

DECISION-MAKING IN GOVERNMENT

AS INTENDED BY THE MASTER
DESIGNER OF GOVERNMENT



DR. GARY I. ALLEN

DECISION-MAKING IN GOVERNMENT



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CHRISTIAN MISSION FOR THE UNITED NATIONS COMMUNITY

Decision-Making in Government
2nd Edition
2012 Gary I. Allen

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Acknowledgments: Many people helped in this project. Special thanks go to Grand Chief Sir Paulias Nguna Matane, GCL, GCMG, KStJ and OBE, who in February 1980, while Ambassador of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations, presented me with a challenge that led to Decision-Making Filter #1, and ultimately this whole book; and the late Professor Aaron T. Gana of Nigeria, democracy advocate, for asking me a question in May 1998 over a late evening cup of tea that led to Decision-Making Filter #2. I am deeply indebted to my partner and wife Elaine Allen for introducing me to the ultimate Author of this book, Almighty God Himself, as well as helping develop many of the ideas expressed herein and for critical editorial help. Thanks to Scott Allen for art direction (including cover design) and layout. Thanks also to Prof. David McGill for additional graphic design and layout. I am grateful to the late Dr. Melvin E. Lorentzen for encouragement with this project while he lived and then through his estate for helping to make the printing of this book possible.

Cover Photo: Statue of Abraham Lincoln, Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C. The photo of the statue of Abraham Lincoln was chosen, not because Abraham Lincoln was perfect, but rather because he attempted to implement many of the values described herein.

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Introduction

The typical Government official, whether in an emerging democracy or a more established democracy, is ill prepared to make decisions. The typical official has no preparation for making governmental decisions. Almost always, the Government official was trained to serve in another profession. Almost never is there training in an understanding of democratic governance. In the worst case, the official has experience in a non-democratic Government. In other cases, the official lived under a non-democratic Government and the values of non-democratic governance were instilled within the would-be official. This is compounded by the fact that the history of democratic governance is relatively brief in the history of mankind. Our understanding of governance comes largely from our human history of emperors, monarchy, tribal chieftaincy, and serfdom. This does not adequately prepare us for democratic governance, which in many of our societies is less than 50 years old. The Government official then brings these incorrect ways of thinking into the decision-making process.

Specifically, there are two sources for errors in the Government decision-making process. First, many errors result from an incorrect understanding of the purpose of Government. Once the purpose for Government is understood (Filter Number 1), proper decision-making is facilitated. The second major source of errors in Government decision-making is a misunderstanding of the goals for a healthy society. Once these goals are understood and applied (Filter Number 2) to the decision-making process, another large segment of decisions become clearer.

This book recognizes the discretionary power of the decision-maker. In the process of decision-making, it is important to avoid arbitrariness and possible legal challenge, which may delay implementation of the decision by the court system. Thus, a goal is to ensure speedy implementation by providing a basis for lawful decisions on the part of the decision-makers and on the part of the courts that would overturn those decisions.¹

Furthermore, there is a dangerous propensity for Government officials to make irrational decisions. The historian Barbara Tuchman has demonstrated the irrationality with which Government officials make decisions that are neither in their best interest nor in the interest of the population, and for which they were warned in advance.²

The enclosed material intends to provide a foundation for making decisions in Government and then to apply those principles in several practical areas. I develop two filters for making decisions. I go into a lengthy development for each of these filters, then summarize each of these filters and then apply each of these filters to a number of practical issues facing Government. Filter Number 1 is developed in pages 15-34. It is summarized on pages 35-37. Filter Number 2 is developed in pages 83-107. It is summarized on page 109.

I have elucidated three God-ordained institutions: Family, Religious Institution, and Government. Just a word of caution: what I have described as Religious Institution may or may not correspond with what we call Church in our Western societies. Thus, do not let your perception of the visible Church colour your understanding of the Religious Institution as defined by God. This need for distinction becomes clearer in other cultures where the Religious Institution goes by other names, such as Mosque, Temple, etc. I believe that the challenge is for us to help the Religious Institution in our cultures to live up to the standards God requires of the Religious Institution.

References

1. Steve D. Matenje and Christopher F. Forsyth, *Manual of Administrative Law in Malawi. A Guide for Ministers and Public Servants* (Lilongwe: The Government of Malawi, 2002).
2. Barbara W. Tuchman, *The March of Folly* (New York: Ballantine, 1984).

Rationale for Conveying This Material in a Biblically-Based Format

Argument based on the roots of democracy. Historically and philosophically, democracy is deeply rooted in obedience to the teachings of the Bible. Drawing on the experiment in democracy in the United States, Patrick Henry said:

It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.¹

John Quincy Adams said:

The highest glory of the Revolution was that it united in one indissoluble bond the principles of Christianity and the principles of civil government.²

John Adams said:

Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other.³

James Madison said:

We have staked the future of all our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self-government; upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God.⁴

The concepts of democracy are deeply rooted in obedience to the teachings of the Bible. Thus, an honest look at democracy requires a careful consideration of the foundational truths upon which that democracy has been based historically and upon which we can imagine it must be based in other emerging democracies, even if they are growing out of non-Christian soils.

Argument based upon the capacity of God to change us from the inside. Can these ideas be conveyed without invoking religion? Democracy does not come naturally. It requires a different way of operating. In instilling democratic principles, one can appeal to the head. However, the heart ultimately rules over the head. Unless the heart is convinced, the head will not operate according to conviction. The ideal is when the foundations are internalized. I am convinced that we must open-mindedly explore the role that faith in God can play in making us democratically-minded by changing us from the inside.

Biblical argument. Before ancient Israel confirmed its first leader, God gave this instruction:

Be sure to appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses...When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law...It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his brothers and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom....⁵

This instruction was originally given to ancient Israel. However, this is God's general mandate for the Head of Government of every nation. (I will use the term Head of Government to refer to the executive Head of the Government, whether the official title is Head of State or Prime Minister.) Israel was to be a model to every other nation of the way that God interacts with the nation. As the other nations watched God's interaction with Israel, they were to learn how they were to interact with the same God, who is also the God over their nation.

Notice that the head of the nation was to write out for himself the Law of God. He was not simply to read it, but he was to make his own copy. It is a well-known principle that learning is far more effective when an individual takes the information into his brain and then writes it out with his own hand, in comparison with simply reading the material. After having written out the Law of God, the head of nation was to meditate on it daily. The Law of God imbedded in his mind and heart would affect his judgments and affect his behaviour.

Clearly, God cares that the head of the nation walk closely with Him more than any other person in the nation. God did not give this mandate to any other individual in the nation. There is no other group of people required by God to write out the Law of God themselves for their own personal use, not even the religious leaders. The question is: When the task of administering a nation grows beyond the capacity of a single person and the head of nation delegates to other individuals to discharge his responsibilities in his name, does the requirement given to the head of nation fall upon the individual who discharges the duties of the head of nation in his name? Seemingly, yes. By extension, this mandate given to the head of nation applies to all Government officials. Each Government official is to immerse his/her mind in the Law of God and base his/her decisions upon it.

Political argument. John Adams, one of the founders of the American democratic experiment:

Suppose a nation in some distant region should take the Bible for their only law book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts contained! Every member would be obliged in conscience to temperance, frugality and industry; to justice, kindness and charity towards his fellow men; and to piety, love and reverence toward Almighty God.⁶

Argument with regard to Islam. I have great respect for the Qur'an. I have studied it at length. However, my best knowledge is of the Bible. Whenever I teach this material to workshop groups including Muslims, which I have done extensively, I explain that I will use what I know best, i.e., use the Bible, and ask them to go home and look for the same principles from the Qur'an.

Social argument. Let us consider the social impact upon two eighteenth-century American families.

Atheism/Agnosticism	Biblical Faith
<p>Max Jukes was an atheist who married a godless woman. Out of 650 descendants who were traced, 310 died as paupers; 150 became criminals—7 of them murderers; 100 were known to be drunkards; and more than half of the women were prostitutes. The descendants of Max Jukes cost the United States Government more than \$1.25 million in nineteenth-century dollars.⁷</p>	<p>Jonathan Edwards was a contemporary of Max Jukes. He was a committed follower of Jesus Christ who gave God first place in his life. He married a young lady who loved God. Out of 1,394 descendants who were traced, 295 graduated from university, of whom 13 became university presidents; 65 became professors; 30 were judges; 100 were lawyers—one the dean of an outstanding law school; 56 practiced as physicians—one the dean of a medical school; 75 became officers in the military; 100 were well-known preachers. Another 80 held some form of public office, of whom three were mayors of large cities; three were elected as United States Senators; three as state governors; and others were sent as ambassadors. One was the Comptroller of the U.S. Treasury, and another was Vice President of the United States. Not one of the descendants of Jonathan Edwards cost the U.S. Government a dollar.⁸</p>

Which type of family do we need as the building block for a healthy society?

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NOTE: All Bible references are from the New International Version unless otherwise indicated.

1. Patrick Henry, quoted in D. James Kennedy, *Character & Destiny: A Nation in Search of Its Soul* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), p. 125.
2. John Quincy Adams, quoted in D. James Kennedy, *Character & Destiny: A Nation in Search of Its Soul* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), p. 124.
3. John Adams, addressing the Massachusetts Militia, 1789, quoted in A. James Reichly, *Religion In American Public Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), p. 371.
4. James Madison, quoted in Rus Walton, *One Nation Under God* (Washington: Third Century, 1975), p. 33.
5. *Bible*, Deuteronomy 17:15, 18-20.
6. John Adams, *In Life and Works of John Adams, Volume XI*, pp. 6-7, quoted in Stephen Abbott Northrop, *Cloud of Witnesses* (Portland: American Heritage, 1987), p. 2.
7. Marilyn Hickey, *Breaking the Generation Curse*, (Denver: Marilyn Hickey Ministries, 1988), pp. vi-vii.
8. *Ibid.*

Decision-Making in Government: The Problem

Ted Sorensen, special counsel to President John Kennedy, described that the “ideal” White House decision-making process should encompass:

*...first: agreement on the facts; second: agreement on the overall policy objective; third: a precise definition of the problem; fourth: a canvassing of all possible solutions, with all their shades and variation; fifth: a list of all the possible consequences that would flow from each solution; sixth: a recommendation and final choice of one alternative; seventh: the communication of that selection; and eighth: provision for its execution.*¹

References

1. Ted Sorensen, quoted in William Safire and Leonard Safire, *Leadership* (New York: Galahad, 1990), p. 66.

Decision-Making Filter #1

Foundations for Government Decision-Making Filter #1: God's Guidelines for Making Decisions in Government

I. The Challenge Facing Government: Man, God's Purposes for Man, and the Role of Government

Objective: To clarify God's nature, man's nature, the need for Government, the origin and purpose of Government.

A. Nature of God

1. God is transcendent—above created matter, mind or spirit; not derived from or dependent upon anything else. He is the source. Psalm 90:1-2; 104:1-5, 24-25, 27-32; Isaiah 40:13-14; 55:8-9
 - a. God planned everything.
 - b. God created everything. Genesis 1:1; 2:1
 - c. God preserves everything.
 - d. **God governs everything.** Psalm 47:7-9; 82:1, 8; 93:1-2

God is King of all the earth. God reigns over the nations; God is seated on His holy throne. The nobles of the peoples have assembled with the people of the God of Abraham. For the leaders of the earth belong to God; He is greatly exalted.¹

God has taken His place in the divine assembly; He judges among the gods...Rise up, God, judge the earth, for all the nations belong to You.²

The LORD reigns! He is robed in majesty; The LORD is robed, enveloped in strength. The world is firmly established; it cannot be shaken. Your throne has been established from the beginning; You are from eternity.³

“The Lord has assumed kingship.” Psalm 66:7; Isaiah 41:2

He rules forever by His might; He keeps His eye on the nations. The rebellious should not exalt themselves.⁴

The LORD hands nations over to him, and he subdues kings.⁵

- e. God will bring it to His own appointed consummation. 2 Peter 3:1-13

- f. **Implications.** God is sovereign and human leaders must be careful not to be fighting against God's plan. We must go to the source in making plans. Proverbs 16:25,9; Isaiah 29:15

*There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it is the way of death.*⁶

*A man's heart plans his way, but the LORD determines his steps.*⁷

*Woe to those who go to great lengths to hide their plans from the LORD. They do their works in darkness, and say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?"*⁸

2. God's character.

- a. Omnipotent. Jeremiah 32:17
- b. Omnipresent, infinite, limitless. Psalm 139:7-10
- c. Omniscient. Psalm 139:1-6
- d. Immutable. Malachi 3:6
- e. Everlasting. Psalm 90:1-2
- f. Holy. Isaiah 6:3; Ezekiel 36:22-23; Leviticus 11:44a
- g. **Just.** Psalm 89:14; 97:1-2; Isaiah 61:8; John 5:30

*Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; faithful love and truth go before You.*⁹

*The LORD reigns! Let the earth rejoice; let the many coasts and islands be glad. Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.*¹⁰

*For I the LORD love justice; I hate robbery and injustice; I will faithfully reward them and make an everlasting covenant with them.*¹¹

*Jesus: "I can do nothing on My own. I judge only as I hear, and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."*¹²

We can learn much about the quality of justice God wants us to display by looking at this aspect God's character. There are probably more statements in the Bible about justice than any other quality. Zechariah 7:8-10; Jeremiah 22:1-5; Deuteronomy 10:17-18

*The word of the LORD came to Zechariah: "The LORD of Hosts says this: Render true justice. Show faithful love and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the stranger or the poor; and do not plot evil in your hearts against one another".*¹³

*This is what the LORD says: "Go down to the palace of the king of Judah and announce this word there. You are to say: Hear the word of the LORD, king of Judah, you who sit on the throne of David—you, your officers, and your people who enter these gates. This is what the LORD says: Administer justice and righteousness. Rescue the victim of robbery from the hand of his oppressor. Don't exploit or brutalize the alien, the fatherless, or the widow. Don't shed innocent blood in this place. For if you conscientiously carry out this word, then kings sitting on David's throne will enter through the gates of this palace riding on chariots and horses—they, their officers, and their people. But if you do not obey these words, then I swear by Myself"—this is the LORD's declaration—"that this house will become a ruin."*¹⁴

For the LORD your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty, and awesome God, showing no partiality and taking no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreign resident, giving him food and clothing.¹⁵

- h. Good. Psalm 31:19; Matthew 5:45
- i. Loving. John 3:16 (*agape*)
- j. Patient. 2 Peter 3:9
- k. Faithful. Psalm 119:90
- l. Full of grace. Luke 1:50; Psalm 103:10
- m. Implications.

B. Nature of man. In order to understand governance, we must understand the object of governance — man.

1. Created in God's image. Genesis 1:26-27

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the animals, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female.¹⁶

2. Ability to make decisions. Joshua 24:15

But if it doesn't please you to worship the LORD, choose for yourselves today the one you will worship: the gods your fathers worshiped beyond the Euphrates River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living. As for me and my family, we will worship the LORD.¹⁷

- 3. Superior to any other created being. Genesis 2:7, 19-20
- 4. Man is to have dominion over the rest of God's creation. Genesis 1:28-30.
- 5. Implications. There must be a respect for human life and for the quality of that life in accord with man's place in God's creation. There must be an environment that allows him to make decisions and to exercise creativity.
- 6. **Man's sinful nature, man's rebelliousness.** Deuteronomy 9:24; Psalm 78:17; 1 John 3:4

You have been rebelling against the LORD ever since I have known you.¹⁸

But they continued to sin against Him, rebelling in the desert against the Most High.¹⁹

Everyone who commits sin also breaks the law; sin is the breaking of law.²⁰

a. Defined and controlled by the Law.

1) Ten Commandments. Exodus 20:3-17

Do not have other gods besides Me. Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. You must not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the fathers' sin, to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing faithful love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commands. Do not misuse the name of the LORD your God, because

the LORD will punish anyone who misuses His name. Remember to dedicate the Sabbath day: You are to labor six days and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. You must not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the foreigner who is within your gates. For the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything in them in six days; then He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and declared it holy. Honor your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not give false testimony against your neighbor. Do not covet your neighbor's house. Do not covet your neighbor's wife, his male or female slave, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.²¹

2) 1 Timothy 1:9-10

We know that the law is not meant for a righteous person, but for the lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinful, for the unholy and irreverent, for those who kill their fathers and mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral and homosexuals, for kidnappers, liars, perjurers, and for whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching.²²

Every law that is passed further defines the nature of man and further clarifies the lawless and rebellious nature of man.

- b. How good is man?
 - 1) All are tainted by sin. Romans 3:9-18, 22b-23; 1 John 1:8, 10
 - 2) How high is the standard? Exodus 20:3-17, Matthew 5:27-28
- c. Man is a self centred, rebellious being who takes advantage of others to achieve his own goals.
But there is a limit to it. He may do good.
 - 1) Limit to evil. 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, 6
 - 2) Salting influence. Matthew 5:13-16; Psalm 66:3; Genesis 26:28
 - 3) Conscience (internal witness) and external witness.
Romans 1:19-20; 2:14-15; Acts 14:17; 1 Timothy 4:2
 - 4) Some capacity to do good, but there is doubt that the motivation is pure and selfless.
Acts 27:43
 - 5) Spiritual nature of those who have been transformed.
2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:9-10; Ephesians 4:20-24; Galatians 5:16-25

7. Implications. Society is made up of imperfect (rebellious) individuals.

Government leaders have the same flaws. Form of Government must take this into account, with appropriate checks and balances.

Reinhold Niebuhr:

Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.²³

C. S. Lewis:

Mankind is so fallen that no man can be trusted with unchecked power over his fellows. Aristotle said that some people were only fit to be slaves. I do not contradict him. But I reject slavery because I see no men fit to be masters.²⁴

Michael Novak:

One cannot understand America and certainly not its founders or institutions, if one does not understand the Jewish and Christian consciousness of the reality of sin. Without that understanding, one is living in a fool's paradise. Without that, the institutions will not function or long endure. This republic was designed for sinners. There is no use trying to build a republic for saints. There are too few of them, and even the ones there are, are difficult to live with. No, if you wish to build a republic that will last, you must design it for sinners. That is the only 'moral majority' there is...a republic of sinners—and, therefore, a republic with checks and balances, as well as other 'auxiliary precautions' (to employ the phrase of James Madison, well taught as he was by Christian teachers).²⁵

C. Nature of the world

1. Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 8:18-22; Matthew 4:8-10; Luke 4:6
2. Implications.

D. God's purposes for individuals

1. Salvation—place faith in God. 1 Thessalonians 5:9; John 17:3
2. Lordship of Jesus Christ—live in dependence upon God's wisdom and power. Ephesians 5:18-21; Micah 6:8
3. Just. Micah 6:8
4. Work, especially engage in work that will contribute to society. Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 8:18-22; Titus 3:14; Ephesians 4:28
5. Submit to authority. Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-18; Ephesians 5:21-6:9
6. Experience blessing, well being. 1 Timothy 2:1-2
7. Implications.

