

# How Churches Must Deal With Unwelcome Government Intervention

At the beginning of 2020, none of us expected the COVID-19 pandemic. And few expected that battling the outbreak would create governmental powers in which America would begin to look like a police state.

As new restrictions on gatherings were lowered to fifty and then again to fewer than 10 people, it quickly became apparent that this pandemic would be a game changer. Going to sporting events, movies, theatrical events, concerts and church meetings was suddenly forbidden.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio threatened to close churches and synagogues “permanently” if they refused to shut down during the pandemic. And Virginia Governor Ralph Northam declared that church gatherings of 10 or more could result in a \$2,500 fine and up to a year in jail.

Yet in the face of such restrictions, a number of businesses in various states, including liquor stores, were deemed “essential” and allowed to remain open. Why were churches so quickly deemed “nonessential?” And why was the public so quick to accept this?

Pastor Rodney Howard-Browne, a longtime friend of mine, was arrested and booked into a local jail on Monday, March 30, after holding Sunday worship services at The River at Tampa Bay, the church he leads. Howard-Browne was charged with unlawful assembly and violating the county’s stay-at-home order. He was later released on bail.

Originally coming to the United States as a missionary from South Africa, Pastor Rodney has been holding services where

God's presence has been moving in power for many years. His intention was to allow the Holy Spirit to move and heal the sick as they would come for prayer. After all, that is what the Bible says for us as believers to do.

The media loved this story: "crazy Pentecostal pastor endangers the health of his church members by recklessly disregarding governmental edicts for no 'nonessential' gatherings over ten people." But the case brought up some interesting legal issues.

Whether churches are "essential" in the midst of this coronavirus crisis is a critical question that must take into consideration many factors. The related question, whether churches should open or close, must be considered in the context of each church and community.

Mat Staver, founder of Liberty Counsel, came to Howard Browne's defense, and the results were amazing. The county dropped the case because Staver sued for violation of the church's constitutional rights to freedom of religion and freedom of assembly.

Thankfully Christian law firms are defending freedom against these anti-God trends in the culture that manifested themselves during this time of crisis. The double standard has been obvious.

As the country went into lockdown mode, America's pro-life leaders voiced alarm that churches were being forced to close down, while in most states abortion clinics were allowed to stay open.

"How dare they jail pastors and close the doors of the church while the abortion industry remains open to spread the virus and put our lives at risk?" said Janet Porter, president and founder of Faith2Action and the author of the original pro-life *Heartbeat Bill*.

“While free speech and freedom of religion are being banned, Planned Parenthood continues to get away with murder,” said Mark Harrington, president of Created Equal, a pro-life group. “The cure is now worse than the disease.”

“In a pandemic, a double standard is deadly,” Porter said. “Either there is a threat or there isn’t. We must either close the doors of the abortion business or open the doors of the church.”

“By definition, the surgeries abortion centers perform are *elective*—that’s why they call it ‘choice,’” said Harrington.

To classify abortion as “essential medical care” during the novel coronavirus crisis is “preposterous,” said Mark Crutcher, founder and president of Life Dynamics, a Texas-based pro-life organization. “Abortion providers don’t care that there’s a pandemic. All they care about is killing babies. There can be no sacred cows in a pandemic. It is indefensible.”

Though the governors of several states committed to halting nonessential and elective surgical abortions, judges blocked most of their orders from being enforced.

“The abortion industry continues to defy state orders and national health directives, putting us all at risk of the deadly COVID-19 virus,” Porter said in March. “Until the abortion centers are closed, none of us are safe.” {eoa}

Article excerpted from Chapter 6 of *God, Trump and COVID-19* (Charisma House 2020).

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# How Hearing From God Can Help You Face Transition

As a ministry leader, Jeff Struss knows when Jesus wants you do something, you don't hesitate. You just do it.

So, when Jesus called Struss and his family away from a 10-year pastorate in Lynchburg, Virginia, to come to Orlando, Florida, to begin a new ministry, they didn't blink an eye but began a new chapter in their calling for Christ.

Not that it wasn't a difficult decision, but Struss knows that for a kingdom leader, obedience and surrender are two nonnegotiable virtues.

