. There is a strong psychological and spiritual component to poverty. A person who is born again changes his worldview, and this is an important aspect of dealing with the problem of hunger.

**Curing World Hunger**

When we talk about solutions to world hunger we should realize that there are a number of unbiblical solutions. One of the most incredible is the “lifeboat ethic,” which proposes the use of the principle known as *triage*.

**The Lifeboat Ethic**

This idea was popularized by Dr. Garrett Hardin at the University of California at Santa Barbara. He uses the metaphor of the lifeboat to explain how rich nations are surrounded by poor ones who want to get into the lifeboat. He says, at some point, we have to push them back into the water to prevent us all from sinking.

He further argues that the problem will become worse because many of these countries will not control their populations. Thus, he says, it is inevitable that these people will eventually starve. He believes that feeding them will only prolong the suffering. Hardin therefore proposes we use the principle of triage. This concept as it is used in military medicine attempts to classify war or disaster victims according to the severity of their wounds in order to maximize the number of survivors. As incoming wounded arrive, they are placed in one of three groups. The first group has superficial wounds and can be treated later. The second group has more substantial wounds and must be treated immediately. And the members of the third group have such massive wounds that they are
simply set aside and allowed to die.

Proponents of this lifeboat ethic suggest that we use the principle of triage and stop shipments of food to Third World nations facing starvation. After all, they argue, there is only so much room in the lifeboat or on “Spaceship Earth.” We must push the rest of these people off the boat in order to save ourselves.

This idea certainly raises profound ethical questions. But the metaphor only makes sense if you accept the following three assumptions. The first assumption is that there is no distinction between people and animals. The second assumption is that we are pushing the limits of the world’s resources. The third assumption is that population growth is not being brought under control. However, all three of these assumptions are false. First, there is a distinction between people and animals. Humans have dignity because they are created in the image of God and are therefore distinct from animals. Yet we live in a world where evolutionists blur this distinction between humans and animals.

The second assumption is also questionable. We do live in a fallen world, and there are some limits to growth. But an even greater production of resources is possible, and numerous conservation techniques can increase production.

The third assumption, that population growth is not being brought under control, is also in doubt. There is evidence that many countries are serious about controlling their population explosion. In fact, many nations are experiencing a decline in their birth rates and will eventually have declining populations.

What we have to recognize is that there are many people who are proposing unbiblical solutions. And we as Christians have a responsibility to make sure these propositions do not become law.

The Christian Ethic

Often I find that Christians look at the problem of world hunger and become overwhelmed. They ask, What can we do? After all, many solutions to world hunger come from governmental agencies and large organizations.

We need to recognize that governmental agencies and even private organizations are only part of the solution and often are not as effective as Christian organizations and missionaries. In Marxist countries like Ethiopia, the United States has limited diplomatic relationships. Moreover, the government has used some of the incoming aid as a weapon against their enemies. Indigenous programs through missionary organizations can sometimes be more effective since they do not have to go through as many diplomatic channels. Christians should realize there are things we can do, and we can learn about these from Scripture. The first obvious thing we can do is to give. The Bible talks about the compassionate distribution of food and other resources in passages such as 1 Corinthians 16 and 2 Corinthians 9. The New Testament church gave to other Christians who were in need.

One way a church can foster an attitude of compassion is to emphasize our responsibility to the hungry. One program called “Skip a Lunch and Feed a Bunch” encourages Christians to save the money they would have used to buy lunch and place it in a container for those who are hungry.

Some agencies have programs for adopting a child in another country and providing for his or her food and educational expenses. You can write letters to the child and have a personal involvement in this often abstract problem of world hunger.
Another solution to world hunger is missionary work. As missionaries go into various cultures, they are able to change attitudes and values that perpetuate the cycle of hunger and poverty. They can teach people how to become more independent economically and how to develop the resources available to them. In the famine in Ethiopia, many Christian relief organizations provided both food and resources. Unfortunately, their efforts were hampered by inadequate ports and a primitive transportation network. Many of the nation’s trucks were being used to fight a civil war, and others were crippled by a lack of spare parts. So the relief organizations began to airlift food in order to feed those starving in remote areas of the country.

Missionary outreach has also had an impact by preaching the gospel. As I mentioned previously, spiritual conversion changes a person’s worldview and can break the culture of poverty. Many of the problems of poverty and hunger are not economic but psychological and spiritual. These include such things as poor training or wrongful attitudes.

Preaching the gospel can change not only individuals but a culture. Just think of the impact the Hindu worldview has on countries like India. False religious beliefs keep the Indians from utilizing beef, an important source of protein. Other ideas such as the concept of karma keep Indians from meeting the needs of the underclass. Conversion to Christianity can change not only individual lives but a culture that rests on a false foundation. World hunger is certainly a major problem. As Christians we need to be praying and working to provide solutions to the awesome problem of feeding the world.