E. Origin of Government

1. **Established by God. Romans 13:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14; Daniel 2:21**

Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are instituted by God.²⁶

He (God) changes the times and seasons; He removes kings and establishes kings.²⁷

2. **Receives authority from God. Romans 13:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14**

Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are instituted by God.²⁶

Submit to every human institution because of the Lord, whether to the Emperor as the supreme authority, or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.²⁸

3. **A divine institution but not a holy institution. Matthew 22:15-22 (Luke 20:20-25); Revelation 11:15 (in the future); Luke 4:5-7; 1 Corinthians 2:8**

Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to trap Him (Jesus) by what He said. They sent their disciples to Him, with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know that You are truthful and teach

truthfully the way of God. You defer to no one, for You don't show partiality. Tell us, therefore, what You think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" But perceiving their malice, Jesus said, "Why are you testing Me, hypocrites? Show Me the coin used for the tax." So they brought Him a denarius. "Whose image and inscription is this?" He asked them. "Caesar's," they said to Him. Then He said to them, "Therefore, give back to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."'²⁹

F. Purposes of Government

1. Restrain evil; protect man from his essential nature.

1 Timothy 1:9-10; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-14; 1 Timothy 2:1-2

We know that the law is not meant for a righteous person, but for the lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinful, for the unholy and irreverent, for those who kill their fathers and mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral and homosexuals, for kidnappers, liars, perjurers, and for whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching....³⁰

Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are instituted by God. So then, the one who resists the authority is opposing God's command, and those who oppose it will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do good and you will have its approval. For government is God's servant to you for good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, because it does not carry the sword for no reason. For government is God's servant, an avenger that brings wrath on the one who does wrong. Therefore, you must submit, not only because of wrath, but also because of your conscience. And for this reason you pay taxes, since the authorities are God's public servants, continually attending to these tasks. Pay your obligations to everyone: taxes to those you owe taxes, tolls to those you owe tolls, respect to those you owe respect, and honor to those you owe honor.³¹

Submit to every human institution because of the Lord, whether to the Emperor as the supreme authority, or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.³²

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.³³

2. Method of restraining evil. Romans 13:4; 1 Peter 2:14; John 19:10-11; Acts 25:9-11

For government is God's servant to you for good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, because it does not carry the sword for no reason. For government is God's servant, an avenger that brings wrath on the one who does wrong.³⁴

Submit to every human institution because of the Lord, whether to the Emperor as the supreme authority, or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.³⁵

So Pilate said to Him (Jesus), "You're not talking to me? Don't You know that I have the authority to release You and the authority to crucify You?" "You would have no authority over Me at all," Jesus answered him, "if it hadn't been given you from above. This is why the one who handed Me

over to you has the greater sin.”³⁶

Then Festus, wanting to do a favor for the Jews, replied to Paul, “Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem, there to be tried before me on these charges?” But Paul said: “I am standing at Caesar’s tribunal, where I ought to be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as even you can see very well. If then I am doing wrong, or have done anything deserving of death, I do not refuse to die, but if there is nothing to what these men accuse me of, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar!”³⁷

- a. Internal to society (himself and his neighbour) — police force.**
- b. External to society — military force.**

3. Encourage good behaviour. Romans 13:3; 1 Peter 2:14

For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do good and you will have its approval.³⁸

Submit to every human institution because of the Lord, whether to the Emperor as the supreme authority, or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.³⁹

4. Administer justice. Deuteronomy 16:18-20; (1:16-17; Exodus 23:6-8) Jeremiah 22:11-13, 15-17; Proverbs 29:4; 29:14

Appoint judges and officials for your tribes in all your towns the LORD your God is giving you. They are to judge the people with righteous judgment. Do not deny justice or show partiality to anyone. Do not accept a bribe, for it blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. Pursue justice and justice alone, so that you will live and possess the land the LORD your God is giving you.⁴⁰

I commanded your judges at that time: Hear the cases between your brothers, and judge rightly between a man and his brother or a foreign resident. Do not show partiality when rendering judgment; listen to small and great alike. Do not be intimidated by anyone, for judgment belongs to God.⁴¹

You must not deny justice to the poor among you in his lawsuit. Stay far away from a false accusation. Do not kill the innocent and the just, because I will not justify the guilty. You must not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted and corrupts the words of the righteous. You must not oppress a foreign resident; you yourselves know how it feels to be a foreigner because you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.⁴²

For this is what the LORD says concerning Shallum son of Josiah, king of Judah, who succeeded Josiah his father as king: “He has left this place — he will never return here again, but he will die in the place where they deported him, never seeing this land again. Woe for the one who builds his palace through unrighteousness, his upper rooms through injustice, who makes his fellow man serve without pay and will not give him his wages...Are you a king because you excel in cedar? Your own father, did he not eat and drink? He administered justice and righteousness, then it went well with him. He took up the case of the poor and needy, then it went well. Is this not what it means to know Me?” This is the LORD’s declaration. But you have eyes and heart for nothing except your own unjust gain, shedding innocent blood and committing extortion and oppression.⁴³

By justice a king brings stability to a land, but a man who demands “contributions” demolishes it....A king who judges the poor with fairness—his throne will be established forever.⁴⁴

5. Collect taxes. Romans 13:6-7

And for this reason you pay taxes, since the authorities are God's public servants, continually attending to these tasks. Pay your obligations to everyone: taxes to those you owe taxes, tolls to those you owe tolls, respect to those you owe respect, and honor to those you owe honor.⁴⁵

6. Provide environment in which one can prosper in his relationship to God. 1 Timothy 2:1-2

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.⁴⁶

For further reading:

Robert Duncan Culver, *Toward a Biblical View of Civil Government* (Chicago: Moody, 1974). Currently published as Robert D. Culver, *Civil Government: A Biblical View* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009).

II. God's Purposes for Nations

Objective: To clarify the role of nations in God's plan.

A. God divided mankind into units (linguistically and geographically). Genesis 11:1-9

Robert Duncan Culver:

It is apparently not God's will, however, under the present condition of sin, that the world should be governed as a unified world state. Furthermore, it is probably impossible.⁴⁷

Abraham Kuyper, Prime Minister of Netherlands 1901-1905 and prominent theologian:

Man is created from man, and by virtue of his birth he is organically united with the whole race. Together we form one humanity, not only with those who are living now, but also with all the generations behind us and with those who shall come after us — pulverized into millions though we may be. All the human race is from one blood. The conception of States, however, which subdivide the earth into continents, and each continent into morsels does not harmonize with this idea. Then only would the organic unity of our race be realized politically, if one State could embrace all the world, and if the whole of humanity were associated in one world empire. Had not sin intervened, no doubt this would actually have been so. If sin, as a disintegrating force, had not divided humanity into different sections, nothing would have marred or broken the unity of our race. And the mistake of the Alexanders, and of the Augusti, and of the Napoleons, was not that they were charmed with the thought of One World Empire, but it was this — that they endeavored to realize this idea notwithstanding that the force of sin had dissolved our unity....I say, all this is nothing but a looking backward after a lost paradise.⁴⁸

B. There should be a number of nations. Acts 17:26-27

Define *nation*.

1. *ethnos*: originally a multitude, denotes
 - a. a nation or people, e.g., Matt. 24:7; Acts 10:35, often in the singular, it is used of the Jews, Israel, e.g., Luke 7:5; 23:2; John 11:48, 50-52; Acts 10:22; 24:2, 10, 17.
 - b. in the plural, of nations other than Israel, the Gentile nations, the heathen, e.g., Matthew 4:15; Romans 3:29; 11:11; 15:10; Galatians 2:8.
2. *genos*: a family, an offspring, a nation, a race, e.g., Mark 7:26; Acts 4:36; Galatians 1:14.
3. *allopoulos*: foreign, of another race, e.g., Acts 10:28.
4. *goy* (O.T.): a foreign nation — Gentile, heathen, nation, people.

C. The appearance, disappearance, boundaries of the nations are determined by God. Acts 17:26-27

From one man He has made every nation of men to live all over the earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live, so that they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us.^{48b}

D. Purpose is to facilitate the seeking of God. Acts 17:26-27

E. God's purposes in human history take precedence over those for individual nations. Isaiah 40:15-17

One man said to Abraham Lincoln as he was contemplating his direction with regard to slavery:

*Slavery must be stricken down wherever it exists. If we do not do right I believe God will let us go our own way to our ruin. But if we do right I believe he will lead us safely out of this wilderness, crown our arms with victory, and restore our now dissevered Union.*⁴⁹

Lincoln replied:

*My faith is greater than yours. I also believe that He will compel us to do right in order that He may do these things, not so much because we desire them as that they accord with His plan of dealing with this nation, in the midst of which He means to establish justice. I think He means that we shall do more than we have yet done in furtherance of His plans, and He will open the way for our doing it. I have felt His hand upon me in great trials and submitted to His guidance, and I trust that as He shall further open the way, I will be ready to walk therein, relying on His help and trusting in His goodness and wisdom.*⁵⁰

Proverb 21:1

- F. The real leader of each nation is God. Psalm 47:7-8; Jeremiah 10:7
- G. Each nation is to worship God. Psalm 33:8, 12; versus Psalm 9:5, 17
- H. God's purpose for Israel, as a special case.
 - 1. To be a holy people. Leviticus 11:45; Exodus 19:5-6
 - 2. To be a witness for God among the nations. Psalm 102:15-16; 1 Chronicles 16:23-24; Ezekiel 36:19-24
 - 3. To be a vehicle for the entrance of God's Saviour into human history. Genesis 12:1-3
- I. Will God bless any nation that commits itself to the purposes for which God created Israel? Proverbs 14:34; Ephesians 2:11-13; Romans 9; 11:11-24

Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.^{50b}

Lincoln, in his call for a National Fast Day on April 30, 1863:

*And whereas, it is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.*⁵¹

Lord Charnwood said of Lincoln:

*We may regard, and himself regarded, the liberation of the slaves, which will always be associated with his name, as a part of the larger work, the restoration of his country to its earliest and noblest tradition, which alone gave permanence or worth to its existence as a nation.*⁵²

J. God deals with all nations, not just Israel.

1. Psalm 47:7-8; 22:27-28; 66:7; 67:4

God is King of all the earth; God reigns over the nations; God is seated on His holy throne. ^{52b}

2. Jonah
3. Jeremiah 18:7-10

K. God can use one nation as an instrument to punish another nation.

1. Assyria to Israel. 2 Kings 17:6-8
2. Babylon to Judah. Jeremiah 25:1, 8-9
3. Babylon to Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon. Jeremiah 27:1, 3-8
4. Babylon to Egypt. Jeremiah 43:10-11a
5. Cyrus. Isaiah 44:28-45:5
6. Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, third paragraph:

...Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained....The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." ⁵³

L. Implications

III. The Limits of Government, Form of Government, Bringing Government Back on Course

Objective: To clarify the purpose of Government by viewing it as one of several institutions established by God and responsible to God, considering the limits upon each institution; that there is not an ideal form of Government that should be employed by every nation; the options open to us in changing Government not apparently fulfilling its God-given purpose.

A. Three God-ordained institutions

1. Family.

- a. Husband and wife. Genesis 2:20-24; Mark 10:2-12; Malachi 2:14-16; Ephesians 5:22-33; Proverbs 27:17

The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man no helper was found who was like him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. Then the LORD God made the rib He had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. And the man said: This one, at last, is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called woman, for she was taken from man. This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh.⁵⁴

Some Pharisees approached Him (Jesus) to test Him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" He replied to them, "What did Moses command you?" They said, "Moses permitted us to write divorce papers and send her away." But Jesus told them, "He wrote this commandment for you because of the hardness of your hearts. But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, man must not separate." Now in the house the disciples questioned Him again about this matter. And He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. Also, if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."⁵⁵

Yet you ask, "For what reason?" Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have acted treacherously against her, though she was your marriage partner and your wife by covenant. Didn't the one God make us with a remnant of His life-breath? And what does the One seek? A godly offspring. So watch yourselves carefully, and do not act treacherously against the wife of your youth. "If he hates and divorces his wife," says the LORD God of Israel, "he covers his garment with injustice," says the LORD of Hosts. Therefore, watch yourselves carefully, and do not act treacherously.⁵⁶

Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is head of the wife as also Christ is head of the church. He is the Savior of the body.⁵⁷

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.⁵⁸

- b. Parents over children. Deuteronomy 5:16; Ephesians 6:1-2

Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and so that you may prosper in the land the LORD your God is giving you.⁵⁹

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. Honor your father and mother—which is the first commandment with a promise....*⁶⁰

c. Husband's responsibility. Ephesians 5:22-23

*Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is head of the wife as also Christ is head of the church. He is the Savior of the body.*⁶¹

d. Parents have responsibilities for children.

1) Education. Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4

*Listen...The LORD our God, the LORD is One. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*⁶²

*Teach a youth about the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*⁶³

*And fathers, don't stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*⁶⁴

2) Behaviour and character. Deuteronomy 6:1-2

*This is the command—the statutes and ordinances—the LORD your God has instructed me to teach you, so that you may follow them in the land you are about to enter and possess. Do this so that you may fear the LORD your God all the days of your life by keeping all His statutes and commands I am giving you, your son, and your grandson, and so that you may have a long life.*⁶⁵

2. Religious Institution. Matthew 16:16-18; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:18-23; 4:11-16; 5:22-32

*Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God!" And Jesus responded, "Simon son of Jonah, you are blessed because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the forces of Hades will not overpower it."*⁶⁶

*To God's church at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus and called as saints, with all those in every place who call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord—theirs and ours.*⁶⁷

*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the glorious riches of His inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable power of His power to us who believe, according to the working of His vast strength. He demonstrated this power in the Messiah by raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavens—far above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put everything under His feet and appointed Him as head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of the One who fills all things in every way.*⁶⁸

And He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ's fullness. Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head—Christ. From Him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part.⁶⁹

Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is head of the wife as also Christ is head of the church. He is the Savior of the body. Now as the church submits to Christ, so wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as also Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, to make her holy, cleansing her in the washing of water by the word. He did this to present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and blameless. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own flesh, but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, since we are members of His body. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church.⁷⁰

3. Government. Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; 1 Peter 2:13-14; 1 Timothy 1:9-10
See sections I.E,F (pages 19-20)

Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are instituted by God. So then, the one who resists the authority is opposing God's command, and those who oppose it will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do good and you will have its approval. For government is God's servant to you for good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, because it does not carry the sword for no reason. For government is God's servant, an avenger that brings wrath on the one who does wrong. Therefore, you must submit, not only because of wrath, but also because of your conscience. And for this reason you pay taxes, since the authorities are God's public servants, continually attending to these tasks. Pay your obligations to everyone: taxes to those you owe taxes, tolls to those you owe tolls, respect to those you owe respect, and honor to those you owe honor.⁷¹

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.⁷²

Submit to every human institution because of the Lord, whether to the Emperor as the supreme authority, or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.⁷³

We know that the law is not meant for a righteous person, but for the lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinful, for the unholy and irreverent, for those who kill their fathers and mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral and homosexuals, for kidnappers, liars, perjurers, and for whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching....⁷⁴

4. Summarized.⁷⁵**a. Family.**

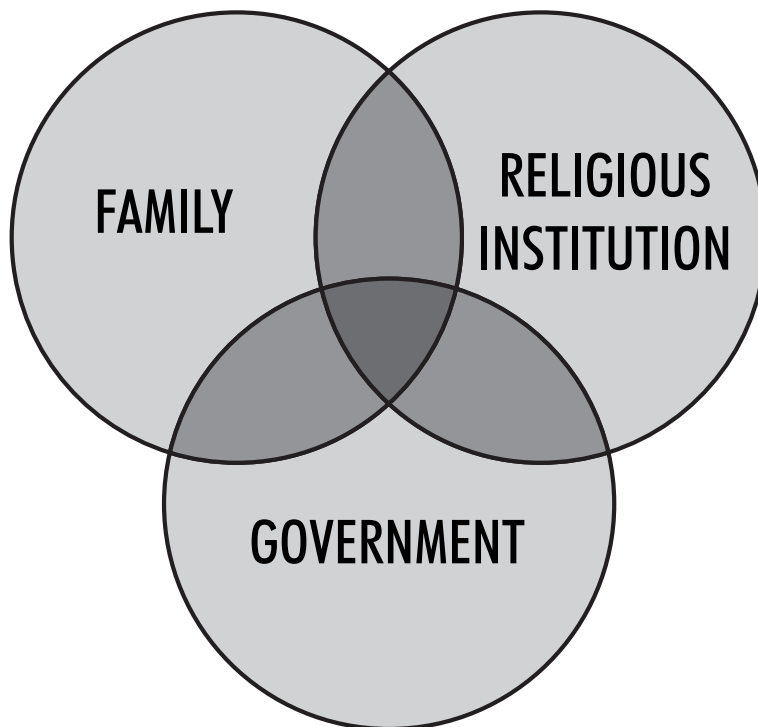
Purpose: the fundamental unit of society in which individual character and values are nourished and which provides the model for all other relationships.

b. Religious Institution.

Purpose: the human manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth responsible for catalysing man's interaction with his Creator.

c. Government.

Purpose: provide an orderly society within which the individual can reach his/her full, God-given potential.



There are three God-ordained institutions, which together must accomplish all of God's purposes for a nation—not just Government.

B. Separation and interaction of God-ordained institutions.

Robert Culver:

*In this philosophy (Calvin, Luther, and Herman Dooyeweerd), the state, or civil government co-exists with church, industry, education, agriculture, art, individual genius, and so forth. All are aspects of God's works of creation, preservation, and providence. Each is autonomous, that is, each operates according to laws of its nature as a creature. The state is only one among the several. Its task is to police them all so that they stay within their autonomies and do not infringe upon one another even though they must impinge on one another. When the state steps in to take charge of any one of the others, a wrong is committed, and disorder is introduced, just as would be the case if civil government were made a department of the church or of the university. God alone has claims of sovereignty over them all.*⁷⁶

C. Biblical history of Government

1. Patriarchal. Genesis 46:26; 49:1-2, 8 10
2. Theocracy. Exodus 19:3-8
3. Government by judges. Judges 2:13-18
4. Monarchy. 1 Samuel 7:15; 8:4-9; 10:24

D. Form of Government

1. The actual form of a Government is not the most important factor, but rather whether it displays justice and righteousness.
Jeremiah 22:1-5, 13-16
See Section I.F.4 (pages 21-22)

Alexander Pope:

*For forms of government let fools contest; Whate'er is best administered is best.*⁷⁷

2. Considering the human weakness inherent in leaders, there is a need for balance of powers and constitutional limits. Isaiah 33:22

Culver:

*The Federalist Papers by James Madison and Alexander Hamilton elaborated this view of affairs, saying in one important passage: "It may be a reflection on human nature that such [constitutional] devices should be necessary to control the abuses of government. But what is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing of a government which is to be administered by men over men, the greatest difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed, and in the next place oblige it to control itself."*⁷⁸

See quotes by C. S. Lewis and Michael Novak in Section I.B.7 (pages 18-19)

3. Will Herberg:

*In the Augustinian Reformation argument, we may therefore find a significant justification of constitutional democracy; yet we should not forget there are other types of regime compatible with the legitimate state, and that constitutional Democracy as we understand it is actually possible only under certain historical conditions, which are by no means always present.*⁷⁹

4. Capitalism vs. socialism.

E. Change of Government

1. What are the conditions for changing Government?
Danger.

Culver:

In many parts of the world, less orderly and law honoring revolutions have come with wearying regularity. In most cases, however, the new regime immediately becomes self protective. This requires safeguards that take away the very freedoms for which the revolution was fought.⁸⁰

Note: Change usually leads to deterioration.

2. Dilemma: If the unprincipled people are the ones most actively involved in changing Government, will there not be a deterioration in the governmental process? Contrast this with Edmund Burke: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."⁸¹
3. What can we do when we think Government is not fulfilling its purpose?
 - a. Submit. John 19:10-11
 - b. Appeal. Daniel 1:5, 8-13; Acts 25:9-11
 - c. Obey God, disobey Government, bear the consequences.
Daniel 3:1-22; 6:1-13, 16, 19-23; Acts 4:5-12, 18, 33; 5:16-21, 26-29, 40-42
4. How may Government be changed? Proverbs 24:21; 30:21-23; Romans 13:1-2; Daniel 2:21; Jeremiah 18:1-12; 25:1-14; 22:5

Robert Lawrence Ottley, speaking of the prophets:

There is indeed significance in the fact that in spite of their ardent zeal for social reform they did not as a rule take part in political life or demand political reforms. They desired, it has been justly said, not better institutions but better men.⁸²

Old Testament prophets did not seek to change Government, rather men. Samuel 12:1-13; Jeremiah 22:1-5

5. David replacing Saul.
 - a. Saul anointed. 1 Samuel 10:1
 - b. Saul's disobedience and rejection. I Samuel 13:8-14
 - c. David anointed. 1 Samuel 16:12-14
 - d. David refused to kill Saul. 1 Samuel 24:2-12; 26:2-16
 - e. David punishes for Saul's death. 2 Samuel 1:1-16
6. American Revolution. Declaration of Independence.
7. U.S. Civil War. Abraham Lincoln Second Inaugural Address. (See section II.K.6, page 25)
8. Sovereignty of God over nations and their leader.
Ezekiel 28:1-2, 6-10; 32:1 8, 11-12; Jeremiah 22:1-5
9. What tools does the believer have for improving Government?
 - a. Sovereignty of God. Psalm 46:10
 - b. Pray. 1 Timothy 2:1-2; Proverbs 21:1
 - c. Reconciling negotiation. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
 - d. Moral improvement of society.

IV. God's Expectations for Government Leaders

Objective: To clarify the way that Government leaders must work with God.