"Following Jesus is such an adventure. When He went to the disciples, He did say, 'Come and follow Me,' not, 'Let's camp; let's just hang out,'" Struss told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. "My wife and I ended up transitioning out of the church community that we started, founded, grew and pastored for 10 years. It was a big transition for us, a big change.

"We got to Lynchburg on the word of the Lord. And it was the word of the Lord that led us on, that led us here. It's definitely a process, hearing the whispers of the Lord—a sense, a feeling that something is changing. Perhaps it's a sense of, 'Did I accomplish what God sent me here to do? Was I successful in heaven's eyes for what I was called to do?'

"In the Bible, when God speaks to them and tells them what He's about to do with them, it's only because something crazy is about to break open. And you've got to go back to that word to know that you know, that you were there for a reason, a

purpose. And that word actually sustains us through difficulty so we don't give up.

“Knowing that our church community was in the hands of anointed people called shepherds, that it made it easier for us to keep moving forward and do what God has called us to do. ... The passage that comes to mind is in Philippians Chapter 3. You have the apostle Paul, who is a missionary and a church planter, and he wrote the majority of the New Testament. But his highest aim was to know Christ. His chief goal is to know Jesus more. ... It's a difficult time for many people, lot of transition, lots of movement, lots of shaking going on. But whatever season you're in, there's a doorway called 'knowing Jesus better,' and God is inviting us into it. Wherever we are, if we can see that opportunity to know Jesus more, then we're going to grow, and we're going to come out stronger and be thrust into God's purposes.”

For more about Jeff Struss' journey and his wisdom for those in transition, listen to the entire podcast. And be sure to listen to Struss' podcast, *Presence, Power and Glory*, on the Charisma Podcast Network.

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## **For Jews and Christians, It's Time to Celebrate**

It's the most wonderful time of the year!

No, I am not talking about those weeks between Thanksgiving

and Christmas. I am talking about the Month of Tishri (September through October on the Greco-Roman calendar). This season, known as the High Holy Days, includes Yom Teruah (Day of Trumpets), also known as Rosh Hashana (New Year), Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) and Sukkot (Tabernacles).

As an adult, I really do see these days as the most wonderful time of the year. As a child though, Yom Teruah and Yom Kippur were the most dreaded days of the year. The services lasted all day and were as dry as sand. The only redeeming factors these two days held was that they were excused absences from school, and on Yom Teruah, one of the men would sound the shofar 100 times. The shofar always reminded me of the bugles sounding when the cavalry arrived to save the day.

While Yom Teruah and Yom Kippur were long and mostly boring to me as a child, Sukkot really was a wonderful time. Sukkot was one of the reasons as a child I loved the G-D of the Bible. Just think about it: the G-D of Israel commanded His people to go camping for a week every fall.

Each family would build a temporary dwelling called a *sukkah*. We decorated the *sukkah* with fruits and vegetables (which could be eaten as desired during the week). We ate our meals in the *sukkah*, and we slept in the *sukkah*. I will always remember counting the days until Sukkot.

As an adult, I still love Sukkot. We build a *sukkah* and still decorate it with fruits. Our synagogue family puts up tents and camps together.

It is still a week our children look forward to (and some of the adults). But as an adult, my wonderment during the season has shifted from my childhood camping trip to a deeper understanding of the first two Holy Days. As an adult, I now look forward to Yom Teruah and Yom Kippur and the prayers for forgiveness that we say as a community.

As a child, I rarely thought about eternity, but now as I

approach my 60s, eternity is on my mind much more. So, while as a child I thought to myself, *How cool is the G-D of Israel who commanded us to go camping?*, today I say to myself, *How cool is the G-D of Israel who provided a means of forgiveness to His people?*

Now, when I hear the voice of the shofar call out to us 100 times, my heart doesn't thrill about the sounds alone. My heart becomes filled with the knowledge that I have been forgiven and made new. When I pray the prayers of repentance on Yom Kippur, my heart rejoices because I know my sins are forgiven, and my atonement has been made complete in Yeshua.

These days really have become the most wonderful time of the year. In only a few weeks, we will gather together and hear the shofar sound. Only now when I hear that sound, I no longer think about the cavalry coming to save the day. I think about the Savior who went to Calvary to save His people.