Politics and Religion

Nearly everywhere you go, it seems, you hear statements like, “You can’t legislate morality,” or “Christians shouldn’t try to legislate their morality.” Like dandelions, they pop up out of nowhere and sow seeds of deception in the fertile, secular soil of our society.

Unfortunately, I have also heard these cliches repeated in many churches. Even Christians seem confused about how they are to communicate a biblical view of issues to a secular world.

Part of the confusion stems from blurring the distinctions between law and human behavior. When a person says, “You can’t legislate morality,” he or she might mean simply that you can’t make people good through legislation. In that instance, Christians can agree.

The law (whether biblical law or civil law) does not by itself transform human behavior. The apostle Paul makes that clear in his epistle to the Romans. English jurists for the last few centuries have also agreed that the function of the law is not to make humans good but to control criminal behavior.

But if you understand the question in its normal formulation, then Christians can and should legislate morality. At the more basic level, law and public policy is an attempt to legislate morality. The more relevant question is not whether we should legislate morality but what kind of morality we should legislate.

Much of the confusion stems from our country’s misunderstanding of democratic pluralism. Our
founders wisely established a country that protected individual personal beliefs with constitutional guarantees of speech, assembly, and religion. But undergirding this pluralism was a legal foundation that presupposed a Judeo-Christian system of ethics.

Thus, in the area of personal ethics, people are free to think and believe anything they want. Moreover, they are free to practice a high degree of ethical pluralism in their personal life. To use a common phrase, they are free to do their own thing.” But that doesn’t imply total ethical anarchy. Not everyone can “do his own thing” in every arena of life, so government must set some limits to human behavior.

This is the domain of social ethics. To use an oft-repeated phrase, “a person’s right to freely swing his or her arms, stops at the end of your nose.” When one person’s actions begin to affect another person, we have moved from personal ethics to social ethics and often have to place some limits on human behavior.

Government is to bear the sword (Rom. 13:4) and thus must legislate some minimum level of morality when there is a threat to life, liberty, or property. An arsonist is not free to do his own thing nor is a rapist or a murderer. At that point, government must step in to protect the rights of citizens.

Perhaps the most visible clash between different perceptions of ethics can be seen in the abortion controversy. Pro-choice groups generally see the abortion issue as an area of personal morality. On the other hand, pro-life advocates respond that the fetus is human life, so something else is involved besides just personal choice. Thus, government should protect the life of the unborn child.

**Promoting Christian Values**

Christians must consider how to communicate biblical morality effectively to a secular culture. Here are a few principles.

First, we must interpret Scripture properly. Too often, Christians have passed off their sociological preferences (on issues like abortion or homosexual behavior) instead of doing proper biblical exegesis. The result has often been *a priori* conclusions buttressed with improper proof-texting.

In areas where the Bible clearly speaks, we should exercise our prophetic voice as we seek to be salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16). In other areas, concessions should be allowed.

The apostle Paul recognized that the first priority of Christians is to preach the gospel. He refused to allow various distinctions to hamper his effectiveness and tried to “become all things to all men” that he might save some (1 Cor. 9:22). Christians must stand firm for biblical truth, yet also recognize the greater need for the unsaved person to hear a loving presentation of the gospel.

Second, Christians should carefully develop biblical principles which can be applied to contemporary social and medical issues. Christians often jump immediately from biblical passages into political and social programs. They wrongly neglect the important intermediate step of applying biblical principles within a particular social and cultural situation.

In recent years, there has been a dangerous tendency for certain Christians to identify their message with a particular political party or philosophy of government. Christians must be more careful to articulate the connection between biblical principles and specific programs. While Christians may agree about the goal, they may reasonably disagree about which program might best achieve that goal. In these non-moral areas, a spirit of freedom may be necessary.
Third, Christians should articulate the moral teachings of Scripture in ways that are meaningful in a pluralistic society. Philosophical principles like the “right to life” or “the dangers of promiscuity” can be appealed to as part of common grace. Scientific, social, legal, and ethical considerations can be useful in arguing for biblical principles in a secular culture.

Christians can argue in a public arena against abortion on the basis of scientific and legal evidence. Medical advances in embryology and fetology show that human life exists in the womb. A legal analysis of the Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision shows the justices violated a standard principle of jurisprudence. The burden of proof is placed on the life-taker and the benefit of the doubt is given to the life-saver. Since the Court never determined when life begins, they erroneously ruled that states could not prohibit first trimester abortions.

Likewise, Christians can argue against the depravity of homosexuality on the basis of the dangers of sexual promiscuity in an age of AIDS. Epidemiological and sociological data can provide a convincing case for public health measures that will prevent the spread of AIDS.

This does not mean we should subliterate the biblical message. But our effectiveness in the public arena will be improved if we elaborate the scientific, social, legal, and ethical aspects of a particular issue instead of trying to articulate our case on Scripture alone.

In conclusion, Christians should develop effective ways to communicate biblical morality to our secular culture. Law and public policy should be based upon biblical morality which results from an accurate interpretation of Scripture and a careful application to society.