A. Required attitude

1. Derive authority from God. Romans 13:1; Deuteronomy 1:17-18; Jeremiah 27:5; Psalm 83:18; Exodus 9:16
2. Are placed in office by God and serve at His pleasure. Romans 13:1; Daniel 2:21; 4:17; Deuteronomy 17:15; Psalm 94:20-23
3. Sense of dependence upon God. Psalm 33:13-17
4. Leadership is a sacred trust. Jeremiah 22:1-2, 11-17
5. Are selfless servants of God. Romans 13:6; Deuteronomy 17:15-20
6. Must be just. Proverbs 29:4,14; Deuteronomy 1:13-17; 16:18-20; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Isaiah 1:10, 17; 1 Kings 10:1, 6-9
7. Must be honest or righteous. Proverbs 29:12; 16:12; Deuteronomy 1:13-17; 16:18-20; 2 Samuel 23:3-4; Exodus 18:21
8. Must be wise. Jeremiah 23:5; Deuteronomy 1:13; 16:18-20; Exodus 18:2; 1 Kings 3:7-12
9. Should be equipped. Proverbs 30:21-23; Daniel 1:1-5; Deuteronomy 1:15

B. Purpose

1. Administer the Government obligations. Romans 13:1-7
2. Administer justice. Proverbs 29:4, 7; 22:22-23; 14:31; Isaiah 10:1-2; Jeremiah 22:16; but Proverbs 29:26

C. Separating the private man from the public man

1. Forgiveness vs. justice. Matthew 5:39-45
2. Public morality. Deuteronomy 17:17
3. Avoiding slander. Proverbs 6:16-19
4. Forsaking personal gain. Deuteronomy 17:16-17; Jeremiah 22:15-17; Exodus 18:21
5. Worship of God. Deuteronomy 17:18-20; Psalm 2:10-12; 2 Kings 22:3-11; 23:1-3, 25; Proverbs 14:34; Romans 13:4, 6 "a minister of God" or "God's servant"
6. Family responsibilities. Parallel with other leaders. 1 Timothy 3:1-7

References

NOTE: All Bible references are from the Holman Christian Standard Bible unless otherwise indicated.

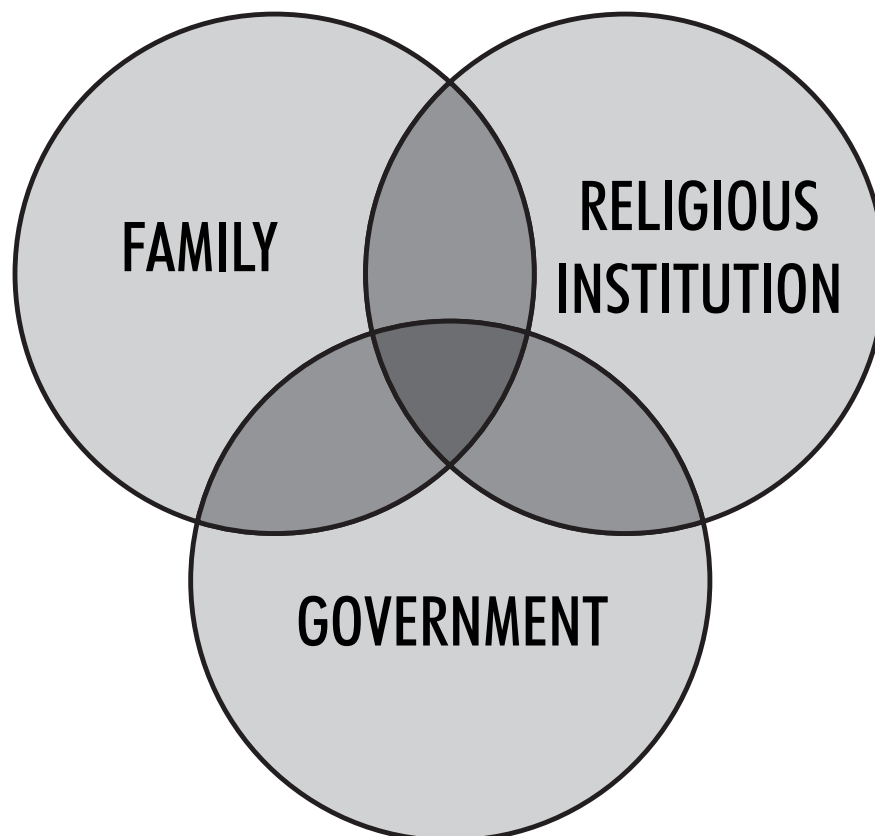
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13. *Ibid.*, Zechariah 7:8-10.
14. *Ibid.*, Jeremiah 22:1-5.
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16. *Ibid.*, Genesis 1:26-27.
17. *Ibid.*, Joshua 24:15.
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19. *Ibid.*, Psalms 78:17.
20. *Ibid.*, 1 John 3:4.
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Government Decision-Making Filter #1 Summarized: The Roles of the Three God-Ordained Institutions

There are three God-ordained institutions that must each be healthy and working in balance in order for individuals and the society to be healthy. Each one of these institutions is established by God. Each plays a separate, but indispensable, role for the building of a healthy society made up of healthy individuals. Those serving in each of these three institutions are servants of God just as much as any clergyman. They each report to God and are responsible to Him for the manner in which they discharge their duties.

The first filter is based upon an understanding of the purposes for three God-ordained institutions. According to purpose, a determination must first be made as to which of the three institutions has responsibility for that area and should actually make the decision. Then, the appropriate institution should make the decision in a direction consistent with that purpose.



God ordained institutions:

1) Family.

Purpose: the fundamental unit of society in which individual character and values are nourished and which provides the model for all other relationships.

2) Religious Institution.

Purpose: the human manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth responsible for catalysing man's interaction with his Creator.

3) Government.

Purpose: provide an orderly society within which the individual can reach his/her full, God-given potential.

Separation and interaction of God ordained institutions.

Robert Culver:

In this philosophy (Calvin, Luther, and Herman Dooyeweerd), the state, or civil government co-exists with church, industry, education, agriculture, art, individual genius, and so forth. All are aspects of God's works of creation, preservation, and providence. Each is autonomous, that is, each operates according to laws of its nature as a creature. The state is only one among the several. Its task is to police them all so that they stay within their autonomies and do not infringe upon one another even though they must impinge on one another. When the state steps in to take charge of any one of the others, a wrong is committed, and disorder is introduced, just as would be the case if civil government were made a department of the church or of the university. God alone has claims of sovereignty over them all.¹

Government must strengthen the influences, specifically the institutions, that limit harmful behaviour.

Lee Kuan Yew:

Confucian societies believe that the individual exists in the context of the family, extended family, friends, and wider society, and that the government cannot and should not take over the role of the family. Many in the West believe that the government is capable of fulfilling the obligations of the family when it fails, as with single mothers....Singapore depends on the strength and influence of the family to keep society orderly and maintain a culture of thrift, hard work, filial piety, and respect for elders and for scholarship and learning.²

Implications.

Once properly understood, each of these institutions is equally important in the building and maintaining of a healthy society. Each of these institutions must function within its God-given boundaries.

Government is divine. To make a decision on behalf of this institution is a holy act. Decisions must be undertaken with this attitude.

Government has the capacity to use the sword in the furtherance of its responsibilities. As such, it must be extremely careful that it does not encroach upon the boundaries of the other two institutions. Because of the great influence that it exerts, Government has the capacity to nourish and strengthen the other two institutions so that they increase in health and are able to function in balance with Government.

It is to Government's advantage for the other two institutions to operate at full strength. There are many cases, as we shall see, where the other institutions are better equipped to meet societal needs than Government is. Government must cautiously restrain itself from interfering with the actions and health of the other two institutions.

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Decision-Making Filter #1: Steps to Applying

When a problem appears in society, it quite frequently is presented to Government. However, Government officials must resist the temptation to automatically move ahead in dealing with it. Once the problem is properly defined, it must be determined which institution has responsibility for making the decision, according to the purpose and responsibility of each of the God-ordained institutions.

The temptation is for Government to deal with every problem presented to it, whether consistent with its God-ordained purpose or not. However, in the process, Government can actually weaken the appropriate institution that should be dealing with the issue. If Government feels that the appropriate institution is too weak to properly resolve the issue at hand, then it would often be better for Government to work to strengthen the appropriate institution.

If Government has responsibility for this area, then the following questions must be asked of the proposed decision:

Does the proposed decision contribute toward providing an orderly society within which the individual can reach his/her full, God-given potential?

Does the proposed decision contribute toward, or at least not detract from, the Family functioning as the fundamental unit of society in which individual character and values are nourished and which provides the model for all other relationships?

Does the proposed decision contribute toward, or at least not detract from, the Religious Institution functioning as the human manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth responsible for catalysing man's interaction with his Creator?

If Family or Religious Institution has responsibility for this area, then the following questions must be asked:

Is there anything Government should do to make it possible for Family or Religious Institution to better accept this responsibility or meet this need?

Must Government work to produce a better environment, e.g., economically, within which the Family and Religious Institution can be stronger and better play its God-given role?

Case Study in Decision-Making: Education

Whose responsibility is education?

Deuteronomy 4:9; 6:6-9; 11:18-21

Proverbs 1:8-9; 22:6

Ephesians 6:4

Only be on your guard and diligently watch yourselves, so that you don't forget the things your eyes have seen and so that they don't slip from your mind as long as you live. Teach them to your children and your grandchildren.¹

These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.²

Impress these words of Mine on your hearts and souls, bind them as a sign on your hands, and let them be a symbol on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, so that as long as the heavens are above the earth, your days and those of your children may be many in the land the LORD swore to give your fathers.³

Listen, my son, to your father's instruction, and don't reject your mother's teaching, for they will be a garland of grace on your head and a gold chain around your neck.⁴

Teach a youth about the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.⁵

And fathers, don't stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.⁶

Clearly, education is the responsibility of the Family. When Government enters the arena of education, its scope is limited to elements related to building and maintaining an orderly society. It must view its involvement as a service to the Family in achieving its objectives, including the imparting of character and values. Government's involvement must then be under the authority of the Family, and with its complete approval. When Government takes upon itself responsibility for education through a system of universal public education, Family can become lazy and weaker. Family must remain diligent and actively involved to make sure its responsibility is properly fulfilled.

Even when motivation is pure, public education thrusts Government into the area of values—spiritual and philosophical.

Neil Postman:

*In considering how to conduct the schooling of our young, adults have two problems to solve. One is an engineering problem; the other, a metaphysical one.*⁷

Whoever educates has a serious responsibility.

Early documents make it clear that an important motivation for public education in the United States was the development of a docile working class to meet the needs of the Industrial Revolution.

John Dewey, the founder of public education in America:

*You can't make Socialists out of individualists—children who know how to think for themselves spoil the harmony of the collective society which is coming, where everyone is interdependent.*⁸

Neil Postman:

*The reason...is that public education does not serve a public. It creates a public. And in creating the right kind of public, the schools contribute toward strengthening the spiritual basis of the American creed. That is how Jefferson understood it, how Horace Mann understood it, how John Dewey understood it. And, in fact, there is no other way to understand it. The question is not "Does or doesn't public schooling create a public?" The question is "What kind of public does it create?"*⁹

Temptation of Government to control education.

Temptation of Government to use education as a tool for indoctrination.

Temptation of Government to use education as a tool for subordination.

Noam Chomsky:

*Schools...are institutions for indoctrination and for imposing obedience.*¹⁰

Government has the power to modify (correct, distort, twist) historical understanding. In 1890, Sultan Abdul Hamid II of Turkey outlawed the use of the name *Armenia* in textbooks as well as the press.¹¹

Chomsky refers to *historical engineering*.¹²

Temptation of Government to use its disproportionate strength to overrule the other institutions, i.e., to take undue advantage of them.

Based on God's guidelines for making decisions in Government, what should be the goal of education?

Questions for Further Reflection

1. Who should take responsibility for education?
2. How can Family fulfill its responsibility while availing itself of Government-provided universal public education?
3. Based on God's guidelines for making decisions in Government, what should be the goal of education?
Should the goal of education include instilling creativity?
Should it include how to think?
Should it include the skills to make a contribution to society, while earning an income sufficient to support a family, according to pages 45-50?
Should it include how to make decisions?
4. What about sex education? Whose responsibility is that?

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Case Study in Decision-Making: Social Safety-Net

Temptation: Government welfare programmes used as an instrument of politics.

The temptation is to make the population dependent upon the Government or a political party, e.g., the adage under communism that Government will meet every need from the cradle to the grave.

Likewise, there is the temptation to make some segment of the population dependent upon Government, e.g., a permanent underclass — a *culture of dependency*.¹

Whose responsibility is welfare?

1. Each meet his/her own need through socially constructive work, with an excess available to save and to give to others in need.

a. Each work to meet his own basic needs. Titus 3:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-14

*And our people must also learn to devote themselves to good works for cases of urgent need, so that they will not be unfruitful.*²

*But we encourage you, brothers, to do so even more, to seek to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, so that you may walk properly in the presence of outsiders and not be dependent on anyone.*³

*In fact, when we were with you, this is what we commanded you: “If anyone isn’t willing to work, he should not eat.” For we hear that there are some among you who walk irresponsibly, not working at all, but interfering with the work of others. Now we command and exhort such people, by the Lord Jesus Christ, that quietly working, they may eat their own bread. Brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take note of that person; don’t associate with him, so that he may be ashamed.*⁴

b. Save. Jeremiah 40:10; Ezekiel 4:9; 2 Chronicles 32:28

*As for me, I am going to live in Mizpah to represent you before the Chaldeans who come to us. As for you, gather wine, summer fruit, and oil, place them in your storage jars, and live in the cities you have captured.*⁵

*Also take wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt. Put them in a single container and make them into bread for yourself. You are to eat it during the number of days you lie on your side, 390 days.*⁶

He made warehouses for the harvest of grain, wine, and oil, and stalls for all kinds of cattle, and pens for flocks.⁷

- c. With an excess available to give. Ephesians 4:28

The thief must no longer steal. Instead, he must do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need.⁸

2. Family.

- a. Take care of its own members. 1 Timothy 5:8, 16

Now if anyone does not provide for his own relatives, and especially for his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever....If any believing woman has widows, she should help them, and the church should not be burdened, so that it can help those who are genuinely widows.⁹

- b. Widows under 60 years old are not to be a burden. 1 Timothy 5:9-15

No widow should be placed on the official support list unless she is at least 60 years old, has been the wife of one husband, and is well known for good works—that is, if she has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the saints' feet, helped the afflicted, and devoted herself to every good work. But refuse to enroll younger widows; for when they are drawn away from Christ by desire, they want to marry, and will therefore receive condemnation because they have renounced their original pledge. At the same time, they also learn to be idle, going from house to house; they are not only idle, but are also gossips and busybodies, saying things they shouldn't say. Therefore, I want younger women to marry, have children, manage their households, and give the adversary no opportunity to accuse us. For some have already turned away to follow Satan.¹⁰

- c. Widows over 60 years old are to be taken care of by close believing relatives.
1 Timothy 5:8, 16

Now if anyone does not provide for his own relatives, and especially for his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever....If any believing woman has widows, she should help them, and the church should not be burdened, so that it can help those who are genuinely widows.¹¹

3. Religious Institution.

- a. Take care of godly widows older than 60 years if there are no close relatives where the wife is a believer.
1 Timothy 5:9-16

No widow should be placed on the official support list unless she is at least 60 years old, has been the wife of one husband, and is well known for good works—that is, if she has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the saints' feet, helped the afflicted, and devoted herself to every good work. But refuse to enroll younger widows; for when they are drawn away from Christ by desire, they want to marry, and will therefore receive condemnation because they have renounced their original pledge. At the same time, they also learn to be idle, going from house to house; they are not only idle, but are also gossips and busybodies, saying things they shouldn't say. Therefore, I want younger women to marry, have children, manage their households, and give the adversary no opportunity to accuse us. For some have already turned away to follow Satan. If any believing

woman has widows, she should help them, and the church should not be burdened, so that it can help those who are genuinely widows.¹²

b. Help members in need in the local Religious Institution. Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37

Now all the believers were together and had everything in common. So they sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as anyone had a need.¹³

Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of his possessions was his own, but instead they held everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was on all of them. For there was not a needy person among them, because all those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet. This was then distributed to each person as anyone had a need. Joseph, a Levite and a Cypriot by birth, whom the apostles named Barnabas, which is translated Son of Encouragement, sold a field he owned, brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.¹⁴

c. Help members in need who are a part of the larger body of believers.

2 Corinthians 8-9, e.g., 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God granted to the churches of Macedonia: during a severe testing by affliction, their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed into the wealth of their generosity. I testify that, on their own, according to their ability and beyond their ability, they begged us insistently for the privilege of sharing in the ministry to the saints, and not just as we had hoped. Instead, they gave themselves especially to the Lord, then to us by God's will. So we urged Titus that, just as he had begun, so he should also complete this grace to you. Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—excel also in this grace. I am not saying this as a command. Rather, by means of the diligence of others, I am testing the genuineness of your love. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: although He was rich, for your sake He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich. Now I am giving an opinion on this because it is profitable for you, who a year ago began not only to do something but also to desire it. But now finish the task as well, that just as there was eagerness to desire it, so there may also be a completion from what you have. For if the eagerness is there, it is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have. It is not that there may be relief for others and hardship for you, but it is a question of equality—at the present time your surplus is available for their need, so that their abundance may also become available for your need, that there may be equality. As it has been written: The person who gathered much did not have too much, and the person who gathered little did not have too little.¹⁵

4. Neighbours and community.

a. Neighbours are responsible for the welfare needs of those not covered by the above.

Deuteronomy 15:7-11; 26:12-13; 24:19-21; Leviticus 19:9-10

If there is a poor person among you, one of your brothers within any of your gates in the land the LORD your God is giving you, you must not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. Instead, you are to open your hand to him and freely loan him enough for whatever need he has. Be careful that there isn't this wicked thought in your heart, "The seventh year, the year of

canceling debts, is near;” and you are stingy toward your poor brother and give him nothing. He will cry out to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty. Give to him, and don’t have a stingy heart when you give, and because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you do. For there will never cease to be poor people in the land; that is why I am commanding you, “You must willingly open your hand to your afflicted and poor brother in your land.”¹⁶

When you have finished paying all the tenth of your produce in the third year, the year of the tenth, you are to give it to the Levite, the foreign resident, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. Then you will say in the presence of the LORD your God: I have taken the consecrated portion out of my house; I have also given it to the Levite, the foreign resident, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all the commands You gave me. I have not violated or forgotten Your commands.¹⁷

When you reap the harvest in your field, and you forget a sheaf in the field, do not go back to get it. It is to be left for the foreign resident, the fatherless, and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you knock down the fruit from your olive tree, you must not go over the branches again. What remains will be for the foreign resident, the fatherless, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you must not glean what is left. What remains will be for the foreign resident, the fatherless, and the widow.¹⁸

The principle is that the first harvesting of a field reaps on the order of 70-75% of the total harvest from the field. The first harvest rightfully belongs to the owner. The remainder belongs to the disadvantaged in society. The goal is for them to meet their need in dignity. The question is: What is the equivalent in a non-agricultural society?

When you reap the harvest of your land, you are not to reap to the very edge of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You must not strip your vineyard bare or gather its fallen grapes. Leave them for the poor and the foreign resident; I am the LORD your God.¹⁹

5. Government’s role in social safety-net

- a. Government is apparently responsible for limited welfare needs not covered by the above, specifically those of a scale too large to be met by the first four.

Genesis 41:46-49, 53-57; Ezekiel 16:49

Joseph was 30 years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Joseph left Pharaoh’s presence and traveled throughout the land of Egypt. During the seven years of abundance the land produced outstanding harvests. Joseph gathered all the excess food in the land of Egypt during the seven years and placed it in the cities. He placed the food in every city from the fields around it. So Joseph stored up grain in such abundance—like the sand of the sea—that he stopped measuring it because it was beyond measure....Then the seven years of abundance in the land of Egypt came to an end, and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in every country, but throughout the land of Egypt there was food. Extreme hunger came to all the land of Egypt, and the people cried out to Pharaoh for food. Pharaoh told all Egypt, “Go to Joseph and do whatever he tells you.” Because the famine had spread across the whole country, Joseph opened up all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. The whole world came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, for the famine was severe all over the earth.²⁰

When Government takes too large a responsibility, Family and Religious Institution tend to become lazy in their responsibility with regard to social safety-net, and they become weakened.