For those of you unfamiliar with these biblical Holy Days, you can read more about them in Leviticus 23, or in the book *G-D's Appointed Times* by Barney Kasdan. I also would like to encourage you to make plans to attend services for Yom Teruah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot at a Messianic synagogue near you.

To find one, you can visit or . {eoa}

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# 5 Powerful Characteristics of Your Faith That Crush Strongholds

Faith is both natural and spiritual. Natural faith is “the trust” in things, objects and situations.

We could call it earthly faith.

We use earthly faith more than we realize. Earthly faith is trusting things we know are trustworthy. Earthly faith is activated mostly through our subconscious mind. We sit down in a chair with faith that the chair will hold us up. We turn on a light switch by faith that the lights will come on.

We turn on a cold-water faucet, and water begins to flow. We trust the chair, the light switch and the water faucet to activate what we need. Is this similar to our faith in God?

## **Spiritual Faith**

There is also spiritual faith. Spiritual faith is a conscious decision. Spiritual faith happens when we place our trust in God. Giving our trust to God releases the element of faith inside of us. This God-kind of faith is the connector between God the Father and us.

” For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of yourselves. It is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8, MEV).

We are saved by grace through faith. In this sense, “faith” is belief. The word “faith” actually means “to be persuaded.” So faith is persuasion. Our key text in this writing prompt reveals the power of faith.

“Israel is led by the city of Samaria, and Samaria is led by its weak king, the son of Remaliah. If your faith is not strong, you will not have strength enough to last” (Isa. 7:9, NCV)

Faith is a strength. The text indicates that when our faith is not strong, our strength will not endure. Let’s reverse the principle. When our faith is strong, our strength will last.

Faith is a force.

Scripture is clear about the power of faith.

“And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in fighting, and turned the armies of foreign enemies to flight” (Heb. 11:32-34, MEV).

Faith determines what happens. Did you see the power of faith and the outcomes that faith birthed?

1. **Faith overcomes.** “For whoever is born of God overcomes the world, and the victory that overcomes the world is our faith” (1 John 5:4)

Did you see it? Faith overcomes the world. The contrast is faith versus the world. Faith has the power and strength to overcome anything and everything this world throws at believers.

2. **Faith resists.** “ Be sober and watchful, because your adversary the devil walks around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him firmly in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world” (1 Pet.5:8-9).

Again, faith has the strength to resist the devil.

- 3. Faith strengthens.** “But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have repented, strengthen your brothers” (Luke 22:32).

Notice how faith does not fail the believers. So faith sustains them. The ability to stand or to be maintained is a factor of strength. We see the believers were sustained and strengthened by the substance of faith.

Faith is not weak or feeble. The fact is, faith is a sustaining force. Faith conceals hope. Faith is the substance of hoped for things.

- 4. Faith lasts.** Faith holds our strength like our veins hold our blood. Faith is a substance.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1).

- 5. Faith sees beyond this world.** Some only believe in what they can see. The world says seeing is believing. God says believing is seeing.

The things we see were not made with seen things. They were made with words. God’s spoken word created them.

“By faith we understand that the universe was framed by the word of God, so that things that are seen were not made out of things which are visible” (Heb. 11:3). {eoa}

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# Jonathan Cahn: The Window for America to Repent May Be Closing

Rabbi Jonathan Cahn, a multiple *New York Times*' bestselling author, believes that, despite its current state, there is still hope for America.

But if America is ever to return to the nation he believes God ordained it to be, Cahn says, people must come to repentance, and they must do it soon.

"If we want to see revival in America, we have to be walking and living in revival now," Cahn, author of the bestselling *The Harbinger* and the just-released *The Harbinger II: The Return*, told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. "My belief is that the shakings are not finished. I believe that there are big things coming.

"At the same time, and people have always asked me this since *The Harbinger*, 'Do you believe that there is going to be judgment, calamity or revival?' And I have said that there can be both," Cahn said. "Often, revival can come through shaking. I only came to the Lord because I was hit by a train. That was a shaking for me, and so it will be with nations. I believe it can be both, and I believe for those who will stand—those who will take this seriously and come before God and seek His face and pray and repent—whatever is in your life that shouldn't be there get rid of it now.