**Role of Religion in Politics**

What should be the role of religion in politics? A number of years ago I participated in a panel representing a Baskin-Robbins variety of religious opinion that considered this controversial question. The scenario we were to consider was that of “a candidate running for office who comes from the far religious right and uses his religious beliefs as a major part of his political credentials.”

I was intrigued by the addition of the adjective “far,” especially since the moderator, Hodding Carter, served in the administration of an evangelical president. Jimmy Carter–hardly considered a member of the “far” religious right–became the only Democrat to win a presidential election in the last twenty years because he successfully used his “born-again” beliefs to influence voters.

Moreover, how plausible is the scenario? Pat Robertson withdrew from the 1988 presidential primaries with few delegates. Jerry Falwell has withdrawn from his previous active role in the Moral Majority. And many surveys suggest that American voters still have some misgivings about mixing politics and evangelical Christianity.

The Williamsburg Charter Survey on Religion and Public Life (taken a number of years ago) showed that while only 8 percent of Americans would refuse to vote for a Roman Catholic on the basis of religion, 13 percent would refuse to vote for a “born-again Baptist” and 21 percent wouldn’t vote for a candidate who has been a minister of a church.

Nevertheless, two ministerial candidates did campaign for the presidency in 1988, perhaps hoping that voters who shared their convictions would overlook their lack of experience in public office. Although they both achieved some minor success, the delegate counts confirmed American voters’ wariness of ministers in public office.

Is it possible too much is being made of the religious factor in elections? While it may make great
copy for ACLU or PAW fund raising letters warning of “religious ayatollahs” taking over the government, the reality is that the American electorate may be looking more for competence than convictions.

Two notable evangelicals in Congress in the last few years have been Senator Bill Armstrong and Senator Mark Hatfield. Both come from states geographically removed from the Bible Belt, suggesting that they are elected for more than just their religious convictions.

Certainly the evangelical vote has played a factor in past presidential elections. Jimmy Carter won one of the closest elections in American history because of the “born-again” vote and lost it four years later when many of those voters abandoned him for Ronald Reagan. American voters, perhaps because of the Carter experience, seem less inclined to use religious convictions as the litmus test for public office.

If anything, the Williamsburg Charter Survey seems to show that Americans are applying an inverse religious test. The Constitution prohibits a religious test for public office, but the voters may be reversing that idea and really wanting someone who doesn’t take his faith too seriously.

This is indeed unfortunate because religious ideals should undergird this republic. Yet voters seem willing to settle for a president with nothing more than a lukewarm Christian faith.

Thirty years ago, President Eisenhower declared a national day of prayer and then used the day to go golfing. Later revelations from the Reagan White House suggest the president spent more time consulting the stars than praying to the Creator of those stars. Perhaps nothing has changed. If so, then the hypothetical scenario we were asked to consider on the panel will remain hypothetical.

**Pluralism in this Country**

This country was founded on the idea of a tempered pluralism that allowed for a civil debate among the citizens. Although we take this pluralism for granted, it is instructive to remember how radical this concept was in the history of political philosophy. In the past, secular political philosophers argued that a legitimate state could not tolerate much freedom and diversity. After all, how would the dictator or monarch rule effectively if that much dissent were allowed?

Foundational to this idea is the belief that government should not be the final arbiter of truth. It should not be an institution that settles by force the truthfulness of an issue. This is why the framers of the Constitution specifically provided freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion. Government should not have power to impose its version of truth by force.

Christians should be strong supporters of this idea. We believe that God governs this world by His grace. His final judgment awaits, and we should not take His judgment into our hands. Overly anxious Christians often want to pull up the tares in the field instead of allowing the wheat and the tares to grow together.

Tyranny results when an authoritarian leader comes along who wants to impose his brand of truth on others. It is wrong for secularists to try to remove religion from the public sphere, and it is equally wrong for religious leaders to impose religion on others by force. In either case the political arena becomes a religious battleground.

What we should develop is a civil debate where Christians are allowed to promote biblical morality without imposing it. This has been made more difficult by the current anti-religious climate in our society.
Richard John Neuhaus talks of the “naked public square,” where religious values have been stripped from the public arenas of discourse. In this case, the tempered pluralism of the framers has been replaced by a radical pluralism which assumes that all values are relative. Public moral judgments, therefore, seem out of place. In recent years, we have seen a great deal of prejudice against such pronouncements simply because they are rooted in biblical morality.

So, the “naked public square,” where religious values are excluded, is wrong. Likewise, the “sacred public square,” which seeks to impose religious values, is also wrong. What Christians should be arguing for is a “civil public square” that allows an open, civil debate to take place. In such an arena, controversial ideas can be discussed and debated in a civil manner.

This form of pluralism must be more than just window dressing. Christians and non-Christians alike must be dedicated to maintaining a pluralism that allows vigorous interchange and debate. Unfortunately, there is some indication that many in our society see pluralism as merely a means to an end. English historian E. R. Norman believed that “pluralism is a name society gives itself when it is in the process of changing from one orthodoxy to another.”