Now this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, plenty of food, and comfortable security, but didn't support the poor and needy.²¹

- b. Where Government does have an ongoing responsibility is in preventing welfare needs. Jeremiah 22:13-17; Isaiah 10:1-2; Exodus 22:21

"Woe for the one who builds his palace through unrighteousness, his upper rooms through injustice, who makes his fellow man serve without pay and will not give him his wages, who says: I will build myself a massive palace, with spacious upper rooms. He will cut windows in it, and it will be paneled with cedar and painted with vermillion. Are you a king because you excel in cedar? Your own father, did he not eat and drink? He administered justice and righteousness, then it went well with him. He took up the case of the poor and needy, then it went well. Is this not what it means to know Me?" This is the LORD's declaration. But you have eyes and heart for nothing except your own unjust gain, shedding innocent blood and committing extortion and oppression.²²

Woe to those enacting crooked statutes and writing oppressive laws to keep the poor from getting a fair trial and to deprive the afflicted among my people of justice, so that widows can be their spoil and they can plunder the fatherless.²³

You must not exploit a foreign resident or oppress him, since you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.²⁴

- c. Strengthen the institutions that have responsibility.
- d. Develop policies that facilitate profitable work, stable currency, safe savings.
- e. Infrastructure to support business.
- 1) Facilitate entrepreneurship.
 - 2) Legalization of property.²⁵
 - 3) Simplify process of registration of new businesses.²⁶
 - 4) Expand markets.
 - 5) Strengthen human resources through skills training, education.
- f. Food security.
- g. Government should not favour the poor, nor the rich. Exodus 23:2-3; Leviticus 19:15

You must not follow a crowd in wrongdoing. Do not testify in a lawsuit and go along with a crowd to pervert justice. Do not show favoritism to a poor person in his lawsuit.²⁷

You must not act unjustly when rendering judgment. Do not be partial to the poor or give preference to the rich; judge your neighbor fairly.²⁸

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Case Study in Decision-Making: Religion

What is the role of Religious Institution and Government in each other's affairs?

1 Samuel 13:5, 7-14; 15:1-3, 20, 23, 32-33

*The Philistines also gathered to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, and troops as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Michmash, east of Beth-aven.... Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul, however, was still at Gilgal, and all his troops were gripped with fear. He waited seven days for the appointed time that Samuel had set, but Samuel didn't come to Gilgal, and the troops were deserting him. So Saul said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings." Then he offered the burnt offering. Just as he finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel arrived. So Saul went out to greet him, and Samuel asked, "What have you done?" Saul answered, "When I saw that the troops were deserting me and you didn't come within the appointed days and the Philistines were gathering at Michmash, I thought: The Philistines will now descend on me at Gilgal, and I haven't sought the LORD's favor. So I forced myself to offer the burnt offering." Samuel said to Saul, "You have been foolish. You have not kept the command which the LORD your God gave you. It was at this time that the LORD would have permanently established your reign over Israel, but now your reign will not endure. The LORD has found a man loyal to Him, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not done what the LORD commanded."*¹

Saul as King crossed the line into the jurisdiction of the Religious Institution when he took it upon himself to offer a sacrifice to God. This one action led God to decide to replace Saul as King.

Samuel told Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you as king over His people Israel. Now, listen to the words of the LORD. This is what the LORD of Hosts says: 'I witnessed what the Amalekites did to the Israelites when they opposed them along the way as they were coming out of Egypt. Now go and attack the Amalekites and completely destroy everything they have. Do not spare them. Kill men and women, children and infants, oxen and sheep, camels and donkeys.'" "But I did obey the LORD!" Saul answered. "I went on the mission the LORD gave me: I brought back Agag, king of Amalek, and I completely destroyed the Amalekites. The troops took sheep and cattle from the plunder—the best of what was set apart for destruction—to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal." Then Samuel said: "Does the LORD take pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? Look: to obey is better than sacrifice, to pay attention is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and defiance is like wickedness and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has rejected you as king..." Samuel said, "Bring me Agag king of Amalek." Agag came to him trembling, for he thought, "Certainly the bitterness of death has come." Samuel

declared: As your sword has made women childless, so your mother will be childless among women. Then he hacked Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal.²

What is the role of Government in the Religious Institution's affairs?

What is the role of Government in limiting religion and the activities of religious organizations?

Government may only deal with Religious Institution and religion according to its limited mandate, i.e., maintaining an orderly society.

Case of aberrant religion.

What is the role of the Religious Institution in the Government's affairs?

What is the Religious Institution's role in change of Government?

Jeremiah 18:1-12; 25:1-14

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: "Go down at once to the potter's house; there I will reveal My words to you." So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, working away at the wheel. But the jar that he was making from the clay became flawed in the potter's hand, so he made it into another jar, as it seemed right for him to do. The word of the LORD came to me: "House of Israel, can I not treat you as this potter treats his clay?"—this is the LORD's declaration. "Just like clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, house of Israel. At one moment I might announce concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will uproot, tear down, and destroy it. However, if that nation I have made an announcement about, turns from its evil, I will not bring the disaster on it I had planned. At another time I announce that I will build and plant a nation or a kingdom. However, if it does what is evil in My sight by not listening to My voice, I will not bring the good I had said I would do to it. So now, say to the men of Judah and to the residents of Jerusalem: This is what the LORD says: I am about to bring harm to you and make plans against you. Turn now, each from your evil way, and correct your ways and your deeds. But they will say: It's hopeless. We will continue to follow our plans, and each of us will continue to act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart."³

This is the word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah (which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon). The prophet Jeremiah spoke concerning all the people of Judah and all the residents of Jerusalem as follows: "From the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah, until this very day—23 years—the word of the LORD has come to me, and I have spoken to you time and time again, but you have not obeyed. The LORD sent all His servants the prophets to you time and time again, but you have not obeyed or even paid attention. He announced, 'Turn, each of you, from your evil way of life and from your evil deeds. Live in the land the LORD gave to you and your ancestors forever and ever. Do not follow other gods to serve them and to worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger by the work of your hands. Then I will do you no harm. But you would not obey Me'—this is the LORD's declaration—'in order that you might provoke Me to anger by the work of your hands and bring disaster on yourselves.' Therefore, this is what the LORD of Hosts says: 'Because you have not obeyed My words, I am going to send for all the families of the north'—this is the LORD's declaration—'and send for My servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and I will bring them against this land, against its residents, and against all these surrounding nations, and I will completely destroy them and make them a desolation, a derision, and ruins forever. I will eliminate the sound of joy and gladness from them—the voice of the bridegroom and the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. This whole land will become a desolate ruin, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon for 70 years. When the 70 years are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation'—this is the LORD's declaration—'the land of the Chaldeans, for their guilt, and I will make it a ruin forever. I will bring on that land all My words I have spoken against it, all

that is written in this book that Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations. For many nations and great kings will enslave them, and I will repay them according to their deeds and the work of their hands.’”⁴

Temptation of Government to use its power.

Government must work with the other institutions to encode necessary laws.

Government cannot overly restrict religion.

Government cannot overly restrict the Religious Institution.

Government cannot allow the Religious Institution to overly restrict religion.

Gamaliel. Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-32, 33-39

So they (the Sanhedrin) called for them (the Apostles) and ordered them not to preach or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it’s right in the sight of God for us to listen to you rather than to God, you decide; for we are unable to stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”⁵

When they had brought them (the Apostles) in, they had them stand before the Sanhedrin, and the high priest asked, “Didn’t we strictly order you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to bring this man’s blood on us!” But Peter and the apostles replied, “We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had murdered by hanging Him on a tree. God exalted this man to His right hand as ruler and Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”^{5b}

This is Religious Institution overstepping its God-given authority in overly restricting religion.

When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. A Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was respected by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered the men to be taken outside for a little while. He said to them, “Men of Israel, be careful about what you’re going to do to these men. Not long ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a group of about 400 men rallied to him. He was killed, and all his partisans were dispersed and came to nothing. After this man, Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and attracted a following. That man also perished, and all his partisans were scattered. And now, I tell you, stay away from these men and leave them alone. For if this plan or this work is of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even be found fighting against God.” So they were persuaded by him.⁶

This is Religious Institution overstepping its God-given authority in overly restricting religion. But, at the same time, we see one leader of the Religious Institution preventing it from overly restricting religion. That leader displayed the attitude that God was mighty enough to protect the Religious Institution without overzealous human leaders having to take over that responsibility from Him.

Is the spiritual domain outside the boundary of Government?

2 Chronicles 7:14; Malachi 3:8-12; Jonah 3:4-10

God to King Solomon: *If... My people who are called by My name humble themselves, pray and seek My face, and turn from their evil ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land.⁷*

The context is God speaking directly to the Head of Government, giving directions for leading the people in repentance before God, leading to the restoration of God's blessing upon the nation. Although we may tend to think of this responsibility belonging to the Religious Institution, God clearly placed it here upon a Government leader.

“‘Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me!’ You ask: ‘How do we rob You?’ By not making the payments of 10 percent and the contributions. You are suffering under a curse, yet you—the whole nation—are still robbing Me. Bring the full 10 percent into the storehouse so that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this way,” says the LORD of Hosts. “See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure. I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not ruin the produce of your ground, and your vine in your field will not be barren,” says the LORD of Hosts. “Then all the nations will consider you fortunate, for you will be a delightful land,” says the LORD of Hosts.⁸

Although we tend to think of paying the tithe as our responsibility to the Religious Institution, here it has clear significance for the nation and, hence, the State. With this issue, there is no clear line of separation between Religious Institution and State.

Jonah set out on the first day of his walk in the city and proclaimed, “In 40 days Nineveh will be overthrown!” The men of Nineveh believed in God. They proclaimed a fast and dressed in sackcloth—from the greatest of them to the least. When word reached the king of Nineveh, he got up from his throne, took off his royal robe, put on sackcloth, and sat in ashes. Then he issued a decree in Nineveh: By order of the king and his nobles: No man or beast, herd or flock, is to taste anything at all. They must not eat or drink water. Furthermore, both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth, and everyone must call out earnestly to God. Each must turn from his evil ways and from the violence he is doing. Who knows? God may turn and relent; He may turn from His burning anger so that we will not perish. Then God saw their actions—that they had turned from their evil ways—so God relented from the disaster He had threatened to do to them. And He did not do it.⁹

Here is a prophet bringing a message to a Head of Government and the King leading the people in a spiritual response that had consequences for the nation. What would seem to be the responsibility of the Religious Institution could not be separated from the Government.

Separation of Church and State.

The expression sounds noble considering that Religious Institution and Government are two independent God-ordained institutions. The expression “Separation of Church and State” originally, in the American context, applied to the intent to prevent the Government from controlling the Religious Institution, as was the experience out of which the American democratic experiment arose, not to prevent the Religious Institution from influencing Government, as it is often misinterpreted or misstated to mean today. The expression was first used in a letter from Thomas Jefferson, while President, to a Baptist church group to assure them of their independence.¹⁰ Furthermore, considering the source of these two institutions, this expression in no way means the separation of God from Government.

Patrick Henry:

It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.¹¹

Chief Justice William Rehnquist of the United States Supreme Court, in his dissent from the majority in *Wallace v. Jaffree* in 1985, argued:

There is simply no historical foundation for the proposition that the framers [of the Constitution] intended to build the “wall of separation” [between Church and State].¹²

Congress did not mean that the Government should be neutral between religion and irreligion.¹³

The “wall of separation between church and State” is a metaphor based on bad history, a metaphor which has proved useless as a guide to judging. It should be frankly and explicitly abandoned.¹⁴

John Quincy Adams:

The highest glory of the Revolution was that it united in one indissoluble bond the principles of Christianity and the principles of civil government.¹⁵

Deuteronomy 17:14-20

When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, take possession of it, live in it, and say, “We want to appoint a king over us like all the nations around us,” you are to appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses. ...When he is seated on his royal throne, he is to write a copy of this instruction for himself on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. It is to remain with him, and he is to read from it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to observe all the words of this instruction, and to do these statutes. Then his heart will not be exalted above his countrymen, he will not turn from this command to the right or the left, and he and his sons will continue ruling many years...¹⁶

This command from God appears to apply to every Head of Government for all time. The command is that he/she write out the entire Law of God in his/her own handwriting. No other person is required to do this, making the Head of Government extremely important in God's plan. By extension, we must conclude that all who operate under delegated authority from the Head of Government live and operate under the same requirement. From this, it is clear that no Government official can be separated from God.

See “Case Study in Religion in Decision-Making #1: Mary Eugenia Charles”, pp. 57-60.

See “Case Study in Religion in Decision-Making #2: Abraham Lincoln”, pp. 61-71.

See “Case Study in Religion in Decision-Making #3: Jehoshaphat”, p. 73-74.

References

NOTE: All Bible references are from the Holman Christian Standard Bible unless otherwise indicated.

1. *Bible*, 1 Samuel 13:5-14.
2. *Ibid.*, 1 Samuel 15:1-3, 20-23, 32-33.
3. *Ibid.*, Jeremiah 18:1-12.
4. *Ibid.*, Jeremiah 25:1-14.
5. *Ibid.*, Acts 4:18-20.
- 5b. *Ibid.*, Acts 5:27-32.
6. *Ibid.*, Acts 5:33-39.
7. *Ibid.*, 2 Chronicles 7:13-14.
8. *Ibid.*, Malachi 3:8-12.
9. *Ibid.*, Jonah 3:4-10.
10. Letter from President Thomas Jefferson to the Baptist Association of Danbury, Connecticut, 1 January 1802, in *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Albert Ellery Bergh, Editor (Washington, D.C.: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1904), Vol. XVI, pp. 281-282.
11. Patrick Henry, quoted in D. James Kennedy, *Character & Destiny: A Nation in Search of Its Soul* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), p. 125.
12. William Rehnquist, quoted in Stephen Mansfield, *Ten Tortured Words: How the Founding Fathers Tried to Protect Religion in America...and What's Happened Since* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), p. 204.
13. Rehnquist, quoted in Stephen Mansfield, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
14. Rehnquist, quoted in Stephen Mansfield, *op. cit.*, p. 205.
15. John Quincy Adams, quoted in D. James Kennedy, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
16. *Bible*, Deuteronomy 17:14-20.

Case Study in Religion in Decision-Making #1:

Mary Eugenia Charles

Note: This case study on the following pages examines the statement of a Prime Minister to a political meeting. This statement was delivered by the late Dame Mary Eugenia Charles, then Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the founding of the governing party in 1993. I consider this the most God-honouring statement by a head of nation that I know of. The question we must each ask is: Did Prime Minister Charles make this statement to gain political favour or was she seriously indicating the dependence upon God that would be necessary for her nation to reach its full potential? In fact, Dame Charles told me that there were negative political repercussions. However, she shared her heart and gave her best advice to her people. This is appropriate for a true leader. I am deeply grateful to Dame Charles for giving me permission to reproduce her remarks here before her departure from this earth.

Fellow Dominicans:

The constitution of the Commonwealth of Dominica begins by declaring that “the people of Dominica have affirmed that the Commonwealth of Dominica is founded upon principles that acknowledge the supremacy of God....” This in effect means that in all our institutions and in every aspect of our life in Dominica, all our activities, and all our policies are subject to the sovereign will of God and should reflect that will. It means that we must also acknowledge that we cannot reject God, despise His will, and get away with it. When we reject God, or simply pay him lip service as we so often do, we must expect to pay the price.

If we are honest with ourselves, we will admit that in practice, we as a people have not given God the place which our constitution says we must give Him. We have not been living as though God is supreme over us. Whether it be in our politics, our culture, our family life, our education, we have had very little room for God. Some of us have no room for Him at all. Is it any wonder that there has been such widespread breakdown in family life? Is it any surprise that we have so many formidable social problems—drugs, violence, unwanted children, abortion, child abuse, AIDS, division, hatred, greed and selfishness? Is it any wonder that witchcraft is so widespread in our society? Is it any wonder that there is such lack of respect for one another? We are paying the price for failing to make God supreme, and for exalting ourselves and our own selfish ends instead. That is why the theme for this occasion is of such great importance — “Calling the People Back to God in Unity.”

I am not taking on the role of the churches. I am not trying to play the role of preacher, priest or pastor. We are Christians and take lessons from our Bibles, and therefore know that I, as leader of the government of this nation, am on solid ground in playing my part in calling our people back to God and uniting our people under God. I am doing this in all sincerity, because I believe it is what God wants me to do.

Let me begin with the home. Perhaps the greatest disaster that has taken place in Dominica over the years is the breakdown of the family. The root of all our problems lies here. The family is the cradle of the nation, and the nation cannot be better than the homes which make it up. Today, everyone is doing what is right in his own eyes, not what is right in the sight of God. Parents seem to think they can turn out good children by living loose and immoral lives. Parents, let us bring God back into our homes! Let God be supreme in our homes! Make prayer and the words of God in our Bible central in our homes. Let us train our children as God wants them to be trained. Parents, let us turn back to God, and let us begin to rebuild sound family life in Dominica.

I turn now to the schools. I think we must take a close look at what is happening in our schools. Let me quote from a letter of Principals of Secondary Schools to the Minister for Education dated 14th May 1993:

In our schools there has been increasing evidence of unusually serious misconduct which warrants an urgent examination of the entire socio-economic and moral atmosphere existing in and out of schools in order to arrive at possible solutions.

Among the problem identified by the Principals are: pregnancy, abortion, pornography, perverse sexual practices, theft, violence, drug abuse, and vandalism. These are problems in the schools. Some of the possible reasons identified are: child abuse, parental neglect, television, and a general moral decadence in the society. Why? We have almost completely thrown the study of religion out of our schools. Churches no longer have a close relationship with schools as they used to. Many teachers are no longer role models for our children. The supremacy of God which our constitution speaks of is not generally demonstrated in our schools. I am calling on Principals and teachers in all schools to correct this. Christian teachers must play a significant role in molding the lives of our children. We need to exercise greater care in appointing people to be teachers in our schools. We cannot simply look for people to teach subjects. We must have in our schools teachers whose lives are a pattern for children to emulate. Prayer and the study of our religious faiths must once again have an important place in our schools, as ways of teaching our children what God requires of them, and how to live with one another. I know that there is a danger of religious education being misused in schools. I know this can be a touchy subject. But it still remains true that we require this study as a Guidebook for living. It is the best guidebook there is. If we lived our lives according to our religious beliefs we would not be having the problems that plague our society today.

There has been almost complete reversal of values in our Dominican society. Most of us seem to call good evil, and evil good. The Preamble to our Constitution says that the people of Dominica

recognize that men and institutions remain free only when freedom is founded on respect for moral and spiritual values and the rule of Law.

We are in danger of losing our freedom in Dominica. Our society is threatened with widespread anarchy because we no longer base our life-style on Christian values. Our life-style is increasingly fashioned by television, by the styles imported from industrialized countries. It is reported that even in our preschools little children are practicing the sexual patterns which they see on televisions. Such things as honesty, truthfulness, hard work, self control, respect for people, courtesy, gratitude, service to others—these things are now foreign to us. Instead most people seem to be motivated by selfishness and greed, and from these follow all the evils which are destroying our society. As a people, then, we must return truly to God, [and to] Christian values. We must reject the evil trends in our society. We must develop a Christian conscience which cries out loudly against every manifestation of evil; and we must preach and teach, and live those traditional values found in our religious faith and teachings which shape sound character and build stable societies.

But I would be failing if I did not acknowledge that it is in the area of politics and government more than in any other that we in Dominica need to acknowledge and demonstrate our acknowledgment of the supremacy of God. We have seen how in the past bad politics and bad government have brought this country near dis-

aster. We have seen how greed and corruption, lack of honesty and lack of integrity have marred our political life. We have seen how godless politics has brought hatred and disunity among our people. We have seen how some politicians in their greed for power resort to witchcraft and satanic devices. And we know that for the same reason many will encourage violence and threats of violence to hinder the people from exercising and enjoying the freedom which is theirs under our constitution. All of this is the price we pay when we throw God out of politics and out of government.

If this nation is to prosper, if we are to have a stable society, we must as a people turn back to God. Politicians must turn to God. I do not mean by this only that politicians must go to church. We all know that politicians can go to church when it suits them—as a vote-catching gimmick. Nor does it mean merely being a member of a church or holding office in a church. What is all that if you leave church and go out spreading hatred and telling lies, and buying votes. What I mean is that our politicians must be people who are god-fearing and who practice godliness. I am challenging you, my fellow Dominicans, to look for god-fearing people when you are looking for politicians. If the leadership of the nation is ungodly, the nation is heading for disaster.