"Whatever it could be in your life that you haven't risen in God's calling, get to it now, today. Those who will stand will

shine like lights in the darkness. We know certain things have to happen, but we also know there is an end-times revival, a harvest, a pouring out of the Spirit. I believe that can happen. We can see that in our time,” Cahn added.

“But we have to be the candles in the night. People have said, ‘I wish I could live in biblical times.’ Well, congratulations, because you are,” Cahn said. “These are the days of Jeremiah. He saw culture turn away from God, but he stood. These are the days of Ezekiel; these are the days of Paul when the culture was anti-Christian. But the lights of God shine brightest in the darkness. We’ve got to be ready, because this could be the greatest hour if we rise as never before.”

For more of Jonathan Cahn’s thoughts on repentance for America, listen to the entire podcast.

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## **Help Your Pastor Stand Firm When the Wolf Comes Stalking**

As president of the American Pastors Network, Sam Rohrer believes that now, more than ever before in American history, believers must be diligent in prayer for Christian leaders. With the enemy bearing down in so many ways in our culture and society, the job of a pastor or ministry leader continues to grow more difficult every day.

One need only to look at the moral failures—and suicides—of many ministry leaders in the past few years to realize that

the church is in trouble if believers don't get on their knees in intercession for their leaders.

"One of the best things we can do for our pastors to help them be strong is to look in the mirror ourselves every morning and truly ask the Lord, 'Am I living for you?'" Rohrer told Dr. Steve Greene on a recent episode of *Greenelines* on the Charisma Podcast Network. "Show me the stent in my own heart. The pastors are to lead. Shepherds are to lead; we know that.

"But at the end of the day, none of us, the sheep in the pews, are going to be able to blame our decisions for not serving God or not walking by faith on the failure of the pastor or the success of the pastor," Rohrer said. "Ultimately, we're going to give an account for ourselves. So, look in the mirror first and commit each day to recalibrating our will to God's will; recalibrating our ways to God's ways and committing ourselves to carrying out and obeying the word of the Lord as best as we are able. If we do that, we will best be able to help our pastors.

"Many of our pulpits out there are filled with hirelings. When the wolf comes, they run," he said. "We have a wolf out there right now, and it's called COVID policies. We have a wolf out there, and it's called panic, and it's called fear and lawlessness. The wolf is out there, and most of the pulpits have run, which indicates that there are more hirelings perhaps than real pastors. But nonetheless, what can the sheep do to help?

"They need to be praying," Rohrer said. "We are to pray for those who are in authority over us because they watch for our souls. So, pray for your pastor like you've never prayed before. But start in your own heart first. Then pray for your pastor, that God would put a hedge of protection around them. Pray for courage to be given to the pastor because most are fearful. They are operating in a realm they've never operated in before. They don't know how to respond when whatever the

governor is saying is the law or not the law. They should, and we, the American Pastors Network, are trying to educate them.”

For more from the Hon. Sam Rohrer, listen to the entire podcast. {eoa}

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# Preparing Your Heart to Live the Abundant Life Jesus Promised

When a world-class agriculturalist prepares to plant an award-winning garden, many things must occur before even one seed is placed in the ground.

The gardener begins to prepare next year’s soil immediately after harvest. It takes mulching, fertilizing and plowing; a person with a radiant green thumb will often add nutrients, subtract weeds and hope for just the right amount of rain. The process of guaranteeing that a plot of dirt will develop into a vibrant garden is long, painstaking and demanding. However, it is worth it, my friend!

The next task in preparing the soil for an abundant harvest is to acknowledge the importance of digging deeply. A successful farmer knows the utmost importance of loosening the soil and removing any rocks or roots that may have made a home in the plot of earth that will eventually become a productive garden. This farmer is intent on digging well below the surface of the earth to ensure that the seeds eventually planted will nestle down snugly into the warmth and freedom of this soil.

You, too, must dig deeply into the promises in God's Word if you hope that your life will display the abundance of the Father. You must remove the rocks of worry, discouragement and sin. You must throw away the stones of unforgiveness, bitterness and compromise. You will never have the sustaining ability to live a vital and dynamic life without removing the gravel of offense.

When you take the time to dig deeply into the Bible and allow it to become part of the rich soil of your life, you will be utterly surprised at what it digs up in you. I often dare people to do an experiment with the Word of God—a dare I present to you today.