If this is what secularists really want, then pluralism is in trouble. When religion is excluded in the name of pluralism, then pluralism no longer exists.

**Biblical Principles**

Christians should first develop a comprehensive program of social involvement. The Lordship of Jesus Christ is not a temporary, issue-oriented crusade. Christians are not merely to march against injustice and then cease their involvement. They have an on-going responsibility to build positive alternatives to existing evil.

Second, social and political involvement based upon biblical absolutes must be realistic. We should not fall prey to utopian political philosophies but squarely face the sinful nature of man and the important place government has in God’s creation. Because of a general cynicism about the role of government, Christians are often guilty of neglecting their role in society.

As Christians we must remember that although the times are evil, God’s common grace restrains sin. Even though perfect justice cannot be achieved until Christ returns, we are nevertheless responsible for doing what we can. If we co-labor with God, we can have a measure of success in achieving a better society.

Third, Christians should focus attention not only on individual change but on societal change. Changing lives is fundamental but not completely sufficient to change society. Revival must lead to reformation. Christians should not merely be content with Christians thinking biblically about the issues of life. They must also be acting biblically and building institutions with a Christian framework. A Christian world view implies a Christian world order.

Christian obedience goes beyond calling for spiritual renewal. We have often failed to ask the question, What do we do if hearts are not changed? Because government is ordained of God, we need to consider ways to legitimately use governmental power. Christians have a high stake in making sure government acts justly and makes decisions that provide maximum freedom for the furtherance of the gospel.

In situations in which governmental redress is not available, civil disobedience becomes an option. When such conditions exist, Christians might have to suffer the consequences as did their first-century counterparts in a hostile Roman culture.
We are to obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29) when civil government and civil law violate God’s commands and law. Christians therefore were correct when they hid Jews from the Nazis during World War II. Hitler’s Germany did not have the right to take innocent life or persecute the Jews.

Finally, the major focus of social involvement should be through the local church. Social action in the church is best called social service, since it attempts to move from the theoretical area of social ethics to the practical level of serving others in need. While evangelicals are to be commended for giving to the poor and others faced with adversity, our duty does not stop there. A much neglected area is personal involvement with people who need help.

The local church is the best place to begin to meet many social needs of a society. In the New Testament, the local church was the training ground for social involvement and provided a context by which the needy were shown compassion. Christians, therefore, should begin their outreach to society from the church and work together to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

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**Economic Issues**

**Minimum Wage**

Although the minimum wage law is more than 50 years old, it is still a very controversial measure. In fact, a battle over the minimum wage occurs every time Congress tries to increase it. Minimum wage seems like one of those political issues that compassionate people should support. But the opposite is true. The minimum wage leads to maximum unemployment for people with few job skills trying to enter the work force.

My own experience is illustrative. I started job hunting as a teenager during a rather depressed economy. The minimum wage requirement nearly kept me from getting a job because, as an unskilled laborer entering the job market for the first time, I had nothing more to offer than a strong back and conscientious work habits. Whether I was worth the minimum wage in my first job is questionable. But after working in a machine shop and as a ditch digger, I developed skills that made me more valuable to my employer.

Back in 1938, establishing a minimum wage of 35 cents an hour seemed admirable. But today it effectively shuts less-skilled people out of the work force. In essence, the minimum wage law requires employers to discriminate against young people with few job skills. A teenager whose services are worth, say, only $3 an hour is not going to be hired at $4.25 an hour (plus benefits like Social Security, which raise the cost to the employer to over $5 an hour). The choice is not between working for $3 an hour and working for $4.25 an hour. The real choice is between working for $3 an hour and not working at all.

The effect of minimum wage on young people is devastating. When the lowest rung on the ladder is higher than your head, that necessary first step into a job will never be taken. The high rate of unemployment among teenagers is due in large part to the minimum wage laws that place the rungs on the ladder too high. Eliminating the minimum wage would allow more young people to get on-the-job training.
Minimum wage’s effect on the poor is also troubling. Research indicates that for every 10 percent rise in the minimum wage, there is a 3 percent drop in employment among workers covered by the Fair Labor and Standards Act. In other words, if seven workers get their wages increased, three workers either get fired or can’t find work. Notice how the minimum wage law has changed the nature of employment in America. More and more restaurants are switching from waiter service to self-service. Gas stations have followed suit. It explains why you see fewer ushers at movie theaters and fewer “bag boys” at supermarkets. In the past, these jobs allowed young people to develop job skills. Today, many don’t exist, and young people are the losers.

Raising the minimum wage may seem compassionate. But in the end, those with limited job skills in need of work experience are the ones hurt by good intentions.

**Comparable Worth**

Although the idea of comparable worth has been roundly criticized, it is still gaining proponents. Like the minimum wage, it seems at first glance like an issue we should back. But it has not exactly generated a groundswell of support.

