

3 Options for Christians When Government Contradicts the Word of God

Evangelist Martyn Iles, managing director of the Australian Christian Lobby, gives a word for believers to consider during turbulent political times.

He says, “In every scenario, there are three options. One, obey God and government—[ideal for] happiness. Two, obey God but not government—this is trouble. Or, three, obey government but not God.”

Iles warns to never choose option three, no matter the consequences.

COVID-19 was predicted early on to cause massive deaths in the United States unless “some kind of coordinated pandemic response” was put in place to mitigate losses. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimated over 1.5 million lives would be wiped out, a number that caused government officials to implement unprecedented physical distancing and mask mandates. According to one source, around 583,230 deaths have been reported as being caused by coronavirus. While we grieve the loss of one life, it is unfair for survivors to continue living in lockdown or be required to demonstrate immunity to go without a mask. We cannot pretend the CDC didn’t grossly overestimate the death toll by more than two times the actual numbers we see.

A few months ago, a report explained that New York was the first state to roll out something like a vaccine passport to “prove [people] have been vaccinated against COVID-19 or recently tested negative for the virus that causes it.” New York’s Excelsior Pass is a cell phone app that enables residents to enter sports arenas and attend large catered

events. The pass is being marketed as a convenient method so “people won’t have to hang on to a dog-eared piece of paper, worry about privacy or forgeries, or fork over extra cash to prove they are not contagious.” Statewide standards for implementation are still being developed.

Likewise, Washington State started requiring vaccine passports to attend outdoor sporting events and for otherwise healthy college students to return to class in person. The source says, “These passports aren’t about public health. They’re a matter of social currency...[P]rogressives have touted hero status for getting vaccinated, chiding others as irresponsible for not acting selflessly as they have.”

After the CDC lifted mask restrictions for vaccinated people, Oregon became the first state to require proof of immunity “as an option.” The Oregon Health Authority said, “Businesses, employers and faith institutions now have the option to adjust their masking guidance to allow fully vaccinated individuals to no longer wear a mask in their establishments.”

Apostle Paul says, “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgement (Rom. 13:1-2).

Peter wrote, “Submit yourselves to every human authority for the Lord’s sake, whether it be the king, as supreme, or to governors, as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and to praise those who do right. For it is the will of God that by doing right you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Pet. 2:13-15).

These Scriptures are hard to navigate under current circumstances. We must pursue Iles’ first option of obeying God and government wherever possible and pray for those in power (see 1 Tim. 2:1-2). However, we cannot ignore the

obvious oppressive legislation that's creeping into our lives. When invasive public health practices are turned into new forms of segregation and discrimination, Iles' second choice of obeying God, not government, is the most feasible. These new state requirements are in direct violation to HIPAA laws and the freedoms granted to Americans in the Declaration of Independence.

Where there appears to be a lack of rights in the earthly sphere, the church certainly has authority from a higher realm. Although we are to be submissive to government, the Lord has not called us to assimilate to communism. The spirit behind such legislation as vaccine passports must be exposed and resisted. Particularly, religious organizations should not implement oxymoronic "optional mandates" in houses of worship. Let's not give those with an aversion to church services another reason to stay away. Don't further restrict access to the altars. Surely God's people have greater faith than this.

While there is no Scriptural formula for cultural activism, there are ways to stand in respectful opposition to authorities when laws require us to disobey God's Word. Christians can make moves that seem small on the surface, but are truly pivotal shifts that advance our movement. We can decline shopping in certain stores, stop eating at segregated restaurants, cancel entertainment memberships and exercise First Amendment rights every Sunday morning. The church is not meant to be subcultural. We are counterculture and it's time we double down as people of principles and conviction. {eoa}

*For more than a decade, **Tiffany Benson's** passion for writing has exceeded most of her interests. When she's not catching up on politics or watching documentaries, she enjoys journaling, fiction and contributing to her blog: .*