I dare you to read the Bible every day for 21 days for just 10 minutes a day. Try not to miss a day, but if you do, start right up again. I believe that at the end of this three-week period, you will see a marked difference in the way that you process life as well as how you treat other people.

When you immerse yourself into the powerful truth of the Bible on a daily basis, suddenly you will realize, *I didn't lose my temper with my children this morning. What happened to me?*

The Word happened to you!

You discover, *I wasn't cranky with my mother when she called me for the tenth time today! What happened to me?*

The Word of God happened to you!

You wonder, *What has happened to me? I didn't even get angry when my husband forgot to take out the trash!*

The Word of God happened to you!

You feel joyful for your friend who's getting married instead of self-pity because you are not even dating anyone and you ponder, *What happened to me?*

The Word of God happened to you!

Spending time ingesting the eternal and life-changing Word of God every day is one of the sweetest disciplines that precedes embracing a vibrant life. The call to read God's love letter and apply it personally to your life will be found often on the pages of this book. It is impossible to overestimate the life change that will happen to you when you drink in the treasure of the most glorious and impactful book ever written.

As you begin the dirty work of preparing the soil of your heart to live the life that it was made for, start with digging deeply into the inspired truth that is found only in the Bible. The Word will do an excavating work in your life that will equip you to grow a world-class array of delicious fruit and gorgeous flowers. When you honor the Word of God in your life, the world will stand in awe at the life that has been grown in the dirty soil of your formerly insignificant existence.

You were created to be a producer of delectable fruit, brilliant flowers and undeniable glory. The Word of God will prepare your life for the demonstration of God's character in an ordinary man or in a common woman.

"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isa. 55:11).

"Visit many good books but live in the Bible." –C. H. Spurgeon  
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# How Economic Fallout From COVID-19 Could Impact the 2020 Election

In March, just as the country was shutting down due to COVID-19, the overwhelming surge in unemployment filings came as a hard pill to swallow for our nation. With companies of all sizes hit by the fallout from COVID-19, many Americans began scrambling for their next paychecks. As with all historical economic slumps, minorities and young workers experienced a significant impact.

A recent report by Moody's Analytics chief economist Mark Zandi identified the hardest-hit industries. These include "leisure and hospitality (16.9 million people), transportation (5.7 million), employment services (3.7 million), mining (662,000) and travel arrangements (222,000)." Because 17.6% of Hispanic workers and 16.8% of African American workers are in these areas, compared with 12.5% of non-Hispanic white workers, experts anticipate that Hispanic and Black Americans will lose jobs at higher rates during a coronavirus-led recession than other groups.

Up to this point, the Trump administration has been able to maintain the lowest Black American unemployment rates in history. In February, the Department of Labor reported a rate of 5.8%.

Will the great strides President Trump has made with the Black community be lost because of this current situation? In *God, Trump and the 2020 Election* I discuss why the president could lose in 2020, but a virus was never in the mix—until now.

The coronavirus came just as the Black community was beginning to look at Trump differently due to his success in bringing benefits their way that the Democrats have never delivered.

Most Black voters continue to follow Democratic Party lines—although something strange happened in the 2016 election. Though only 8% of Black Americans voted for Trump, many stayed home rather than voting for Hillary Clinton. *The New York Times* found that 4.4 million Obama voters stayed home on Election Day, and more than a third of those no-shows—1.6 million—were Black Americans.

Despite Trump's efforts to reach out to the Black community and create economic opportunities for all Americans, an NBC News/*Wall Street Journal* poll from February 2020 found that a mere 14% of Black voters have a positive view of the president. But the Trump campaign sees an opportunity to make the case that Democrats have taken Black voters for granted.

In the Black community the so-called "Black church" is a very strong influence—more so than most denominations are in the majority community. I've spent my career covering the Black Christian community in *Charisma* because it makes up a sizable percentage of the Pentecostal movement. Indeed, Pentecostalism grew out of the 1906 Azusa Street Revival, which was led by a Black preacher named William Seymour. I believe these Black Christians—who usually support the Democratic Party—are beginning to look at Trump differently.