Clarence Pendleton (former chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights) called comparable worth “the looniest idea since Looney Tunes came on the screen.” But even so, its proponents are resolved to make it the law of the land.

The seeds of comparable worth first found fertile ground in the judicial system. A number of years ago, Federal Judge Jack Tanner, citing a consulting firm’s comparable-worth study, ruled that the state of Washington was guilty of sex discrimination. His judgment of nearly $1 billion against the state provided impetus for a similar suit in California.

Proponents of comparable worth argue that the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 are not enough and urge the adoption of comparable worth legislation. But underlying this movement are some questionable assumptions.

First is the dubious assumption that differences between male and female wages are due to discrimination. But sexism has less to do with the wage differences than with the way women participate in the economy. Many work part-time, and most leave the job market to raise children. Economist Walter Williams estimates that women on the average spend about one-third of their potential working years in the labor market and therefore have less job-related experience than men. When relevant criteria such as education, experience, and seniority are factored in, many wage disparities vanish.

A study released by the Rand Corporation demonstrates that the gap between male and female wages is decreasing steadily, and the rate of decrease has begun to accelerate in the last few years. Economists James Smith and Michael Ward show that this rise in wages is commensurate with improvements in women’s education and job experience, “rather than legislation, government commissions, or political movements.”

Second, the approach assumes that personnel studies can adequately compare different kinds of jobs. Yet there is no such thing as an objective scale of economic values. Economists from Marx to Ricardo have tried to devise non-market criteria for the value of labor, and there is still no consensus after 100 years of work on the project.

What will happen when the studies disagree, as they inevitably will? The potential for disputes is endless. Should nurses earn as much as doctors or paramedics? How about a secretary who can
drive a car? Should she make more than a truck driver who cannot type? There simply are not enough courts to handle the many kinds of questions that will surely follow.

Third, comparable worth assumes that governmental bureaucrats should decide pay levels. Even in situations of obvious discrimination, we should question whether a bureaucracy is the best way to rectify the problem. In fact, in light of the last 25 years of research into the nature of governmental bureaucracies, one might wonder whether bureaucracies are the best way to deal with any social problem.

Wage inequity deserves attention, but the solution is not to force employers to pay wages established by bureaucrats rather than by the free market. We need better implementation of existing laws and prosecution when discrimination occurs.

Comparable worth plays a game of “worthier than thou” by trying to compare vastly dissimilar occupations without utilizing the market system and depending solely upon subjective judgments. We would do better without it.

**Budget Deficits**

A theme in recent campaigns has been the budget deficit. And for good reason. We are drowning in tides of red ink, and something must be done. Some candidates suggest that the way to balance the budget is to increase taxes. But that won’t solve the problem and most likely will make it worse.

The problem is not that we are undertaxed but that we are overspent. Consider these budget statistics. First, taxes have continued to increase throughout this century. That’s not so surprising since the cost of living has increased as well. But tax receipts as a percentage of the GNP have also steadily increased over time.

A second way to look at the problem is to plot the increase of the federal government’s budget. In 1938 the budget was $7 billion. Today the budget exceeds $1 trillion. That’s an increase of over 14,000 percent. In comparison, in 1938 a Hershey bar cost 5 cents, a first-class stamp 3 cents, a new Ford $600, a good suit $40, and gold $35 per ounce. However, if these costs increased by the same proportion as the cost of government, the prices would be astronomical. A Hershey bar would be $7, a first-class stamp would be $4.20, a car would sell for $84,000, a suit for $5,600, and an ounce of gold would be $4,900.

Moreover, a tax increase is not a solution; it is part of the problem. Economist Walter Williams has shown that the facts simply do not square with the oft-repeated assumption that more taxes will reduce the deficit.

Williams has studied the federal budget figures for the last 25 years and found the following. The budget has been in the red 24 of the last 25 years. And in 19 of those years there have been tax increases. His studies show that for each $1 in tax increase during that period, there was a $1.58 spending increase. In other words, when taxes rose, deficits skyrocketed.

In 1982, when Congress passed the largest peacetime tax increase in U.S. history, the new revenues were not used to decrease the deficit. Instead, they were used to increase spending in a number of budget categories.

The solution is to cut the federal budget. Bloated bureaucracies drain America’s economic competitiveness and often dole out grants to things ranging from obscure scientific projects to obscene art. Certainly it is time to begin cutting the federal budget in significant ways.
A major budget category is federal pensions. There is nothing wrong with providing pensions to civil service employees and military retirees. But some of these pensions have grown much more lucrative than anything found in the private sector.

For example, retired Senator Al Gore was making more than his son, Al Gore, Jr., until the younger man was given a Congressional pay increase in the mid-1980s. When Gore senior retired from Congress in 1970, his salary was $42,000. But, thanks to federal cost-of-living increases, his pension was over $78,000, while his son’s salary was only $77,000. When a current member of Congress makes less than a retired one, something is wrong with pensions. The Grace Commission found that if federal pensions were trimmed to resemble the “best” private sector pension programs, $58 billion in taxes could be saved over a three-year period.