I happen to be the leader of a political party, and the leader of the government. Let me take this opportunity to make a strong call to the party which I lead to make God supreme in all our doings. Let us celebrate this anniversary occasion with a general and sincere turning to God, and with a determination to order our affairs according to His will. I am pleased to have in my government a number of men who truly fear God. I would like to see this become the normal and acceptable thing in government. Let me urge my colleagues in government to do their part in making God supreme in all aspects of the governing of our beloved people and country. This is the only way we can guarantee good government in Dominica.

The theme of this service is “Calling the People in Unity Back to God.” However, not much will be accomplished if we simply sound the call at this service and leave it there. We must all make a commitment to submit ourselves to the sovereignty of God. There must also be a pledge to continue what is begun here today. For this reason, I am making a strong appeal to the churches to plan and carry out an ongoing campaign to lead our people in unity back to God. I am sure this is a goal you all share. Therefore, let me ask you to muster all the resources you can, and to work together as far as you are able with this single purpose in mind, to make the people of Dominica a people who fear God and practice righteousness. Bring our people back to God.

May God bless you in this effort so that Dominica may truly become the land of the Lord, and Dominicans, the people of the Lord.¹

Questions for Further Reflection

1. What was the Prime Minister's motivation for delivering such a message?
2. Was this politically motivated?

References

1. Dame Mary Eugenia Charles, “Calling the People Back to God in Unity,” delivered to the Dominica Freedom Party on the occasion of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of its Founding, March 1993.

Case Study in Religion in Decision Making #2: Abraham Lincoln

This case study on the following pages compares Lincoln's statements while President in the left column with the Biblical basis for these ideas in the right column, in an effort to evaluate his leadership. The question we must each ask is: *Did Abraham Lincoln operate in the leadership of the nation in dependence upon God?*

Lincoln's Statements	Biblical Origin of These Ideas
<p>God Is the Ultimate Leader over the Nation</p> <p><i>We must believe that He permits it for some wise purpose of His own, mysterious and unknown to us, and though with our limited understandings we may not be able to comprehend it, yet we cannot but believe, that He who made the world still governs it.</i>¹</p>	<p>Psalms 29:10b:</p> <p><i>The LORD is enthroned as King forever.</i>²</p> <p>Psalms 22:27-28:</p> <p><i>All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before Him, for dominion belongs to the LORD and He rules over the nations.</i>³</p> <p>Psalms 135:6:</p> <p><i>The LORD does whatever pleases Him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.</i>⁴</p> <p>Isaiah 37:26:</p> <p><i>God: Have you not heard? Long ago I ordained it. In days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass....</i>⁵</p>

Lincoln's Statements	Biblical Origin of These Ideas
	<p>Isaiah 46:10-11:</p> <p><i>God: I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill My purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.</i>⁶</p> <p>Psalms 67:4:</p> <p><i>May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for You rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth.</i>⁷</p> <p>Psalms 66.7:</p> <p><i>He rules forever by His power; His eyes watch the nations — let not the rebellious rise up against Him.</i>⁸</p> <p>Isaiah 55:8-9:</p> <p><i>God: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."</i>⁹</p>

Lincoln's Statements	Biblical Origin of These Ideas
<p><i>Those who fight the purpose of the Almighty will not succeed. They always have been, they always will be, beaten.</i>¹⁰</p> <p>In his call to the American people for a national day of prayer and fasting:</p> <p><i>It is the duty of nations as well as of men, to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, to confess their sins and transgressions, in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon; and to recognize the sublime truth, announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history, that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord.</i>¹¹</p>	<p>Psalms 33:10-11:</p> <p><i>The LORD foils the plans of the nations; He thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations.</i>¹²</p> <p>Proverbs 21:30:</p> <p><i>There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the LORD.</i>¹³</p> <p>Isaiah 29:15:</p> <p><i>Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the LORD, who do their work in darkness and think, "Who sees us? Who will know?"</i>¹⁴</p> <p>Psalms 47:7-8:</p> <p><i>For God is the King of all the earth; sing to Him a psalm of praise. God reigns over the nations; God is seated on His holy throne.</i>¹⁵</p> <p>2 Chronicles 7:14:</p> <p><i>God: If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.</i>¹⁶</p> <p>Psalms 33:12a:</p> <p><i>Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD.</i>¹⁷</p>

Lincoln's Statements	Biblical Origin of These Ideas
<p>Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, third paragraph:</p> <p><i>....Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained....The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."'¹⁸</i></p> <p>God's Guidance</p> <p><i>I have always taken Counsel of Him, and referred to Him my plans, and have never adopted a course of proceeding without being assured, as far as I could be, of His approbation.'</i>¹⁹</p>	<p>Jeremiah 10:10:</p> <p><i>But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God, the eternal King. When He is angry, the earth trembles; the nations cannot endure His wrath.'</i>²⁰</p> <p>Matthew 18:7:</p> <p><i>Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!'</i>²¹</p> <p>Psalms 19:9:</p> <p><i>The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.'</i>²²</p> <p>Isaiah 48:3:</p> <p><i>God: I foretold the former things long ago, My mouth announced them and I made them known; then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass.'</i>²³</p> <p>Proverbs 16:3:</p> <p><i>Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.'</i>²⁴</p>

Lincoln's Statements	Biblical Origin of These Ideas
<p><i>I have had so many evidences of His direction, so many instances when I have been controlled by some other power than my own will, that I cannot doubt that this power comes from above. I frequently see my way clear to a decision when I have no sufficient facts upon which to found it. But I cannot recall one instance in which I have followed my own judgment, founded upon such a decision, where the results were unsatisfactory, whereas, in almost every instance where I have yielded to the views of others, I have had occasion to regret it. I am satisfied that when the Almighty wants me to do or not to do a particular thing, He finds a way of letting me know it.²⁵</i></p> <p><i>I should be the veriest shallow and self conceited blockhead upon the footstool, if, in my discharge of the duties which are put upon me in this place, I should hope to get along without the wisdom which comes from God and not from men.²⁶</i></p> <p><i>If it is probable that God would reveal His will to others, on a point so connected to my duty, it might be supposed He would reveal it directly to me....It is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter. And if I can learn what it is, I will do it!²⁷</i></p>	<p>Proverbs 16:9:</p> <p><i>In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.²⁸</i></p> <p>Proverbs 21:1:</p> <p><i>The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; He directs it like a watercourse wherever He pleases.²⁹</i></p> <p>Psalms 111:10 (see also Proverbs 9:10):</p> <p><i>The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow His precepts have good understanding.³⁰</i></p> <p>1 Corinthians 2:6-8, 10, 16:</p> <p><i>We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory....but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit....But we have the mind of Christ.³¹</i></p> <p>Psalms 25:9, 12, 14:</p> <p><i>He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them His way....Who, then, is the man that fears the LORD? He will instruct him in the way chosen for him....The LORD confides in those who fear Him; He makes His covenant known to them.³²</i></p>

Lincoln's Statements	Biblical Origin of These Ideas
<p><i>I hold myself in my present position and with the authority vested in me as an instrument of Providence. I have my own views and purposes, I have my convictions of duty, and my notions of what is right to be done. But I am conscious every moment that all I am and all I have is subject to the control of a Higher Power, and that Power can use me or not use me in any manner, and at any time, as in His wisdom and might may be pleasing to Him.</i>⁴²</p> <p>History's View of Lincoln</p> <p>Lord Charnwood, the British historian, said of Lincoln:</p> <p><i>We may regard, and himself regarded, the liberation of the slaves, which will always be associated with his name, as a part of the larger work, the restoration of his country to its earliest and noblest tradition, which alone gave permanence or worth to its existence as a nation.</i> ⁴³</p> <p>The Dynamic in Lincoln's Life</p> <p><i>When I left Springfield, I asked the people to pray for me; I was not a Christian. When I buried my son—the severest trial of my life—I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg, and saw the graves of thousands of soldiers, I then and there consecrated myself to Christ.</i>⁴⁴</p>	<p>Psalms 119:19:</p> <p><i>I am a stranger on earth; do not hide Your commands from me.</i>⁴⁵</p> <p>Proverbs 20:28:</p> <p><i>Loyalty and truth preserve the king, and he upholds his throne by righteousness.</i>⁴⁶</p> <p>Deuteronomy 17:19-20:</p> <p><i>It (the Law of God) is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his brothers and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom....</i>⁴⁷</p>

Lincoln's Statements	Biblical Origin of These Ideas
<p>Lincoln, in a discussion with a godly woman, said:</p> <p><i>I have formed a high opinion of your Christian character, and now, as we are alone, I have a mind to ask you to give me, in brief, your idea of what constitutes a true religious experience.</i></p> <p>When she finished, Lincoln said:</p> <p><i>I had lived until my boy Willie died, without realizing fully these things (dependence upon God and upon Jesus as Saviour). That blow overwhelmed me. It showed me my weakness as I had never felt it before, and if I can take what you have stated as a test, I think I can safely say that I know something of that change of which you speak; and I will further add, that it has been my intention for some time, at a suitable opportunity, to make a public religious profession.⁴⁸</i></p>	<p>Daniel 4:1-3:</p> <p><i>King Nebuchadnezzar, To the peoples, nations and men of every language, who live in all the world: May you prosper greatly! It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me. How great are His signs, how mighty His wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; His dominion endures from generation to generation.⁴⁹</i></p>

Questions for Further Reflection

1. Did President Lincoln operate in the leadership of the nation in dependence upon God?
2. In doing this, did Lincoln interfere with the jurisdiction of the Religious Institution?

References

NOTE: All Bible references are from the New International Version unless otherwise indicated.

1. Abraham Lincoln, 1862, in a conversation with Eliza Gurney, quoted in Peter Marshall and David Manuel, *The Glory of America* (Bloomington: Garborg's Heart'N Home, 1991), 9.22, quoted in William J. Federer, *America's God and Country* (Coppell: FAME, 1994), p. 381.
2. *Bible*, Psalms 29:10b.
3. *Ibid.*, Psalms 22:27-28.
4. *Ibid.*, Psalms 135:6.
5. *Ibid.*, Isaiah 37:26.
6. *Ibid.*, Isaiah 46:10-11.
7. *Ibid.*, Psalms 67:4.
8. *Ibid.*, Psalms 66:7.
9. *Ibid.*, Isaiah 55:8-9.
10. Abraham Lincoln, 23 February 1861, in a reply to William Dodge, quoted in L. E. Chittenden, *Recollections of President Lincoln and his Administration* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1891), p. 76, quoted in Marshall and Manuel, op. cit., p. 2.23, quoted in Federer, op. cit., p. 377.
11. Abraham Lincoln, 30 March 1863, quoted in Elton Trueblood, *Abraham Lincoln: Theologian of America Anguish* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. 87-88.
12. *Bible*, Psalms 33:10-11.
13. *Ibid.*, Proverbs 21:30.
14. *Ibid.*, Isaiah 29:15.
15. *Ibid.*, Psalms 47:7-8.
16. *Ibid.*, 2 Chronicles 7:14.
17. *Ibid.*, Psalms 33:12a.
18. Abraham Lincoln, 4 March 1865, quoted in Benjamin Weiss, *God in American History* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1966), pp. 95-96.
19. Abraham Lincoln, quoted in Marshall and Manuel, op. cit., p. 11.29, quoted in Federer, op. cit., p. 391.
20. *Bible*, Jeremiah 10:10.
21. *Bible*, King James Version, Matthew 18:7.
22. *Ibid.*, Psalms 19:9.
23. *Bible*, Isaiah 48:3.
24. *Ibid.*, Proverbs 16:3.
25. Abraham Lincoln, quoted by L. E. Chittenden, *Recollections of President Lincoln and His Administration* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1891), p. 448, quoted in Trueblood, op. cit., p. 128.
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27. Abraham Lincoln, 13 September 1862, quoted in Trueblood, op. cit., p. 41.
28. *Bible*, Proverbs 16:9.
29. *Ibid.*, Proverbs 21:1.
30. *Ibid.*, Psalms 111:10.
31. *Ibid.*, 1 Corinthians 2:6-8, 10, 16.
32. *Ibid.*, Psalms 25:9, 12, 14.
33. Abraham Lincoln, quoted in John Wanamaker, *The Wanamaker Primer on Abraham Lincoln* (New York: John Wanamaker, 1909), pp. 101-102, quoted in Catherine Millard, *Great American Statesmen and Heroes* (Camp Hill: Horizon, 1995), p. 233.
34. Abraham Lincoln, quoted in J. B. McClure, ed., *Abraham Lincoln's Stories and Speeches* (Chicago: Rhodes & McClure, 1896), pp. 185-186, quoted in Federer, op. cit., p. 388.
35. *Bible*, John 7:17.
36. *Ibid.*, 1 Kings 3:7-14.
37. *Ibid.*, Isaiah 30:1.
38. Abraham Lincoln, quoted in Trueblood, op. cit., pp. 126-127.
39. Abraham Lincoln, unknown.
40. *Bible*, Psalms 32:8.
41. *Ibid.*, Psalms 37:23.
42. Abraham Lincoln, December 1862, in relating to J. A. Reed, quoted in William J. Johnson, *Abraham Lincoln, The Christian* (New York: The Abington Press, 1913), p. 102, quoted in Marshall and Manuel, op. cit., 11.14, quoted in Federer, op. cit., p. 382.

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43. Lord Charnwood, *Abraham Lincoln* (Garden City: Garden City Publishing, 1917), p. 15.
44. Abraham Lincoln, quoted in Oldryod, *Lincoln's Memorial Album*, p. 366; Boreham, *A Temple of Topaz*, p. 31; Hill, *Abraham Lincoln, Man of God*, pp. 240, 261, 2; quoted in G. Frederick Owen, *A Heart That Yearned for God* (Washington: Third Century, 1976), p. 163.
45. *Bible*, Psalms 119:19.
46. *Ibid.*, Proverbs 20:28.
47. *Ibid.*, Deuteronomy 17:19-20.
48. Abraham Lincoln, quoted in Carpenter, *Six Months at the White House*, quoted in G. Frederick Owen, *A Heart That Yearned for God* (Washington: Third Century, 1976), p. 170.
49. *Bible*, Daniel 4:1-3.

Case Study in Religion in Decision-Making #3: Jehoshaphat

2 Chronicles 17:1, 3-10; 19:8-10; 20:29-30:

Jehoshaphat his son succeeded him as king....The Lord was with Jehoshaphat because in his early years he walked in the ways his father David had followed. He did not consult the Baals but sought the God of his father and followed His commands rather than the practices of Israel. The Lord established the kingdom under his control....His heart was devoted to the ways of the Lord....In the third year of his reign he sent his officials...to teach in the towns of Judah. With them were certain Levites... and the priests....They taught throughout Judah, taking with them the Book of the Law of the Lord; they went around to all the towns of Judah and taught the people.

The fear of the Lord fell on all the kingdoms of the lands surrounding Judah, so that they did not make war with Jehoshaphat....

In Jerusalem also, Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites, priests and heads of Israelite families to administer the law of the Lord to settle disputes....He gave them these orders: "You must serve faithfully and wholeheartedly in the fear of the Lord. In every case that comes before you from your fellow countrymen who live in the cities—whether bloodshed or other concerns of the law, commands or ordinances—you are to warn them not to sin against the Lord; otherwise His wrath will come on you and your brothers. Do this, and you will not sin...."

The fear of God came upon all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard how the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. And the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side.¹

References

NOTE: All Bible references are from the New International Version unless otherwise indicated.

1. Bible, 2 Chronicles 17:1, 3-10; 19:8-10; 20:29-30.

Case Study in Decision-Making: Marriage

What is Government's role in marriage?

What is the Religious Institution's role in marriage?

Mark 10:2-9:

*Some Pharisees approached Him to test Him (Jesus). They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" He replied to them, "What did Moses command you?" They said, "Moses permitted us to write divorce papers and send her away." But Jesus told them, "He wrote this commandment for you because of the hardness of your hearts. But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, man must not separate."*¹

Malachi 2:13-16:

And this is another thing you do: you cover the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning, because He no longer respects your offerings or receives them gladly from your hands. Yet you ask, "For what reason?" Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have acted treacherously against her, though she was your marriage partner and your wife by covenant. Didn't the one God make us with a remnant of His life-breath? And what does the One seek? A godly offspring. So watch yourselves carefully, and do not act treacherously against the wife of your youth. "If he hates and divorces his wife," says the LORD God of Israel, "he covers his garment with injustice," says the LORD of Hosts. Therefore, watch yourselves carefully, and do not act treacherously.²

Does Government have the right to pass laws restricting marriage?

What about laws preventing close relatives from marrying?

Leviticus 20:17, 19-20:

If a man marries his sister, whether his father's daughter or his mother's daughter, and they have sexual relations, it is a disgrace. They must be cut off publicly from their people. He has had sexual intercourse with his sister; he will bear his punishment. You must not have sexual intercourse with your mother's sister or your father's sister, for it is exposing one's own blood relative; both people will bear their punishment. If a man sleeps with his aunt, he has shamed his uncle; they will bear their guilt and die childless.³

Leviticus 18:6, 9-13:

*You are not to come near any close relative for sexual intercourse; I am the LORD. You are not to have sexual intercourse with your sister, either your father's daughter or your mother's, whether born at home or born elsewhere. You are not to have sex with her. You are not to have sexual intercourse with your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, because it will shame your family. You are not to have sexual intercourse with your father's wife's daughter, who is adopted by your father; she is your sister. You are not to have sexual intercourse with your father's sister; she is your father's close relative. You are not to have sexual intercourse with your mother's sister, for she is your mother's close relative.*⁴

Deuteronomy 27:20, 22-23:

*Cursed is the one who sleeps with his father's wife, for he has violated his father's marriage bed...Cursed is the one who sleeps with his sister, whether his father's daughter or his mother's daughter...Cursed is the one who sleeps with his mother-in-law...*⁵

Government must be sensitive to the needs of the other institutions in establishing laws.

Government has law-making capacity and responsibility.

Government must cautiously build the legal framework to support the Religious Institution and the Family.

Issues to consider:

Protecting society from genetic defects.

Case Study

In the United Kingdom, boy and girl twins were separated at birth, adopted by different families. As young adults, not knowing their relationship, they met, fell in love, and married. The courts discovered their relationship, and annulled their marriage, causing them great emotional pain.⁶ Was Government within its right to take such a step? Were there other courses of action that would have been consistent with the purposes and responsibilities of the three God-ordained institutions?

References

NOTE: All Bible references are from the Holman Christian Standard Bible unless otherwise indicated.

1. *Bible*, Mark 10:2-9.
2. *Ibid.*, Malachi 2:13-16.
3. *Ibid.*, Leviticus 20:17, 19-20.
4. *Ibid.*, Leviticus 18:6, 9-13.
5. *Ibid.*, Deuteronomy 27:20, 22-23.
6. John F. Burns, "British Peer Cites Twins Who Married Unwittingly," *New York Times*, 12 January 2008, p. A6.

Case Study in Decision-Making: Military and Police

As a society moves from less democratic to more democratic, there will be major changes in the way the military and the police discharge their roles and the way these are perceived by the population. In less democratic societies, the military and the police tend to become weapons used by the regime against their own citizens to suppress dissent. As the nation moves toward a more democratic society, those who serve in these areas must change the way they think and behave.

