

Virtue and Righteousness Are Key Components of Freedom

When former Ohio Congressman Bob McEwen speaks, people listen. God gave McEwen gifts of oratory, and we at the American Renewal Project put those talents to use when we gather across the nation for worship and the mobilizing of pastors and pews.

At these events, Bob tells a story to illustrate how politics works:

An airline passenger turns to her seatmate and asks, "What is it that you do?" He replies, "I am a minister of the gospel." She responds enthusiastically, "Oh that is wonderful! I think that spirituality is very important and I don't care which religion because they all lead to the same place just using different roads. My son does something with crystals out in California, and it seems to have helped him. Besides, it's the same God in all religions anyway. So, I think what you do is a really good thing!"

Now, she thinks she has paid the minister a compliment. However, she has just demonstrated that she doesn't have a clue what she's talking about.

The minister then turns to his other seatmate and asks, "What is it that you do?" He answers, "I am a member of Congress." The minister then responds, "Oh that is terrific! I so respect people in public life. It is a good thing that you do. And, I don't care which political party because there are good people in all parties. They are all trying to do what is best. I just vote for the best candidate."

Now, the minister thinks that he has paid the Congressman a compliment. However, he has just demonstrated that he hasn't a clue about how politics and government works.

Can we talk politics? There's nothing good or bad about the Democrat Party or the Republican Party. They are empty, holding vessels; like-minded constituents are housed there. And yet I can say without hesitation that evangelicals and pro-life Catholic Christians are not housed in the Democrat Party. Democrats believe in abortion and same-sex marriage, and both are incompatible with biblical Christian behavior.

Politics is about addition and multiplication, not subtraction and division.

No one I know believes that politicians will save America. That said, Evangelicals must become much more sophisticated politically if we hope to reestablish a Biblically-based culture.

This is the key: virtue and righteousness are key components of freedom. Charles Spurgeon observed, "No garment is so resplendent as that of a holy character."

The problem is not a political party. The problem is the estimated 65-80 million evangelicals in America: Half are not registered to vote, and half of that half do not vote. This is a recipe for political disaster.

Smug theological and political laziness—refusing to consider the consequences of leaving the public square to secularists—is no longer an option if we are to secure freedom.

America's Founders established a biblically based culture for a reason. Bible scholar Peter Leithart wrote, "Political authority is accountable to theologically grounded demands."* But once "political power emancipates itself from spiritual authority it loses its own ability and, in short order, its legitimacy. The downward trend cannot be arrested. Individualism, then anarchy, appear as the natural consequence."**

What to Do

First, pastors must re-establish prayer in America's churches. Second, pastors must teach the whole counsel of God—Genesis to Revelation. Third, making disciples must become the mission of the Church. "The church needs to function as a church, not as an outpost of America but as an outpost of God's kingdom. The growing crisis of American culture is related to the failure of the church to be a church."***

There is good news: God's trustworthiness does not end at the point of our disobedience. "He was the Lord of history who delivered those who would obey, and He continues to be the Lord of history to deliver those who would disobey but would then turn to Him in faith."****

God can be trusted.

Indeed, the spiritual resurrection of America will fire political revolution as well as cultural renewal. In addition to the three action steps for pastoral and spiritual renewal, if evangelical and pro-life Catholic Christians will register and vote biblical principles (thus bringing biblical values and leaders to the public square), America can be spiritually resurrected.

We simply need a Gideon or Rahab to stand. {eoa}

* Peter J. Leithart, 1 & 2 Kings Commentary

** Thomas Molnar, Twin Powers: Politics and the Sacred

*** Peter J. Leithart

**** John N. Oswalt, Isaiah Commentary