The federal budget is a problem, but many are looking in the wrong places for solutions. Americans are not undertaxed. The American government is overspent. We need to cut expenses, not raise taxes.

**Housing**

In recent years, Congress has made significant changes in the way it funds public housing. As the next budget considerations loom in the future, we can learn a great deal from the successes of the past.

One of the most important successes was the adoption of the housing voucher concept. The argument for housing vouchers is simple. Many current federal housing policies focus on bricks and mortar. These programs provide incentives to private developers and thus place an emphasis on buildings. Direct rent assistance in the form of housing vouchers is used to replace construction subsidy programs, which often benefit contractors more than the poor. These voucher programs, therefore, direct government resources at people, not projects.

Housing vouchers given to renters utilize the free market system to bring about desired changes. When rent subsidies are allocated for construction of housing projects, we create a seller’s market. When we give housing vouchers to renters, we create a buyer’s market. A housing voucher system encourages landlords to improve run-down apartments.

Government housing policies make families dependent upon governmental subsidies and lock them into inadequate housing situations. In our effort to win the war on poverty, we have lost the war on independence.

To be poor is to be caught in a culture of poverty, frustrated and without choices. The voucher system provides not only a roof and walls, but choice and dignity. Although government pays only the amount of rent that exceeds 30 percent of a family’s income, the family can choose to pay more than that and is free to move to a different housing situation.

A second program success has been the privatization of public housing. A few years ago a bill encouraging privatization was sponsored by conservative Jack Kemp and liberal Walter Fauntroy. Kemp, invoking memories of the Homestead Act of 1862, referred to this legislation as the “urban homesteading bill.”

The bill offered tenants of the nation’s 1.25 million public housing units the chance to buy their own homes and apartments at 75 percent below market value with no money down and at greatly reduced interest rates. Only units that were “modernized” were offered for sale.
The bill also empowered public housing tenants to run their own projects. Legislators recognized that tenant management would provide better management of public housing.

Inspiration for resident management came from the example of the Kenilworth-Parkside project in Washington, D.C. In 1982, Mayor Marion Barry granted self-management to the residents. An analysis by an international accounting firm indicated that the tenants cut operating costs significantly, boosted rent collections by 77 percent, reduced the vacancy rate by two-thirds, and halved the rate of welfare dependency, thanks to jobs in the project created by the management team. These savings and new revenues, say the accountants, added close to $10 million to Washington's tax collections.

These have been constructive changes in public housing policy. Housing vouchers provide choices and dignity and arm the poor with a mechanism to improve housing. Resident control of public housing provides for initiative and independence. We need more housing programs like this in the future.

**Churches and Taxes**

One of the oft-cited criticisms of Christians is that they attend churches that should be forced to pay their fair share of taxes. But once you understand the history of this issue, it is easy to see why critics of tax-exempt institutions miss the point.

When the United States was founded, the framers of the constitution wanted to protect churches from governmental influence. The first amendment to the Constitution specifically states that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion nor prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” This protected the churches from the intrusive hand of the state.

But when Congress began to tax its citizens, a question arose. Could it tax churches? The answer then was very simple.

The first two modern income-tax statutes were the Revenue Act of 1894 and the Revenue Act of 1913. In both the laws, only “net income” was to be taxed. Churches and all other non-profit organizations had no “net income,” so they were not taxed. The author of the 1913 Act, Cordell Hull, even resisted the call for establishing explicit categories of exemptions. He argued that the law was designed to impose explicit categories of taxation, therefore, all organizations not listed would be exempt.

But that was not sufficient for many in the bureaucracy, and so, over time, the Internal Revenue Service began to define what a tax-exempt organization might be. In the IRS code, it is defined as a 501(c)(3) organization.

From the IRS’s point of view, it made sense to define a church, because they began to see the rise of bogus churches with names like the “Church of the Marijuana” or the “Hot Tub Church.” But from the Christian point of view it seems most unwise to have IRS agents define in legal language what the Bible provides in explicit detail. Sometimes there was a significant confrontation.

Fortunately, Congress has passed a bill which more clearly specifies the role the IRS can have in securing church records and determining whether a church qualifies under the IRS code.

Many critics of churches argue that they can unfairly compete in the marketplace because of their tax exemption. But most of that objection was answered years ago.

The Tax Reform Act of 1969 ended churches’ tax exemption for income from profit-making
enterprises. Before 1969, churches exempt under the IRS code did not have to pay corporate income tax on unrelated business income, but Congress closed that loophole.