Let us return to God's clarification for the purpose and function of Government:

Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are instituted by God. So then, the one who resists the authority is opposing God's command, and those who oppose it will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do good and you will have its approval. For government is God's servant to you for good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, because it does not carry the sword for no reason. For government is God's servant, an avenger that brings wrath on the one who does wrong. Therefore, you must submit, not only because of wrath, but also because of your conscience. And for this reason you pay taxes, since the authorities are God's public servants, continually attending to these tasks. Pay your obligations to everyone: taxes to those you owe taxes, tolls to those you owe tolls, respect to those you owe respect, and honor to those you owe honor.¹

Recall that from this and other instructions from God, the purpose of Government is to provide an orderly society within which the individual can reach his/her full, God-given potential.² Notice carefully in this instruction that it is not the military or the police that holds the authority and bears the sword, but rather the Government. Hence, the military and the police are tools in the hands of the Government for the purpose of providing an orderly society within which the individual can reach his/her full, God-given potential. An orderly society is not for the benefit of the governors. It is for the benefit of the society. It is a gift that the governors give to the people so that they may enjoy peaceful lives and raise their families in that kind of environment. The military and the police, and all Government officials, are instructed by God to view themselves in the exercise of their duty as shepherds. The passage above makes it clear that generally fear is not to result from the way the military and the police discharge their responsibilities, only in the case of the law-breakers and the rebellious. Whenever fear arises in the lives of the law-abiding citizens resulting from the military and the police, these two instruments of the Government have functioned inappropriately from God's perspective. Another important instruction from God tells us:

Submit to every human institution because of the Lord, whether to the Emperor as the supreme authority, or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For it is God's will that you, by doing good, silence the ignorance of foolish people. As God's slaves, live as free peo-

*ple, but don't use your freedom as a way to conceal evil. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the Emperor.*³

Notice from these two passages that with regard to behaviour, limiting evil is only half of the responsibility of Government. The other half, mentioned in both of these instructions, is to encourage and reinforce good behaviour. The military and the police, as tools of the Government, have a serious responsibility and can play a tremendously constructive role in building a healthy society. On the other hand, these two tools can also damage society if there is not self-restraint to avoid abuse. God warns those with shepherding responsibility who harm the sheep:

*"Woe to the shepherds...who have been feeding themselves! Shouldn't the shepherds feed their flock? You eat the fat, wear the wool, and butcher the fatlings, but you do not tend the flock. You have not strengthened the weak, healed the sick, bandaged the injured, brought back the strays, or sought the lost. Instead, you have ruled them with violence and cruelty."...Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD. "As I live"—he declaration of the Lord GOD—"because My flock has become prey and food for every wild animal since they lack a shepherd, for My shepherds do not search for My flock, and because the shepherds feed themselves rather than My flock, therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Lord GOD says: Look, I am against the shepherds. I will demand My flock from them and prevent them from shepherding the flock. The shepherds will no longer feed themselves, for I will rescue My flock from their mouths so that they will not be food for them."*⁴

God takes a strong stance with regard to those who harm the sheep. He has no tolerance for those who harm the sheep that they are instructed to serve.

As demonstrated in section I.F.4 (page 21), justice is essential in every phase of Government. Justice is required of every official who serves in Government. No one is immune from this requirement. Those Government services that carry the sword must be especially careful that they do not misuse the sword and abuse those they are called upon to serve. And they must make sure that they do not use those weapons to take unfair advantage for themselves from either the society or the Government.⁵

References

NOTE: All Bible references are from the Holman Christian Standard Bible unless otherwise indicated.

1. *Bible*, Romans 13:1-7.
2. See section III.4.c on page 29.
3. *Bible*, 1 Peter 2:13-17.
4. *Ibid.*, Ezekiel 34:2-10.
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Case Study in Decision-Making: Land Use

There are a number of issues with regard to land ownership and use. Land ownership and use is a critical issue in any nation, especially where there is a dependence upon agriculture, generally in the developing nations where a high percentage are engaged in subsistence agriculture.

To gain an appreciation for the value of the land, it is instructive to study God's view of land He gave to ancient Israel. The land was originally apportioned so that each family had approximately an equal share.¹ The land was so important to the well-being of the people that it could not permanently be disposed of. It could only temporarily be transferred to another person. Every 50 years, it was to be returned to its original owner:

You are to consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim freedom in the land for all its inhabitants. It will be your Jubilee, when each of you is to return to his property and each of you to his clan.²

There was a clear difference between rural property for agricultural purposes and urban residential property.³ The latter could be irreversibly disposed of. There is also the provision to re-purchase land one might have sold during time of financial difficulty.⁴ As an aside, the land was so important that there were strict instructions for the care of its health.⁵

The issue has been raised of Governments leasing land to investors from another nation to grow food for use in that other nation.^{6,7,8} In the process, the farmers that had previously lived on that land and cultivated it, were removed from the land. The question is being raised whether the land should be protected for the use of the nationals.

The Peruvian economist Hernando De Soto has argued that it is a responsibility of Government to create the legal structures to insure that land may be used and transferred at its full value. His research demonstrates that 80% of the land in the world is undervalued,⁹ because those using it do not possess undisputed title and therefore do not have access to full value of the land when selling or using it as collateral to borrow against it in business ventures. "In every country we researched, we found that some 80 percent of land parcels were not protected by up-to-date records or held by legally accountable owners."¹⁰ De Soto states: "By our calculations, the total value of the real estate held but not legally owned by the poor of the Third World and former communist nations is at least \$9.3 trillion."¹¹ De Soto argues that "In the United States, for example, up to 70 percent of the credit new businesses receive comes from using formal titles as collateral."¹²

De Soto goes on to argue that the wealth of the fully valued property "also constitutes by far the largest source of potential capital for development."¹³ He makes the point that: "In the West, every asset—every piece of land, every house, every chattel—is formally fixed in updated records governed by rules contained in the property system."¹⁴

"The West's reliance on integrated property systems is a phenomenon of at most the last two hundred years. In most Western countries, integrated property systems appeared only about a hundred years ago; Japan's integration happened little more than fifty years ago."¹⁵ "The lesson of the West is that piecemeal solutions and stopgap measures to alleviate poverty were not enough. Living standards rose only when governments reformed the law and the property

system to facilitate the division of labor.”¹⁶ He argues that a nation must start with the extralegal structures and then integrate them into a structured property law system. He then concludes that “Countries that made legal efforts to integrate extralegal enterprise prospered more quickly than the countries that resisted change.”¹⁷ He proceeds to provide insights into the journey that the United States took to create an integrated property law system.¹⁸

References

NOTE: All Bible references are from the Holman Christian Standard Bible unless otherwise indicated.

1. Bible, Numbers 26:52-56.
2. Ibid., Leviticus 25:10.
3. Ibid., Leviticus 25:29-31.
4. Ibid., Leviticus 25:24-28.
5. Ibid., Leviticus 25:2-12.
6. Neil MacFarquhar, “African Farmers Displaced as Investors Move In,” *New York Times*, 22 December 2010, p. A1.
7. John Kron, “In Scramble for Land, Group Says, Company Pushed Ugandans Out,” *New York Times*, 22 September 2011, p. A7.
8. Silas Kpanan’Ayoung Siakor and Rachael S. Knight, “A Nobel Laureate’s Problem at Home,” *New York Times*, 21 January 2012, p. A23.
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10. Ibid., p. 83.
11. Ibid., p. 35.
12. Ibid., p. 84.
13. Ibid., p. 34.
14. Ibid., p. 48.
15. Ibid., p. 53.
16. Ibid., p. 75.
17. Ibid., p. 102.
18. Ibid., p. 105-151.

Decision-Making Filter #2

Foundations for Government Decision-Making Filter #2: The Seven Decision-Making Criteria¹

I believe the fundamental questions for the twenty-first century are: *What are the essential ingredients for a healthy nation?* and *Can we build a healthy nation upon any other foundation than faith in God?* It is these issues that I would like to explore with you.

There are two views of Government in our world:

1. The State is all-important and the individual is expendable in the pursuit of the State goals.
2. The individual is God's highest creation and the purpose of Government is to serve the individual in reaching his/her full potential.

The first view is all-too-common and has been the painful experience of too many people. It is the non-democratic perspective experienced under Marxism and dictatorships. The second view is the ideal of democratic societies. Every decision in Government is made differently depending upon which of these two views is held. Those in emerging democracies are attempting to move from the first view to the second view. This move requires a radical change in thinking and, ultimately, in the value system upon which we place our beliefs.

I have attempted to take the characteristics commonly ascribed to democracy and to simplify them into common categories. They fall into the following seven categories. Thus, as a part of changing our view of Government, there are seven essential attitudes—pillars—that must be instilled into the heart of every member of Government and of society:

1. *High sense of worth for the individual.*
2. *Governors as servants of the people.*
3. *Participatory.* Every person within the society must feel involved in every decision made within the Government so that each citizen takes ownership over those decisions and their implementation.
4. *Inclusion.* Elimination of disenfranchisement or exclusion. No individual or group should feel they cannot participate in the national dream.
5. *Justice.*

6. *Healing of wounds from injustice.* A healthy society must be a self-healing society because wounds are always being inflicted, either intentionally or inadvertently.
7. *Attitude that the best way to improve my quality of life is to improve the quality of life for the whole community.*

I believe that every characteristic commonly attributed to a democracy is included in these seven pillars. Where do these pillars come from? How can we build them, then strengthen them? Are they uniquely supported?

There are two prevailing philosophies that do not support these seven pillars. The first of these is atheism. This was the official philosophy under the Marxism of the twentieth century. It is the *de facto* philosophy within those former Marxist nations moving toward democracy during the past two decades. Those raised under enforced atheism were not only cheated out of important aspects of being a human being, but they were handed a philosophy that will not support democracy.

The second philosophy is misnamed humanism. Humanism is less a focus on lifting humankind as a whole, as is often argued, than being set free from the perceived constraints of an Almighty God to focus on our own goals. A more correct name would be *me-ism*. Many have been beguiled by the proponents of this philosophy and subsequently seduced by it.

Humanism starts with the proposition that there is no God and constructs an approach to life without the need for God. Humanism is the philosophy that says "I am the master of my own world. I will look within myself for the solutions to the problems that I face." It is human-centred and dependent only on ourselves.

The clearest statements on humanism come from the *Humanist Manifesto II*, in 1973, which interestingly enough originated about 30 meters from my laboratory. This *Manifesto* describes "faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to live and care for persons, to hear and understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them," as "out-moded."² It further describes faith as "harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter."³ It proceeds to describe faith in God as "either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of survival and fulfillment of the human race."⁴ It then argues erroneously that enlightened self-interest is sufficient to build a harmonious world, with equality for all.⁵

The original *Humanist Manifesto*, now called *Humanist Manifesto I*, 40 years earlier focused on removing man's connection with his Creator. In place of hope based on God's goodness, love and omnipotence, it states:

*Though we consider the religious forms and ideas of our fathers no longer adequate, the quest for the good life is still the central task for mankind. Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement.*⁶

—and I might add, he has nothing beyond the power within himself for achieving his goals.

Frederick Edwords, Executive Director of the American Humanist Association, favourably quotes Joseph C. Sommer:

*Humanism's focus is on meeting human wants and needs in this world by the use of human efforts...This life should be lived as though it is the only one we have.*⁷

Humanism is the predominant philosophy even within deeply religious societies. It is so pervasive that it subconsciously consumes well-meaning religious people. We inadvertently foster it in the training of our children. It is the basis of our education. In addition, committed humanists are trying to seduce religious believers through what they term religious humanism, which is nothing more than godlessness. The humanist Robert Ingersol, again quoted by Edwords, describes religious humanism:

Religious Humanism is usually without a god, without a belief in the supernatural, without a belief in an afterlife, and without a belief in a "higher" source of moral values. Some adherents would even go so far as to suggest that it is a religion without "belief" of any kind...Furthermore, the common notion of "religious

knowledge” as knowledge gathered through nonscientific means is not generally accepted in Religious Humanist epistemology.⁸

Thus, what is called humanism is nothing more than atheism dressed up to try to look respectable. Humanism must be considered as contemporary atheism—the successor to the atheism of the twentieth-century Marxist states.

And yet, because of the impact of this thinking upon the world in which we live, we are all far too close to being practical humanists. The challenge for each one of us is to understand the impact of this seduction upon our lives and public responsibilities, and then to draw into a deeper relationship with our loving Heavenly Father, from whom all life derives its meaning.

It is important to recognize that not one of the seven pillars of a healthy society is supported by either atheism or humanism. There are avowed atheists and humanists who support one or more of these pillars. However, neither atheism nor humanism, as a value system, will support even one of these pillars. The best that philosophy without God has to offer fails to lead us all the way to these pillars. Faith in God is the only belief that supports these pillars. I have great respect for the other major religions of the world. However, I am going to proceed based upon my experience as a follower of Jesus Christ. If you are an adherent of a different religion, I would ask you to attempt to find the same support for democracy from the teachings of your own religion and then let us sit down together and compare conclusions.

Let me start with a warning that democracy does not grow in every soil, that it does not grow by itself. It requires a special foundation in order to develop and grow. The pitfalls facing a society attempting democracy are so severe and so numerous that John Adams, one of the architects of the American democratic experiment, warned:

Democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There never was a democracy that did not commit suicide.⁹

Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul E. Sigmund concluded their book *The Democratic Experience* with these words:

Unstable democracy is the normal case because the democratic idea still has great appeal, and as the authoritarians fail, as they often do, the only legitimate alternative is to be found in democratic institutions...The prognosis for the future of democracy in the developing areas is a mixed one. Sometimes the circumstances will be such that a democratic leader and a particular combination of historical accidents will permit these forms to take root and grow. In many more cases, once the pattern of traditional rule is broken, a cycle of alternation of democracy and dictatorship ensues...The prospects then are for continued instability in a world in which stable, efficient democratic government is an ideal more often than it is an operative reality.¹⁰

The harsh reality is that there are nations seeking to move from Marxism or despotism to democracy today that may fail and revert to a more human-degrading regime than the people experienced in the past.

Professor Alexander Fraser Tytler, writing at the end of the eighteenth century, said:

A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves money from the Public Treasury. From that moment on the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the Public Treasury, with a result that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy always followed by dictatorship. The average age of the world's greatest civilizations has been 200 years. These nations have progressed through the following sequence:

*From bondage to spiritual faith,
From spiritual faith to great courage,
From courage to liberty,
From liberty to abundance,
From abundance to selfishness,*

*From selfishness to complacency,
From complacency to apathy,
From apathy to dependency,
From dependency back into bondage.*¹¹

It is clear that the most important factor affecting the building of a democratic society is the character of the people. Ralph Buultjens concluded his book *The Decline of Democracy* with these words:

*I feel a profound sense of drama, if not tragedy. Democracy is an ideal that has inspired the noblest sentiments of human civilization...The modern democratic experience appears as a brief interlude, a short flowering of freedom, in the human record of political injustice and oppression...We must remember that the expectations for democracy have far exceeded its capacity; the reality has never been able to match the ideal. It is also clear that the traditional concept of democracy, the product of two centuries of effort, is passing into history...Democracy arose in a time when the values of liberty and self determination outranked all others...If we seek to restore democracy, we must first renew the values that gave it birth.*¹²

According to Buultjens, and each of the authors I have quoted here, we can only have democracy if we are willing to commit ourselves to the values that are precisely required in order for democracy to take root, grow and sustain itself. What are the values that gave democracy birth? Let us take a look at these seven pillars of a democratic society that I have listed above, and consider the failure of atheism and humanism and the support of faith in God.

1. High sense of worth for the individual.

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Humanist Manifesto II:</p> <p><i>We can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species.¹³</i></p> <p>Heinrich Himmler:</p> <p><i>We must be decent, honest, loyal and comradely to members of our own blood and to no one else...Whether the other peoples live in comfort or perish in hunger interests me only in so far as we need slaves for our culture, apart from that it does not interest me. Whether or not ten thousand Russian women collapse from exhaustion while digging a tank ditch interests me only in so far as the tank ditch is completed for Germany...We Germans, who are the only people in the world to have a decent attitude to animals, will also adopt a decent attitude to these human animals, but it is a crime against our blood to worry about them and bring them ideals.¹⁴</i></p> <p>Adolf Hitler, commenting on the especially heavy casualties among junior officers:</p> <p><i>But then, that's what young men are there for.¹⁵</i></p> <p>Jean Paul Sartre:</p> <p><i>Every existence is born without reason, prolongs itself out of weakness and dies by chance.¹⁶</i></p> <p>Humanist Manifesto II:</p> <p><i>There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body.¹⁷</i></p> <p>Humanist Manifesto II:</p> <p><i>Ethics stems from human need and interest... Human life has meaning because we create and develop our futures.¹⁸</i></p>	<p>God:</p> <p><i>Let us make man in our image, in our likeness.¹⁹</i></p> <p>God created man in His image.</p> <p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.²⁰</i></p> <p><i>Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made us, and we are His.²¹</i></p> <p>Man is so special to God that God not only made man in His own image, but He breathed the breath of life into man.</p> <p>God:</p> <p><i>I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.²²</i></p> <p>God is man's servant to protect him and guide him.</p> <p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.²³</i></p> <p>God revealing Himself through one of His servants:</p> <p><i>For You (God) created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made...All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be.²⁴</i></p> <p>Man is the object of Almighty God's affection and His energy. God came to earth briefly in human form to teach man by word and example how to live this life.</p>

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Humanist Manifesto II:</p> <p><i>It also includes a recognition of an individual's right to die with dignity, euthanasia, and the right to suicide.²⁵</i></p> <p>Humanist Manifesto I:</p> <p><i>Though we consider the religious forms and ideas of our fathers no longer adequate, the quest for the good life is still the central task for mankind. Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement.²⁶</i></p>	<p>God, speaking through His servant about Himself and Jesus—God in human form:</p> <p><i>Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.²⁷</i></p> <p>God came to earth briefly in human form to suffer on our behalf so that we could each have the fullest life. God as Jesus said:</p> <p><i>I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.²⁸</i></p> <p>Does this not make you feel that you are special? Does this not make you feel that all human beings are special, even when we see their imperfections?</p>

2. Governors as servants of the people.

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Josef Stalin:</p> <p><i>The State is an instrument in the hands of the ruling class for suppressing the resistance of its class enemies.</i>²⁹</p> <p>Vladimir Ilyich Lenin:</p> <p><i>The State is a special cudgel, nothing more.</i>³⁰</p> <p>Stalin:</p> <p><i>The live man is a burden. The dead man is no burden.</i>³¹</p> <p>Mao Tse-tung:</p> <p><i>Communism is not love. Communism is a hammer which we use to crush our enemy.</i>³²</p> <p>Mao:</p> <p><i>Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.</i>³³</p>	<p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves...For the ruler is God's servant to do you good...He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrong-doer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honour, then honour.</i>³⁴</p> <p>The Government official is a servant of God. He/she is a servant of God just as much as any clergyman.</p> <p>God described Nebuchadnezzar, the harsh ruler of the Babylonian Empire with these words:</p> <p><i>My servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon...</i>³⁵</p> <p>And God later dealt firmly with Nebuchadnezzar to bring him in line.</p> <p>God paints the following picture to depict the Head of Government as servant of the people:</p> <p><i>He chose David His servant and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep He brought him to be the shepherd of His people Jacob, of Israel His inheritance. And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.</i>³⁶</p>

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Dr. Ravi Zacharias, in his book <i>Can Man Live Without God?</i>, provides us with vivid insight into the mind of a godless ruler. On one occasion, Stalin used a live chicken to demonstrate one of his operating principles to those in his inner circle. Holding the chicken tightly, he began to pull out its feathers. As the suffering chicken struggled in vain to escape, he continued to pull out its feathers until the bird was completely stripped. “Now you watch,” Stalin said as he set the chicken on the floor and showed it some food in his hand as he walked away. Amazingly, the tortured chicken followed him closely. Stalin dropped some grain on the floor for the chicken, and as it began to follow him around the room, he told his astounded colleagues:</p> <p><i>This is the way to rule people. Did you see how that chicken followed me for food, even though I had caused it such torture? People are like that chicken. If you inflict inordinate pain on them they will follow you for food the rest of their lives.</i>⁸⁹</p>	<p>In describing the Head of Government as a servant of the people, God uses the picture of a shepherd. What is a shepherd? The shepherd protects the sheep, finds food for the sheep, anticipates danger to the sheep and avoids it, has complete responsibility for the safety and well-being of the sheep. The shepherd is a servant of the sheep. This is God’s picture of what the Head of Government must do for the people of his/her nation.</p> <p>And when the Head of Government does not serve the people, God deals with them as He described in this situation:</p> <p><i>“Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture!” declares the LORD. Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend My people: “Because you have scattered My flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done,” declares the LORD. “I Myself will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing,” declares the LORD.</i>³⁷</p> <p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever he does.</i>³⁸</p> <p><i>You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.</i>³⁹</p> <p><i>Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.</i>⁴⁰</p> <p><i>Be eager to serve.</i>⁴¹</p>

3. Participatory.

Every person within the society must feel involved in every decision made within the Government so that each citizen takes ownership over those decisions and their implementation.