The good news is most Black Americans who support the president are not turning their backs on him, because they see what he's accomplishing and what he's doing for the Black community—even with all the new economic problems associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The president wants to reach the Black community, and I hope the people will begin to see that—especially during the time of rebuilding.

Black America needs a strong leader such as Donald Trump as we

move to recovery, just as all of America does. I make this point clear in *God, Trump and the 2020 Election* because the issues of leadership and the direction of our nation were important before the outbreak of COVID-19, and they're even more important now. {eoa}

*This article was excerpted from Chapter 4 of God, Trump and COVID-19 (Charisma House 2020).*

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## **10 Signs You Lack a Biblical Worldview**

Throughout the years, I have discovered that the average Christian, along with many ministers, lack a biblical worldview. When I use the term "biblical worldview," I'm referring to the practice of interpreting life through the lens of Scripture.

That is to say, your view of such issues as politics, the sanctity of life, marriage, economics, education, science, the law and so on, should derive from biblical principles. The average believer usually has only a piecemeal understanding of Scripture, instead of a comprehensive world and life view. As a result, we have seen the church become irrelevant in the public square.

If we are going to fulfill our assignment as the salt of the earth and the light of the world, we need to shift the body of Christ towards a consistent, cohesive and comprehensive faith.

Anything less than this will result in a continual decline of morality in civil society. This article aims to inspire believers to think God's thoughts as they pertain to faith and culture.

## **10 Signs You Lack a Biblical Worldview**

### **1. You think the word "government" refers only to politics.**

I have often asked Christ-followers, "What is the first thing you think about when I say the word 'government?'" Invariably the answer is always about the president, their governor or their mayor. They think of a political leader.

Our culture has been brainwashed by humanist thinking for the past 150 years. Such thinking has led many to believe that civic government is responsible for taking care of our every need. If one were to look up the definition of "government" in an early 19th-century edition of *Webster's Dictionary*, its meaning would be, "individual responsibility," not "political leadership." Oh, how far we have fallen regarding this definition. Biblically speaking, there are five jurisdictions in Scripture. Civil government is only one of them. The other four are personal responsibility, family government, business and church. When your view of government is exclusively related to politics, it shows your worldview is dominated by secular humanism instead of a Judeo-Christian worldview. For more on this subject, read my book *Understanding the Wineskin of the Kingdom* (available here).

### **2. You know only biblical passages that deal with personal spirituality.** The average believer has no biblical reference for anything other than individual promises of God. They may know a passage on healing, prayer, financial blessing and the like, but they have no biblical understanding of principles related to civic government, history, business or economics.

### **3. You believe big government is the solution to create**

**financial prosperity.** Ronald Reagan said, "Government is not the solution to our problem, government is the problem." Although that is not always the case, in contemporary society, we see that much of the time, small business owners are so weighed down with regulations and high taxation that it is difficult for them to turn a profit. However, biblically speaking, the government can step in at times with economic aid (like Joseph and Pharaoh feeding their people with crops during the seven years of famine in Genesis 41). The preponderance of Scripture in both testaments shows that political leaders' primary responsibility is to protect their citizens and provide just laws to ensure equal opportunity for all (Deut. 16:16-20, Prov. 8:15-16, -7, 1 Tim. 2:1-4).

In the Old Testament, health care, care for the poor and business ventures were primarily facilitated by the priests, families and individual believers (Ex. 22:20-24, Deut. 27:19, Isa. 1:17, Zech. 7:9-10). These verses all put the onus of responsibility on all the people, not the kings and political leaders. In the New Testament, the onus was on the church and families, not the civil government (Acts 2, 1 Tim. 5).

4. **You don't know how the Bible applies to your marketplace assignment.** Many Christ-followers think that the call to ministry is just for full-time church leadership. Such an erroneous belief demonstrates the lack of a biblical worldview. Scripture clearly tells us that all people are called to be equipped for the ministry's work in order to fill the earth with the reign of God (Eph. 4:10-12). Consequently, every believer should understand how to use their vocation to glorify God, whether in the church or the marketplace.
5. **You think the civil government is responsible for educating your children.** One of the greatest tragedies is when Christ-followers allow secular humanists to

disciple their children, thus helping to propagate their worldview through the use of the public school system. I am not against parents sending their children to public schools as long as they use it as an opportunity to critique culture and disciple their kids with biblical values. Scripture puts the onus of education into the parents' hand, not the government or even the church (Deut. 6:6-9). Parental engagement is even more vital now in light of the improper things children are taught in public schools under the guise of "sex education," which is merely a ruse for sexual indoctrination.