Critics also argue that exemptions are given as a legislative grace in return for specified public services which government would have to provide. But the U.S. Supreme Court held in a 1970 case that traditional property-tax exemptions for churches are constitutional and rejected the notion that exemption is a legislative grace. The argument may have its merits in reference to colleges, hospitals, libraries, or parks. But it is not applicable to churches, since government could not constitutionally set up or operate a church to provide the religious services churches provide. Despite allegations to the contrary, churches are not “getting away with something.” They do not pay taxes because they do not have net income. When they do make a profit in a business enterprise, they pay taxes on it. The rest of the time, they should be tax exempt.

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Civil Disobedience

Biblical Examples

In Romans 13:1-7 we read that every person should be in subjection to governing authorities because there is no authority except from God. Those who resist authority have opposed the ordinance of God and will receive condemnation upon themselves. The Apostle Paul then concludes this section by saying that believers are to render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

The Apostle Peter likewise says, Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right (1 Pet. 2:13-14). So it is against this backdrop of biblical obedience to civil authorities that we discuss the issue of civil disobedience.

Francis Schaeffer said in the Christian Manifesto that if there is never a case in which a Christian would practice civil disobedience, then the state has become Lord. He said, One either confesses that God is the final authority, or one confesses that Caesar is Lord. The Bible clearly teaches that there are times when a believer must disobey civil law so that he or she can obey God’s higher law.

In the Old Testament there are a number of prominent examples of civil disobedience. In Exodus 1 and 2, when Pharaoh commanded the Hebrew midwives to kill all male Hebrew babies, they lied to Pharaoh and did not carry out his command.

The book of Daniel has a number of instructive examples. In Daniel 3, for example, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to the golden image and were cast into the fiery furnace. In Daniel 6 the commissioners and satraps had King Darius make a decree that no one could make a petition to any god or man for thirty days. Daniel nevertheless continued to pray to God three times a day and was cast into the lion’s den.

The most dramatic example of civil disobedience in the New Testament can be found in Acts 4 and 5. When Peter and John were commanded not to preach the gospel, their response was, “We must obey
God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

Notice that in each of these examples there are at least two common elements. First, there was a direct, specific conflict between God’s law and man’s law. Pharaoh commanded the Hebrew midwives to kill male Hebrew babies. Nebuchadnezzar commanded his subjects to bow before the golden image. King Darius ruled that no one could pray. And, in the New Testament, the High Priest and the Council forbade the apostles from proclaiming the gospel.

Second, in choosing to obey God’s higher law, believers paid the normal consequence for disobedience. Although most of those previously cited escaped the consequence through supernatural intervention, we know from biblical and secular history that others paid for their disobedience with their lives.

**Operation Rescue**

Operation Rescue describes itself as a group of God-fearing people peacefully but physically placing themselves between the killer [the abortionist] and his intended victims [the baby and the mother]. Members of Operation Rescue explain that

> to rescue someone is to physically intervene on their behalf when they are in danger. We have an obligation before God to try to rescue these children and these women. We do this in a spirit of repentance for our many years of apathy and lack of action.

The foundational scripture for Operation Rescue is found in Proverbs 24:11-12. These verses read:

> Rescue those being led away to death. Hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, But we knew nothing about this, does not He who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not He who guards your life know it?

One brochure produced by Operation Rescue explains these verses by saying,

> It is evil to know that children are about to be murdered and just let them die (Matthew 24:45). The abortionist is committing murder. He will not be able to appeal to Romans 13 on the day of judgment, and neither will we if we remain silent and allow this holocaust to continue.

Another very important verse for Operation Rescue is James 4:17. It is frequently cited with any commentary on the previous verses in Proverbs. And it is also used to answer the question of whether it is sin if a person does not engage in a rescue. James 4:17 reads, Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin. Evidently, anyone who does not participate in Operation Rescue is committing sin.

When asked how going to jail can save a baby, members of Operation Rescue respond that it doesn’t. But, they say, preventing the mother and baby from entering the killing center saves the baby and the mother.

When asked why they have to get arrested, members of Operation Rescue respond as follows.
There is an immovable moral ground upon which we stand. The murder of innocent people is wrong–absolutely wrong (Proverbs 6:16-17). Therefore, the appropriate response (based on Jesus’ example) is to firmly and non-violently resist the evil by placing our bodies between the abortionist and his victims, which we do until we are carried away. This is called intervention. Intervention is a reasonable and proper response to murder. We are not there to get arrested. This is not a protest or a media stunt. We are there to follow God’s command to rescue those being led away to death (Proverbs 24:11). We are to obey God’s law even when it conflicts with the laws of men (Acts 5:29).

Finally, members of Operation Rescue are often asked why they don’t rescue every day. They respond,

We would if we could. We are committing all we can to this task. If more in the Christian community would respond and be willing to be broken and spilled out we could close every abortuary in this city everyday (Mark 14:8).

**Critique by Dr. Charles Stanley**

As pastor of the First Baptist Church in Atlanta, Dr. Charles Stanley was confronted with the activities of Operation Rescue in his city and thus provided one of the first critiques of the movement. While he is pro-life and agrees that the Supreme Court precedent of Roe v. Wade must be changed, he disagrees with the tactics and methodology of Operation Rescue.