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Benito Mussolini:</p> <p><i>Nothing beyond the State, above the State, against the State. Everything to the State, for the State, in the State.</i>⁴²</p> <p>Hermann Goering:</p> <p><i>Let me have men about me that are utter villains—provided that I have the power, the absolute power, over life and death.</i>⁴³</p>	<p>God:</p> <p><i>Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you...Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.</i>⁴⁴</p> <p>God, through the Apostle Paul:</p> <p><i>First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.</i>^{44b}</p> <p>Full participation occurs when we invest our energy to support our prayers.</p>

4. Inclusion. Elimination of disenfranchisement or exclusion.

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Hitler:</p> <p><i>Like a woman...the masses love a dominator rather than a suppliant and feel inwardly more satisfied by a doctrine which tolerates no other beside itself than by the granting of liberal freedom. They have no idea what to do with it as a rule, and tend to feel they have been abandoned.</i>⁴⁵</p> <p>Ernest Rohm, Nazi leader:</p> <p><i>Brutality is respected. The people need wholesome fear. They want to fear something. They want someone to frighten them and make them shudderingly submissive...Why babble about brutality and get indignant about tortures? The masses want them. They need something that will give them a thrill of horror.</i>⁴⁶</p> <p>Humanist Manifesto I:</p> <p><i>In the place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life.</i>⁴⁷</p> <p>The individual's own life is ultimately all that matters. This is at the root of exclusion.</p>	<p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.</i>⁴⁸</p> <p><i>Fathers, do not exasperate your children....</i>⁴⁹</p> <p>There are three God-ordained institutions: marriage and the Family; Government; and Religious Institution. There are strong parallels between these three institutions. Each was established by God. Those who serve in these institutions are servants of God. The servant in each of these institutions is admonished to keep from inflicting frustration and hopelessness to those whom he/she serves.</p> <p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature, rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command. "Love your neighbour as yourself."</i>⁵⁰</p> <p>God:</p> <p><i>When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself...I am the Lord your God.</i>⁵¹</p> <p>God:</p> <p><i>"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."</i>⁵²</p> <p>As the antidote to hopelessness, God's plan for every man, woman and child is hope.</p>

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
	<p data-bbox="850 275 911 302">God:</p> <p data-bbox="894 348 1468 564"><i>If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.⁵³</i></p> <p data-bbox="850 611 1516 714">We, as human beings, are to work for the removal of oppression and the resulting hopelessness from the rest of humanity.</p>

5. Justice.

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Ernest Rohm, Nazi leader:</p> <p><i>Brutality is respected. The people need wholesome fear. They want to fear something. They want someone to frighten them and make them shudderingly submissive...Why babble about brutality and get indignant about tortures? The masses want them. They need something that will give them a thrill of horror.</i>⁵⁴</p> <p>Leon Trotsky:</p> <p><i>The dictatorship of the Communist Party is maintained by recourse to every form of violence.</i>⁵⁵</p> <p>Lenin, in ordering mass terror in the Soviet Union:</p> <p><i>It is necessary secretly—and urgently—to prepare the terror.</i>⁵⁶</p>	<p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.</i>⁵⁷</p> <p>Justice is a high requirement of God. He says more about justice than any other character quality.</p> <p>God:</p> <p><i>Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of My people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless.</i>⁵⁸</p> <p>There is a special warning to those in governmental decision-making roles.</p> <p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the Lord your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly. Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you.</i>⁵⁹</p> <p>God revealing Himself through His servant:</p> <p><i>Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne....</i>⁶⁰</p>

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
	<p data-bbox="850 275 1235 306">God, speaking to an unjust king:</p> <p data-bbox="894 348 1471 1010"><i>For this is what the Lord says about Shalom son of Josiah, who succeeded his father as king of Judah but has gone from this place: “He will never return. He will die in the place where they have led him captive; he will not see this land again. Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his countrymen work for nothing, not paying for their labor ... Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar? Did not your father have food and drink? He did what was right and just, so all went well with him. He defended the cause of the poor and the needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know Me?” declares the Lord. “But your eyes and your heart are set only on dishonest gain, on shedding innocent blood and on oppression and extortion.”⁶¹</i></p> <p data-bbox="850 1052 1268 1083">God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p data-bbox="894 1125 1471 1272"><i>Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand it fully...The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.⁶²</i></p>

6. Healing of wounds from injustice.

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Charles Darwin:</p> <p><i>Looking at the world at no distant date, what an endless number of lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilized races throughout the world.</i>⁶³</p>	<p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>Blessed is he who has regard for the weak.</i>⁶⁴</p> <p>Jesus began His public ministry with these words:</p> <p><i>The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor...Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.</i>⁶⁵</p> <p>With these words, Jesus was appealing to a passage delivered to man 700 years earlier:</p> <p><i>The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve...to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.</i>⁶⁶</p> <p>What phrases in this passage describe emotional healing?</p> <p><i>...to bind up the brokenhearted, ...to proclaim freedom for the captives, ...to proclaim release from darkness for the prisoners, ...to comfort all who mourn, ...to provide for those who grieve, ...to bestow on them the oil of gladness instead of mourning, ...to bestow on them a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.</i></p>

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
	<p>And probably other phrases in this passage describe emotional healing as well. We tend to think of God and Jesus as providing spiritual healing. And yet, in this defining passage regarding Jesus' ministry, it is emotional healing. I think the best way to view Jesus' ministry is spiritual healing, building upon it healing from emotional distress, resulting in the quality of life God intends for us.</p> <p>God revealing Himself through His servant:</p> <p><i>He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.</i>⁶⁷</p> <p>Jesus summarized the commandments:</p> <p><i>"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbour as yourself."</i>⁶⁸</p> <p>This attitude must reflect itself in the way we view those who are hurting emotionally.</p> <p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.</i>⁶⁹</p> <p>When we see someone who is carrying an emotional load that is beyond their capacity, we must help them carry that load. We have a God-given responsibility to help those who, for whatever reason, are unable to carry their load in this stressful world.</p>

7. Attitude that the best way to improve my quality of life is to improve the quality of life for the whole community.

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Humanist Manifesto II:</p> <p><i>Individuals should be encouraged to realize their own creative talents and desires...We believe in maximum individual autonomy consonant with social responsibility...The possibilities of individual freedom of choice exist in human life and should be increased.</i>⁷⁰</p> <p>This speaks of social responsibility as secondary to self-fulfillment.</p> <p>Humanist Manifesto I:</p> <p><i>The goal of humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good.</i>⁷¹</p> <p>Atheism and humanism assume that man is basically good, although there is frustration over social evil for which there is no solution.</p> <p>Frederick Edwords, Executive Director, American Humanist Association:</p> <p><i>Secular Humanist tradition is a tradition of defiance...or challenge to authority.</i>⁷²</p> <p>This is not a good basis for building a civil society.</p>	<p>God:</p> <p><i>Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you...Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.</i>⁷³</p> <p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little."</i>⁷⁴</p> <p>God is admonishing the one who has more than he needs not to hoard it, but rather to use it to lift up the one in need. The idea is to help the one who is weaker to become stronger so that in the future when I have a need, he will be strong enough to help lift me up.</p>

We must build these seven values into every member of society in order to have a healthy, cooperative society. Furthermore, it is these seven values that lead to an attitude of public service. In an ideal democratic society, every member should be prepared to move from the private sector into public service whenever there is a need that they can fill.

Summary. Faith in God is the indispensable underpinning for the morality, the values, the character qualities and the attitudes that must underlie a healthy, cooperative society.

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Friedrich Nietzsche:</p> <p><i>God is dead.</i>⁷⁵</p> <p>Karl Marx, when asked about his life objective:</p> <p><i>To dethrone God and destroy capitalism.</i>⁷⁶</p> <p>Nietzsche:</p> <p><i>I call Christianity the one great curse, the enormous and innermost perversion, the one great instinct of revenge, for which no means are too venomous, too underhand, too underground, and too petty.</i>⁷⁷</p> <p>Nietzsche said that “because God had died in the nineteenth century, there would be two direct results in the twentieth century: first...the twentieth century would be the bloodiest century in history; second...a universal madness would break out.”⁷⁸ Incidentally, he spent the last 11 years of his life insane before dying in 1900.⁷⁹</p> <p>Hitler took Nietzsche’s writings as his philosophical blueprint. Hitler personally presented a copy of Nietzsche’s works to Mussolini.⁸⁰</p> <p>Hitler’s words displayed at Auschwitz:</p> <p><i>I freed Germany from the stupid and degrading fallacies of conscience and morality...We will train young people before whom the world will tremble. I want young people capable of violence — imperious, relentless and cruel.</i>⁸¹</p>	<p>Dag Hammarskjöld:</p> <p><i>God does not die on the day when we cease to believe in a personal deity, but we die on the day when our lives cease to be illumined by the steady radiance, renewed daily, of a wonder, the source of which is beyond all reason.</i>⁸²</p> <p>God, speaking through His servant:</p> <p><i>Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful...And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.</i>⁸³</p>

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Viktor Frankl, survivor of Auschwitz:</p> <p><i>If we present man with a concept of man which is not true, we may well corrupt him. When we present him as an automation of reflexes, as a mind machine, as a bundle of instincts, as a pawn of drive and reactions, as a mere product of heredity and environment, we feed the nihilism to which modern man is, in any case, prone. I became acquainted with the last stage of corruption in my second concentration camp, Auschwitz. The gas chambers of Auschwitz were the ultimate consequence of the theory that man is nothing but the product of heredity and environment—or, as the Nazis liked to say, “of blood and soil.” I am absolutely convinced that the gas chambers of Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Maidanek were ultimately prepared not in some ministry or other in Berlin, but rather at the desks and in lecture halls of nihilistic scientists and philosophers.⁸⁴</i></p> <p>Lenin:</p> <p><i>Morality is that which serves to destroy the old, exploiting society.⁹⁰</i></p> <p>Marx:</p> <p><i>Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the feeling of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of unspiritual conditions. It is the opium of the people.⁹¹</i></p>	<p>George Washington:</p> <p><i>Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labour to subvert these great pillars of human happiness—these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them...And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.⁸⁵</i></p> <p>John Adams:</p> <p><i>Suppose a nation in some distant region should take the Bible for their only law book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts contained! Every member would be obliged in conscience to temperance, frugality and industry; to justice, kindness and charity towards his fellow men; and to piety, love and reverence toward Almighty God.⁸⁶</i></p> <p>John Adams:</p> <p><i>Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other.⁸⁷</i></p> <p>James Madison:</p> <p><i>We have staked the future of all our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self government; upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves...according to the Ten Commandments of God.⁸⁸</i></p>

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
	<p>Philip Schaff:</p> <p><i>Republican institutions in the hands of a virtuous and God-fearing nation are the very best in the world, but in the hands of a corrupt and irreligious people they are the very worst and the most effective weapons of destruction.⁹²</i></p> <p>William Penn:</p> <p><i>If we are not governed by God, then we will be ruled by tyrants.⁹³</i></p> <p>Phillips Brooks:</p> <p><i>No man in this world attains to freedom from any slavery except by entrance into some higher servitude. There is no such thing as an entirely free man conceivable.⁹⁴</i></p> <p>John Adams:</p> <p><i>Statesmen may plan and speculate for Liberty, but it is Religion and Morality alone which can establish the principles upon which Freedom can securely stand. A patriot must be a religious man.⁹⁵</i></p>

The Social Impact Upon Two Eighteenth-Century American Families

Without God	With God/Biblical Faith
<p>Max Jukes was an atheist who married a godless woman. Out of 650 descendants who were traced, 310 died as paupers; 150 became criminals—7 of them murderers; 100 were known to be drunkards; and more than half of the women were prostitutes. The descendants of Max Jukes cost the United States Government more than \$1.25 million in nineteenth-century dollars.⁹⁶</p>	<p>Jonathan Edwards was a contemporary of Max Jukes. He was a committed follower of Jesus Christ who gave God first place in his life. He married a young lady who loved God. Out of 1,394 descendants who were traced, 295 graduated from university, of whom 13 became university presidents; 65 became professors; 30 were judges; 100 were lawyers—one the dean of an outstanding law school; 56 practiced as physicians—one the dean of a medical school; 75 became officers in the military; 100 were well-known preachers. Another 80 held some form of public office, of whom three were mayors of large cities; three were elected as United States Senators; three as state governors; and others were sent as ambassadors. One was the Comptroller of the U.S. Treasury, and another was Vice President of the United States. Not one of the descendants of Jonathan Edwards cost the U.S. Government a dollar.⁹⁷</p>

Which type of family do we need as the building block for a healthy society?

Everyone in society must be imbued with these characteristics.

Fundamentally, we need a society made up of individuals with a servant-leadership mindset who can move into leadership, but also who can discern this character in the process of selecting leaders. Hitler's rise to power did not commence in the 1920's. Rather, it began decades earlier when Germany's philosophers and theologians began to lead the people in the weakening of their faith. The weakening of faith led to a weakening of the seven pillars of democracy throughout society. This, in turn, facilitated the rise of potential leaders who would not serve the people and, at the same time, a citizenry incapable of evaluating potential leaders in terms of their ability to be effective servant-governors.

We cannot see in advance that a person with a flawed character will become a tyrant. And yet, it is a fundamental principle. Lord Acton emphasized this in his classic statement: "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely."⁹⁸ Edmund Burke said it this way: "There never was a bad man that had ability for good service."⁹⁹ For example, I am told that Enver Hoxha, the harsh Albanian dictator until 1985, did not depict himself as a tyrant when he entered office, but rather as a nationalist and as a saviour of the people. The same is true of Slobodan Milosevic. When a society does not build into the character of each member, often the members with the least character grab for power. As we move toward a truly democratic society, again our only hope is in God and in His ability to change tyrants into servant-leaders.

Thus, the attitude envisioned toward public service is that each individual in society be equipped and prepared to fill every responsibility up to head of nation, willing to step into that position whenever the community feels there is a need, and ready to step back into the private sector whenever it is determined that one's services are no longer needed. I like the attitude expressed by one President as he left office:

In a few days, I will lay down my official responsibilities in this office — to take up once more the only title in our democracy superior to that of president, the title of citizen.^{99b}

How does God change individuals from dictators to servant-leaders?

God speaking through His servant:

*If anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*¹⁰⁰

*I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*¹⁰¹

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*¹⁰²

There are numerous examples in history. The first example is Nebuchadnezzar II, ruler of the Babylonian Empire. God warned Nebuchadnezzar first through a dream and then through a prophet of the discipline that God would inflict upon Nebuchadnezzar for his godless behaviour. Nebuchadnezzar rejected both warnings. God dealt with Nebuchadnezzar as Nebuchadnezzar himself describes in this open letter to all of humanity:

All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?"

The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, "This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone He wishes."

Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.

At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honoured and glorified Him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as He pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back His hand or say to Him: "What have you done?"

At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honour and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything He does is right and all His ways are just. And those who walk in pride He is able to humble.¹⁰³

God changed Nebuchadnezzar from a tyrant into a God-fearing leader, apparently a servant-leader.

Another example is the recent President of one nation. He was a Marxist dictator when he held power during the 1980's. When free elections were held in 1991, he was enthusiastically turned out of office. However, then God began to gain his attention. God so touched his life that his character changed. He confessed to the whole nation for his mistakes, and Parliament exonerated him. He began to read the Bible for several hours each day. When the second free election was held in 1996, he was elected the President of his country. When he was in office earlier, he had been a tyrant. After being returned to office with a life submitted to God, he operated much more as a servant-leader with God's help.

God can change an individual from a dictator into a servant-leader while he or she is in office. However, I am convinced that God wants to change everyone from a dictator into a servant-leader before entering office so that they are prepared and equipped to serve whenever his or her peers see a need.

Questions for Further Reflection

1. Do I desire a healthy society for my nation so much that I would be willing to admit my need for God's help?
2. Do I desire a healthy society for my nation so much that I would be willing to let Jesus be the One to carry away the evil aspects of my character?
3. Do I desire a healthy society for my nation so much that I would be willing to give my life completely to God?

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Government Decision-Making Filter #2 Summarized: The Seven Decision-Making Criteria

There are a number of generally agreed upon attitudes or characteristics that must exist in healthy or democratic societies. They may be re-stated and summarized into the following seven attitudes which must be imbedded into the heart of every member of that society:

1. *High sense of worth for the individual.*
2. *Governors as servants of the people.*
3. *Participatory.* Every person within the society must feel involved in every decision made within the Government so that each citizen takes ownership over those decisions and their implementation.
4. *Inclusion.* Elimination of disenfranchisement or exclusion.
5. *Justice.*
6. *Healing of wounds from injustice.* A healthy society must be a self-healing society because wounds are always being inflicted, either intentionally or inadvertently.
7. *Attitude that the best way to improve my quality of life is to improve the quality of life for the whole community.*

Furthermore, every decision in Government must be examined through the filter of these seven criteria.

Decision-Making Filter #2: Steps to Applying

Thus, with each prospective decision to be made within Government, the following seven questions must be asked:

1. Does the proposed decision advance, or at least not hinder, a high sense of worth for the individual?
2. Does the proposed decision advance, or at least not hinder, governors as servants of the people?
3. Does the proposed decision advance, or at least not hinder, every person within the society participating in every decision made within the Government so that each citizen takes ownership over those decisions and their implementation?
4. Does the proposed decision advance, or at least not hinder, inclusion, i.e., the elimination of disenfranchisement?
5. Does the proposed decision advance, or at least not hinder, justice?
6. Does the proposed decision advance, or at least not hinder, the healing of wounds from injustice?
7. Does the proposed decision advance, or at least not hinder, the attitude that the best way to improve my quality of life is to improve the quality of life for the whole community?

Case Studies in Decision Making

The application of Filter #2 to the decision-making process may be examined with the help of issues below. I suggest that you determine which of the seven criteria in Filter #2 resolves the issue in question. After wrestling with these issues, please refer to the Commentary on page 121.

1. Those in the leadership of one nation are asking the question: For the 70% of the children born out of wedlock, do these children have a right to an equal inheritance from their biological father? Which criteria help us to make this decision?
- 2a. In Macedonia, 64% of the people are ethnically Macedonian, 25% Albanian and 11% other. Hypothetically, could we support a proposal to give the ethnic Albanians the right to serve in public positions on a quota basis? Which criteria help us to make this decision?
- 2b. What about the right for the ethnic Albanians to education in their language? Which criteria help us to make this decision?
3. A group of individuals have approached the Government of Albania, asking for an increase in the percentage of the GDP allocated to education from 3.1% to 3.7%. They make the argument that:

During the last ten years, governmental contribution toward education has been around 3% of GDP. The world average on education expenditures is around 5% of GDP. EU countries spend on the average 5% of their GDP, and at the same time persist for a substantial increase in expenditures in order to lead the EU on a path toward a more competitive economy. On average, countries with medium income, among which Albania is counted, allocate 4.8% of their GDP. The average of European countries in transition is slightly higher....Comparing country percentages of GDP allocated to Education, Albania is ranked in 93rd in the world.¹

Which criteria help us to make this decision?

4. Proposed law: Women receive equal pay with men for the same work. Which criteria help us to make this decision?
5. Proposed law: A quota that a certain number of seats in Parliament are to be filled by women. Which criteria help us to make this decision?

Note: To facilitate the study of the issues raised here, there follows brief Commentary.

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Case Studies in Decision Making: Commentary

1. **Filter #2: Criteria #1,5,4.** From God's point of view, all human beings deserve the opportunity to reach their full, God-given potential. None deserve to experience a disadvantage based upon the decisions and actions of their parents.

2. **A. Filter #2: Criteria #3,4,5,6,7.** Presumably, this is a short-term solution while assimilation is taking place. Hopefully, the day will arrive when this will no longer be necessary.

B. Filter #2: Criteria #3,4,5,6,7. Similar reasoning to 2.a.

3. **Filter #2: Criterion #1**

4. **Filter #2: Criteria #1,3,4,5,7.** God's perspective on pay is that it should be based upon the quality of the work, not the person performing it. It is a sad commentary on the society that must institute such a law.

5. **Filter #2: Criteria #1,3,4,5,7.** Where there are inequities that need to be addressed, sometimes corrective actions need to be taken, again, hopefully, as a short-term solution.

Case Study in Decision-Making: The Media

The media in a democratic society has the capacity to play a very constructive role. The values that underlie a democratic society are unique and different than those that supported previous types of regime. The media can fulfill the role of popular education. This is true for all age groups. For working adults, beyond the age of formal education, this is typically the largest source for the intake of new ideas. As an example, *The Federalist Papers*, which shaped the debate on the U.S. Constitution, consisted of 85 essays, 77 of which were published serially in three New York newspapers between October 1787 and August 1788: the *Independent Journal*, the *New York Packet* and the *Daily Advertiser*.¹ They were then re-published in other newspapers in other places in the United States, and were soon printed together in bound volumes.