6. **You think the progressive tax structure is good.** Most Christians think it is OK for half of America's population to get away with paying no income tax. They also think it is okay for people to pay a higher tax percentage if they make a higher income. To the surprise of many, Scripture teaches a flat tax structure, in which all people pay an equal share. In theocratic Israel, the tithe and the poll tax were used for the care of the poor, the support of the Levites, the upkeep of the temple and for the widows and orphans (Lev. 27:30-34, Num. 18:21-26, Deut. 14:28-29, Amos 4:4-5, Matt. 23:23, Heb. 7:1-2). In the pre-Mosaic law era, it was just 10%, as we see in Genesis 28:20-22. The prophet Samuel warned the Jews against any political structure that required taxation equal to or more than 10% (1 Sam. 8).
7. **You think a pastor should remain silent on social issues.** As we examine Scripture, we see that every biblical leader either prophesied or spoke about civic issues related to public policy. Moses, all the major and minor prophets in the Old Testament, Jesus, John the Baptist and the apostles Peter and Paul all dealt with moral and political issues in their contemporary culture. Since 1954, the Johnson Amendment was used to silence churches from engaging in politics from the pulpit. Still, pastors always found a way to speak about

politics and engage with culture. As a matter of fact, in the early years of the United States, Congress would invite pastors to preach to them regarding a particular topic of concern before they debated and voted. During the Second Great Awakening, evangelist Charles Finney's ministry was the impetus for the abolitionist movement. This anti-slavery movement affected the whole nation, culminating in President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. In recent decades, we have seen religious leaders such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer stand against Hitler's fascist regime in Nazi Germany, and Dr. Martin Luther King, who used his pulpit to advance civil rights for African Americans. Imagine what would have happened had they believed the lie that pastors should be silent on social issues? If you think a pastor should remain silent on the elections, the sanctity of life, economics, health care, immigration and public policy, you lack a biblical worldview.

8. **You believe Christians should separate their private faith from public policy.** I have met many political leaders who have said to me that although they are privately pro-life or for biblical marriage, they will advocate for policies and laws that oppose their views. Their reason is that they do not think they have the right to impose their morality in a pluralistic society. My answer to them has been that all laws are an imposition of someone's morality upon society. You cannot avoid it. Jesus is the King of kings, which means that He is the lawgiver for all nations and heads of state (Rev. 19:16). This obligates the church to speak truth to power, as the salt of the earth and the light of the world, and obligates all political leaders to uphold biblical ethics in culture and policy.

9. **You celebrate the values the world celebrates.** I am amazed when I speak to Christians who merely mimic the values and views promulgated by secular culture and mainstream media. If your views on marriage, life,

sexuality, money, science and ethics are essentially the same as contemporary culture, you have been indoctrinated by secularism and lack a biblical worldview.

10. **You think science and religion are opposed to each other.** Many believers think that the Bible just speaks to spiritual and religious things, but this is not accurate. For example, although the Bible is not primarily a book on science, that does not mean it is scientifically inaccurate. Scripture teaches us that God uses nature to declare His glory (Ps. 19, Isa. 40:12-26, Rom. 1:19-23). How can creation describe His glory if His words about nature are not scientifically accurate? 2 Timothy 3:16a says, "All Scripture is inspired by God," not just passages dealing with spirituality. Furthermore, real science should never disallow the supernatural when explaining the visible world. When science utilizes only a nonmaterial, naturalistic empirical methodology to verify research, it forces an agnostic or antitheistic view of the universe upon scientists and educators. This causes an unnecessary bifurcation between faith and reason. If you believe science and religion are opposed, then you lack a biblical worldview. For a fantastic documentary on this, take a look at *Is Genesis History?* by Del Tackett.

In conclusion, my hope and prayer are that this brief article triggers hunger in you to study the Scriptures more thoroughly to gain a biblical worldview in all of life.