In his analysis of the relevant scriptural passages, Dr. Stanley identifies a general biblical principle and the biblical exception. In developing the general biblical principle, he lists three major passages: Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter 2:11-17, and Titus 3:1. He then concludes that these passages clearly teach that a believer has a biblical responsibility to submit to and obey the governing authorities.

The underlying premise on which this general principle is founded is that government is a divinely ordained institution for the maintenance of order, the punishment of evil, and the promotion of good in the world. This premise, according to Dr. Stanley, is supported by the following ideas. First, all authority is from God. Second, governing authorities are God’s ministers. Third, observing the law is a positive, public testimony for Christ. Fourth, observing the law is the right thing to do. And finally, observing the law is ordered by God.

Having stated the general principle, Dr. Stanley then articulates the biblical exception. He says, It is right to break the laws when there is a direct, specific conflict between God’s law and man’s law because God’s law is higher. He lists three major examples: Exodus 1 with the Hebrew midwives, Daniel 6 with Daniel and King Darius, and Acts 4 and 5 where Peter and John are commanded not to preach the gospel.

As I noted earlier, each of these examples has two elements in common with the other. First, there was a direct, specific conflict between God’s law and man’s law. Second, in choosing to obey God’s higher law, the law-breakers paid the normal, natural consequences of their disobedience.

Dr. Stanley therefore concludes that a believer has a biblical responsibility to obey God’s higher law when there is a direct, specific conflict with man’s law. He then goes on to say that the civil disobedience advocated by Operation Rescue does not fit the biblical exception for three reasons.
First, the law being broken has nothing to do with abortion. Those arrested are not being arrested because they are protesting abortion but because they are trespassing. Dr. Stanley says that if anti-God protesters blocked the entrance to First Baptist Church, he would use the same ordinance to have them arrested.

Second, Roe v. Wade neither requires abortions nor prohibits them, but makes them permissible with certain restrictions. Third, the women who choose to have abortions are free moral agents responsible before God for their actions, including the exercise of the rights of their innocent, unborn children.

Dr. Stanley adds that if the law required abortions or prohibited the preaching of the gospel, his response would be different. The biblical exception would be met and the battle lines would be drawn.

**Additional Critique**

In our survey of biblical instances of civil disobedience, we have found that in each situation there was a direct conflict between God’s law and man’s law. In every situation a command from someone in authority directly conflicted with a biblical command.

In these cases, breaking civil statutes is biblically permitted. But what about instances where there is no direct command that conflicts with Scripture? This is where proponents and opponents of Operation Rescue generally differ.

Proponents argue that because abortion is immoral and unbiblical, we must exercise civil disobedience. Opponents instead say that breaking civil statutes is biblically permissible only when we are forced to choose between God and Caesar.

Ken Myers, editor of the newsletter *Genesis* and former editor of *Eternity* magazine, summarizes the argument this way. He says Christians are permitted before God to disobey those laws that, if obeyed, would involve sin. But laws that can be obeyed without sin should be obeyed.

The fundamental principle is this: Christians are never permitted to disobey a just law in order to minimize the effects of unjust laws. In the case of Operation Rescue, the law being broken is a just law that prohibits trespassing. Rescuers are not being arrested because they are protesting abortion; they are being arrested for trespassing.

When there is a clear contradiction between God and Caesar, we have to obey God. But in other cases, we are to render obedience to civil authority. If we do not, then a state of anarchy would quickly develop in which each person did what was right in his own eyes. Christians must resist our culture’s tendency to rebel at the first provocation, especially in light of the numerous scriptural admonitions to obey those in authority. These verses place the burden of proof on those advocating civil disobedience. Ken Myers suggests that rather than being argued out of breaking the law, we should be argued into breaking the law. Those advocating civil disobedience should successfully argue their case for disobeying the law. If they do not or cannot, then we should obey civil authority.

This principle is especially important in light of our sin nature. All of us have some rebellion in us because of our sin nature, and we want to break the law. So a good check on our carnal desires is to ask if breaking a civil law is biblically required. If not, we should give obedience to the law the benefit of the doubt.

Finally, opponents of Operation Rescue have objected to its use of physical force. Proponents believe
that physical force (blocking entrances to abortion clinics) should be used to restrain the evil of abortion. But this raises two questions.

First, what are the limits to the use of physical force? If blocking clinics is justified, what about burning them down or blowing them up? Once any form of physical force is justified, how do we define the limits of its use?

Second, if physical force can be justified in fighting abortion what about its use in restraining other evils like idolatry or adultery? Should Christians block the entrances to New Age bookstores or porno shops?

These are important questions that need to be resolved. Although the Bible does permit civil disobedience, proponents of Operation Rescue leave many unanswered questions at a time when their actions should bear the burden of proof.

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See Also Probe Answers Our Email:
“How Should a Christian View Civil Disobedience?”