For more resources on a biblical worldview, read my books, *Ruling in the Gates*, *Kingdom Revolution*, *Kingdom Awakening*, *Walk in Generational Blessing*, *Understanding the Wineskin of the Kingdom* and *Twenty-Five Things You Never Heard in Church*. These are all available on Amazon or at [. {eo}](#)

**Purchase Joseph Mattera's latest book, The Jesus Principles, available now on Amazon here.**

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# Liberty University Announces Investigation Into Falwell's Tenure

Liberty University is opening an independent investigation into Jerry Falwell Jr.'s tenure as president, a wide-ranging inquiry that will include financial, real estate and legal matters, the evangelical school's board announced Monday.

In a statement, the board said it had retained an outside firm to investigate "all facets" of the school's operations under Falwell, and that it was "committed to learning the consequences that have flowed from a lack of spiritual stewardship by our former president."

Calls for such an investigation had been mounting since Falwell's departure last week from the post he had held since 2007.

He officially resigned on Tuesday, after a confusing day of back-and-forths about whether he would be leaving. His departure came after a news outlet published an interview with Giancarlo Granda, a much younger business partner of the Falwell family. Granda said that he had a years-long sexual relationship with Becki Falwell and that Jerry Falwell was involved.

Although the Falwells have acknowledged that Granda and Becki Falwell had an affair, Jerry Falwell has denied any participation. The couple allege that Granda sought to extort them by threatening to reveal the relationship unless he was paid substantial monies.

The couple said in a statement provided to The Associated Press late Sunday that they support Liberty's board and "welcome any inquiry as we have nothing to hide." A Falwell representative declined further comment when reached on Monday.

Granda, 29, has denied trying to extort the Falwells, but told the AP that he currently has no plans to pursue legal action against them. He said he does want to see an independent investigation of the school, however. Based on what he saw of the school's management under Falwell, Granda described it as run "like a monarchy."

Falwell took over as the president of Liberty after the death of his famous evangelist father, the Rev. Jerry Falwell Sr. He oversaw a period of expansive growth and transformation: Liberty's online program exploded, as did its endowment; the campus underwent a massive transformation; and the athletics programs improved.

Falwell also stayed in the news for a series of divisive remarks as well as his vocal support of President Donald Trump, and was the subject of news stories that focused on his business dealings.

Liberty's statement acknowledged that Falwell's sharpest critics have long been calling for a departure.

"Some may say that all the signs were there for a long time before last week," the statement said. "It's certainly fair to say that there were questionable comments made, worrying behavior and inappropriate social media posts, but all the signs were not there until the start of last week."

That was not good enough for some of Falwell's most vocal opponents. Save71, a recently formed nonprofit aimed at mobilizing students, alumni and faculty to push for reform, said in a statement that the board "needs to disclose a lot more about this investigation for the Liberty community to

trust its legitimacy.”

The board’s statement did not name the firm it has hired, and a board spokesman did not return a request for comment on the company’s identity.

Others were more encouraged.

Karen Swallow Prior, a recently departed English professor at Liberty who had been critical of Falwell, said the investigation announcement was good news.

“I hope that they adhere to the highest standards of not only investigation but also reporting the findings,” added Prior, a prominent Christian academic who now teaches at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

David Nasser, Liberty’s senior vice president for spiritual development, quickly praised the board’s actions, suggesting that other university leaders are eager to move beyond the Falwell era. Days earlier, Nasser publicly apologized to students for the “embarrassment” he said Falwell’s scandals had caused the school.

In Monday’s statement announcing the investigation, Liberty’s board also said it is considering establishing a post aimed at offering spiritual guidance for university leaders to ensure they “live out the Christian walk expected of each and every one of us at Liberty.”

The idea underscores the board’s concern over the degree to which Falwell’s alleged personal conduct would have violated the school’s behavioral codes. Before his resignation, Falwell had already been on an indefinite leave of absence after an uproar over a photo he posted on social media of him and his wife’s pregnant assistant, both with their pants unzipped.

Falwell said it was taken in good fun at a costume party during a vacation, but critics saw it as evidence of hypocrisy

by the head of an institution that holds students to a strict moral code of conduct. For his part, Falwell told the AP last week that “I never broke a single rule that applies to staff members at Liberty, which I was.” {eoa}

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