In the current era, radio or television can play the same role as print journalism. Media, in the broadest sense, can use plays and movies, to instill the democratic values. Those working in the media can exert great influence. Instead of simple entertainment with no values, the media industry can play a constructive role. Pellumb Kulla, the Albanian playwright, employed drama to teach democratic values as his nation transitioned from an atheistic Marxist state toward a democratic society.² Vaclav Havel, took a similar approach in Czechoslovakia.³

Writers who were part of the Clapham Community in eighteenth-century England, played a significant role in the abolition of the slave trade and in advancing their social agenda.^{4,5} Examples are the non-fiction books: William Wilberforce, *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country Contrasted with Real Christianity* (1797); Hannah More, playwright, poet, and author, *Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society* (1788); Thomas Gisborne, *Principles of Moral Philosophy* (1789). The preacher John Wesley, who spearheaded the spiritual revival that led to the Clapham Community, contributed greatly with his books *Thoughts Upon Slavery* (1774) and *Serious Address to the People of England with regard to the State of the Nation* (1777).⁶

Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) was very effectively used to change attitudes toward slavery in the United States. Interestingly, similar to *The Federalist Papers*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* first appeared as a 40-week serial in *National Era*, an abolitionist periodical, before it was consolidated into a book and published.⁷

Movies produced for television and the theatre have tremendous potential to impact values. Examples, of effective movies are: *Invictus*, about Nelson Mandela's efforts to create racial harmony in post-Apartheid South Africa; *Amazing Grace*, about William Wilberforce's tireless efforts to abolish the slave trade; and *The Ultimate Gift*.

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NOTE: All Bible references are from the Holman Christian Standard Bible unless otherwise indicated.

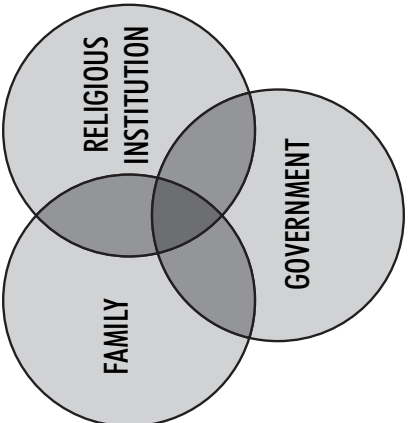
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Integrated Decision-Making Using Filters #1 and #2

Integrated Decision-Making Using Filters #1 and #2

Decisions generally require applying both Filters #1 and #2 to the issue in question. I recommend that one start by applying Filter #1 and then Filter #2 to the issue as illustrated on page 123. I ask you to apply this approach to the issues listed on pages 125-127. I suggest that you determine how each of these filters helps to resolve the issue in question. Then, consult the Commentary on pages 129-131. Further issues are presented for your consideration on pages 133-143.

Guide to Making Decisions Using Filters #1 and #2

Decision-Making Filter #1	Steps to Applying	Decision-Making Filter #2	Steps to Applying
<p>The first filter is based upon an understanding of the purposes for three God-ordained institutions. According to purpose, a determination must first be made as to which of the three institutions should actually make the decision. Then the appropriate institution should make the decision consistent with that purpose.</p>  <p>God-ordained institutions:</p> <p>a. Family Purpose: The fundamental unit of society in which individual character and values are nourished and which provides the model for all other relationships.</p> <p>b. Religious Institution Purpose: The human manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth responsible for catalysing man's interaction with his Creator.</p> <p>c. Government Purpose: Provide an orderly society within which the individual can reach his/her full, God-given potential.</p>	<p>Once the problem is properly defined, based upon the responsibility of each or the God-ordained institutions, it must be determined which institution has responsibility for making the decision.</p> <p>The temptation for Government is to deal with every problem presented to it, whether consistent with its God-ordained purpose or not. However, in the process, Government can actually weaken the appropriate institution that should be dealing with the issue. If the Government feels that the appropriate institution is too weak to properly resolve the issue at hand, then it would be better for Government to work to strengthen the appropriate institution.</p> <p>If Government has responsibility for this area, then the following questions must be asked: <i>Does it contribute toward providing an orderly society within which the individual can reach his/her full, God-given potential?</i> <i>Does it contribute toward, or at least not detract from, the Family functioning as the fundamental unit of society in which individual character and values are nourished and which provides the model for all other relationships?</i> <i>Does it contribute toward, or at least not detract from, the Religious Institution functioning as the human manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth responsible for catalysing man's interaction with his Creator?</i></p> <p>If Family or Religious Institution has responsibility for this area, then the following question must be asked: <i>Is there anything Government should do to make it possible for Family or Religious Institution to better accept this responsibility?</i></p>	<p>There are seven attitudes or characteristics that must exist in healthy or democratic societies. They must be imbedded into the heart and mind of every member of society:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>High sense of worth for the individual.</i> 2. <i>Governors as servants of the people.</i> 3. <i>Participatory.</i> Every person within the society must feel involved in every decision within the Government so that each citizen takes ownership over those decisions and their implementation. 4. <i>Inclusion.</i> Elimination of disenfranchisement or exclusion. 5. <i>Justice.</i> 6. <i>Healing of wounds from injustice.</i> A healthy society must be a self-healing society because wounds are always being inflicted, either intentionally or inadvertently. 7. <i>Attitude that the best way to improve my quality of life is to improve the quality of life for the whole community.</i> <p>Furthermore, these principles must become a filter for appropriate decisions on the part of the Government. Every decision in Government must be examined through the filter of these seven criteria.</p>	<p>Thus, with each prospective decision to be made within Government, the following seven questions must be asked:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the proposed decision advance, or at least not hinder, a high sense of worth for the individual? 2. Does the proposed decision advance, or at least not hinder, governors as servants of the people? 3. Does the proposed decision advance, or at least not hinder, every person within the society participating in every decision made within the Government so that each citizen takes ownership over those decisions and their implementation? 4. Does the proposed decision advance, or at least not hinder, elimination of disenfranchisement? 5. Does the proposed decision advance, or at least not hinder, justice? 6. Does the proposed decision advance, or at least not hinder, healing of wounds from injustice? 7. Does the proposed decision advance, or at least not hinder, the attitude that the best way to improve my quality of life is to improve the quality of life for the whole community?



Case Studies in Integrated Decision-Making Using Filters #1 and #2

How do Filters #1 and #2 applied together help to resolve the issue in question?

1. Transparency of the Government. A Government commits itself to eliminate misinformation, lies, and only withhold information where national security is involved. Which criteria help us to make this decision?
2. A Government commitment to enforce laws against corruption. Which criteria help us to make this decision?
3. Dr. Zhores Ivanovich Alferov, Russian Nobel Prize winner and Member of the Duma, criticized the Duma for voting itself a housing complex worth four times as much as the annual budgetary spending on scientific research.¹ Which criteria help us to resolve this issue?
4. A proposed Ministry of Foreign Affairs policy that diplomats posted abroad have the educational expenses of their children covered in that foreign country by the Government. Which criteria help us to make this decision?
5. A proposed Ministry of Foreign Affairs policy that a married woman serving in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be assigned to the same overseas mission as her husband. Which criteria help us to make this decision?
6. A policy that no political party have an ethnic, regional, or religious orientation. Which criteria help us to make this decision?
7. A Moscow Court banned the activities of one religious group, citing “inciting religious discord, breaking up families, violating individual Russian citizens’ rights, inclining people to commit suicide and luring teenagers and minors.”² Which criteria help us to make this decision?
8. A self-professed pedophile established an internet website describing for other potential pedophiles how to find young girl victims. He posted on his website photographs he had taken of young girls aged 3-11 from his community. He has apparently never been convicted of pedophilia. Even those who argue for removing him from the community are afraid to infringe upon his First Amendment rights (In the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights: “Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press.”)³ Which criteria help us to make this decision?

9. A man has been imprisoned twice for rape. In one of these cases, he was acquitted of murder in the death of one of his rape victims. The Government is about to release him early from prison and back into society after serving as a model prisoner. Psychologists argue that he is a danger to society. His advocates argue that he has paid his debt to society. What action is Government permitted to take? Which criteria help us to make this decision?
10. An organization, which openly advocates the overthrow of the Government is allowed to operate freely using the argument that the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees their right to freedom of speech, no matter how offensive the content may be to the rest of society. What decision should we make based upon the two Filters? Which criteria help us to make this decision?
11. The agricultural sector in other countries can produce certain foodstuffs more economically than local farmers due to certain factors such as soil quality and irrigation. The Parliament is considering lifting tariffs to allow imported foods to compete with locally produced foods. Which criteria help us to make this decision?
12. The legislature is discussing a bill to remove the tariff protecting the fledgling steel industry with regard to imported steel. Which criteria help us to make this decision?
13. A computer hard-drive manufacturer has an offer to be bought by a foreign company. There is a concern that the products made by this company can be used for military purposes, and the Government is considering whether to block this sale.⁴ Which criteria help us to make this decision?
14. The Mayor of Megion, Russia has directed that no official in his administration may use phrases such as “I don’t know,” “I can’t,” “It’s not my job,” “It’s impossible,” “I’m having lunch,” “There is no money,” and “I was away/sick/on vacation.”⁵ Which criteria help us to support this decision?
15. Patients with an incurable strain of tuberculosis known as XDR-TB, an extremely drug resistant TB, were kept in a hospital isolation unit. This is a contagious form of TB and, if untreated, generally kills those who contract it. Although authorities acknowledge that “forced confinement of patients violates most medical ethics, authorities say they have no choice but to put the wider public good above individual rights.”⁶ Which criteria help us to make this decision?
16. A California appellate court judge in Los Angeles ruled that “Parents do not have a constitutional right to home school their children,” and that parents can only educate their children at home if they have teaching credentials. The judge’s argument is that the Government has an obligation to ensure that each child receives a quality education. Obtaining these teaching credentials in California requires a minimum of five years of university education.⁷ Which criteria help us to resolve this issue?

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Case Studies in Integrated Decision-Making: Commentary

1. **Filter #2: Criteria #2,3; Filter #1: Government.**
2. **Filter #2: Criterion #2; Filter #1: Government.**
3. **Filter #2: Criterion #2.**
4. **Filter #1: Family; Filter #2: Criterion #1.** In this case, the Government has asked an individual to fulfil an important Government responsibility by living abroad. Thus, the Government has, in essence, asked a family unit to live abroad while one member of that family is fulfilling this Government function. The members of that family still receiving education are pulled out of their normal educational opportunities. It is very likely that educational opportunities provided within the overseas community, although possibly free of charge, may be inadequate in meeting the needs of the children involved, either in terms of language or quality. Here, Government must demonstrate its respect for the institution of the Family and honour its God-given purpose ("the fundamental unit of society in which individual character and values are nourished and which provides the model for all other relationships"), by providing additional educational expenses to insure that the children receive the quality of education they were receiving at home.
5. **Filter #1: Family; Filter #2: Criterion #1.**
6. **Filter #2: Criteria #4,6,7.**
7. **Filter #1: Government.**
8. **Filter #1: Government. Filter #2: Criterion #1.** The speech of the individual in question here, as a minimum, advocates and facilitates criminal behaviour on the part of others, in a sense making him an accomplice. In this case, his behaviour is a threat to society. Remember that Government has a God-given responsibility to provide an orderly society within each individual can reach his/her full, God-given potential. Government is charged with not allowing individuals who are a threat to society from operating freely. Thus, Government must separate him from society. The U.S. Supreme Court has determined that there are limits to one's First Amendment right of freedom of speech. There are limits on individual freedom, as there must be. For example, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Schenck v. United States* (1919) has determined that one cannot "shout fire in a crowded theater," in the words of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., from the unanimous ruling regarding an action that would be calculated to cause damage. One's right to expression does not include expression that would bring damage to another. In liberal democracies, "limitations on freedom of speech are thus imposed on such practices as false advertising, 'hate speech,' obscenity, incitement to riot, revealing state secrets, and slander."¹

9. **Filter #1: Government. Filter #2: Criterion #1.** This man is a repeat offender and can be expected to function in society according to who he is, barring some significant change. True, he has paid his debt as imposed by the judicial system. Nevertheless, the issue of his danger to society is not resolved. Prison is intended to be a punitive experience, not a rehabilitative one. Remember that Government has a God-given responsibility to provide an orderly society within each individual can reach his/her full, God-given potential. Thus, Government cannot re-introduce this individual back into society. The U.S. Supreme Court in a ruling on 17 May 2010, *United States v. Comstock, 08-1224*, determined that sexually dangerous individuals may be kept away from society after they have completed the prison sentence originally imposed upon them.²
10. **Filter #1: Government.** Remember that Government has a God-given responsibility to provide an orderly society within each individual can reach his/her full, God-given potential. The right to “free speech” does give any individual or organization the right to advocate the destruction of this God-given instrument, no matter how much it may fall short of God’s ideal.
11. **Filter #2: Criterion #1.** In serving the people, the Government has a double responsibility: to guarantee the basic need for food is met, i.e., food self-sufficiency, and that it is within economic reach of the people. There may be the temptation that importing food from other nations that can produce the agricultural products more cheaply than can be produced nationally, and there may be the added argument that this may free up workers in the agricultural sector to work in other sectors. Nevertheless, Government must take into account that during times of drought or famine, especially at the regional level, food exporters in the region may no longer be counted on as they must be re-directed to meet pressing demands in their own nations. Thus, although other nations may be able to produce essential foods more economically, weakening national food production capacity may in the long run leave the nation more vulnerable to regional food shortages. Also, in the event of conflict between nations, the Government of the other nation may prevent food exports as a punitive effort. Government has the responsibility to insure food sufficiency for its population and must maintain the viability of the national agriculture.
12. **Filter #1: Government.** Government must protect the people in certain areas: food, energy. In addition, Government must insure that no essential commodities are controlled by foreign nations that could exert leverage over the nation. There is a difference between international cooperation in an interdependent world and foreign dependency. The Government must think long-range to make sure that no basic commodity could be unavailable due to foreign dependency, especially at time of conflict with another nation, specifically a nation controlling access to that commodity.
13. **Filter #1: Government.** The Government has responsibility for protecting the people from internal crime as well as international attack. Hence, Government must be extremely careful in allowing a trade-off between corporate economic benefit and national military vulnerability.
14. **Filter #2: Criterion #2; Filter #1: Government.**
15. **Filter #1: Government; Filter #2: Criteria #1,2.** The Government has the responsibility to protect the greater good of the society at-large. Hence, the individual’s right of freedom to move and interact with the rest of society, inflicting life-threatening damage upon other members of society, does not take precedence.
16. **Filter #1: Family; Filter #1: Government.** The Family has the God-given responsibility to educate its children. When Government undertakes education, it must do so as a servant to the Family, and must not supplant the Family. It is true that the Government has the responsibility to protect the greater good of the

society at-large. Thus, there is a limited opportunity for Government to set some standards for the quality of parent-organized education. However, it must not overstep its God-given authority by dealing with the methodology of parent-organized education. The parents' right to directly educate their children is much stronger than a right guaranteed by the Constitution. It is required by God Himself, making it a God-given responsibility, which supersedes rights. Government's concern would seem better served by taking less of a regulator role and focusing on the development of resources that families may then employ in fulfilling their God-given responsibility.

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1. New World Encyclopedia, "Freedom of Speech," http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Freedom_of_speech
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Case Study in Decision-Making: Criminal Justice

God's purpose for criminal justice appears to include three interwoven elements:

1. Justice
2. Restoration.
3. Cleansing of society from evil and its consequent behaviour.

I am far from possessing a thorough understanding of this critical issue. However, let me lay out some of the issues for consideration. I caution you to move carefully in this area.

The administration of justice is to be a high priority for the Government. This certainly applies throughout the criminal justice system:

Appoint judges and officials for your tribes in all your towns the LORD your God is giving you. They are to judge the people with righteous judgment. Do not deny justice or show partiality to anyone. Do not accept a bribe, for it blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. Pursue justice and justice alone, so that you will live and possess the land the LORD your God is giving you.¹

Other than in capital crime cases, the primary goal appears to be restoring the pre-crime situation, hence, the emphasis on restitution. For example:

When a man uncovers a pit or digs a pit, and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls into it, the owner of the pit must give compensation; he must pay money to its owner, but the dead animal will become his.²

When a man's ox injures his neighbor's ox and it dies, they must sell the live ox and divide its proceeds; they must also divide the dead animal. If, however, it is known that the ox was in the habit of goring, yet its owner has not restrained it, he must compensate fully, ox for ox; the dead animal will become his.³

When a man steals an ox or a sheep and butchers it or sells it, he must repay five cattle for the ox or four sheep for the sheep....A thief must make full restitution. If he is unable, he is to be sold because of his theft. If what was stolen—whether ox, donkey, or sheep—is actually found alive in his possession, he must repay double.⁴

When a man lets a field or vineyard be grazed in, and then allows his animals to go and graze in someone else's field, he must repay with the best of his own field or vineyard.⁵

When a fire gets out of control, spreads to thornbushes, and consumes stacks of cut grain, standing grain, or a field, the one who started the fire must make full restitution for what was burned.⁶

When a man borrows an animal from his neighbor, and it is injured or dies while its owner is not there with it, the man must make full restitution. If its owner is there with it, the man does not have to make restitution. If it was rented, the loss is covered by its rental price.⁷

The principle is clear. Making the application to non-agricultural settings should be straightforward.

Let us cautiously approach the area of capital punishment. Behind capital punishment is the goal of compensating for the high value of human life and the significance of depriving another individual of the immense value of living that life responsibly before our Creator. God has created man in His image.⁸ God breathed life into our first ancestor,⁹ representative of the value of our lives as human beings. He has made provision for us to have His Spirit within us.^{10,11,12} Furthermore, our lives have eternal significance. The way we live our lives during the years allotted to us on this earth, and the choices we make affect our eternal destiny. We have the capacity to continue for eternity with our Father in heaven or to spend it in hell, separated from Him. To cut off a person's life prematurely has consequences that belong only to God. Because of that, God prescribes "life for life."¹³

With regard to capital punishment, we have the extremes of too much or too little of its use. We have nations with disproportionately high use of the death penalty. Without appearing to criticize current states, let us consider the historical example of eighteenth-century England, where there were 160 offenses for which a person could be executed, e.g., to pick a pocket for more than one shilling.¹⁴ That was a clear distortion of justice. On the other hand, the European Union, in Article Two of its Charter, completely prohibits execution among its member nations.¹⁵ Clearly, from God's perspective, execution is to be used very sparingly, principally in cases of purposely taking the life of another individual. There are some other areas of flagrant disobedience to God where execution is prescribed,^{16,17} but human beings taking upon themselves to mete this out take themselves into dangerous territory. Jesus, for example, corrected those about to apply capital punishment in such a case by admonishing forgiveness and the extension of grace to the individual in a case where capital punishment appeared not to be dispensed even-handedly.¹⁸ Those involved in administering justice in such cases must seek God's wisdom. Frequently, whenever God instructs with regard to the taking of life, He adds the phrase:

You must purge the evil from you.^{19,20}

In cases of killing, there is a mechanism for attempting to determine whether it is murder or involuntary manslaughter in order to prevent one who accidentally kills another from being executed as a murderer.²¹

Guilt is to be ensured. God's original instruction was:

One witness cannot establish any wrongdoing or sin against a person, whatever that person has done. A fact must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.²²

In the process of determining guilt, the trustworthiness of the witnesses is to be carefully determined.

The judges are to make a careful investigation, and if the witness turns out to be a liar who has falsely accused his brother, you must do to him as he intended to do to his brother. You must purge the evil from you.²³

More than anything, the requirement is to ensure that there is not a rush to convict based on inadequate evidence. Since an important part of our judicial effort today includes forensic and other types of evidence, we can make provision to substitute for the requirement for so many independent human witnesses. However, the requirement for ensuring justice remains. With regard to the human witnesses, if a witness makes a false accusation, that false witness is to receive the punishment that would have been due the accused. In a capital crime case, the punishment for false testimony is

severe. With capital punishment, the witnesses are apparently to take the first steps in the execution. This would also have effect of providing a further test of the authenticity of the testimony.

*The witnesses' hands are to be the first in putting him to death, and after that, the hands of all the people. You must purge the evil from you.*²⁴

Guilt is to be determined by judges. Where there is the provision for trial by jury, the jury functions as the judge in the earlier description, and the requirements for the judge then fall upon the jury. In conclusion, there appear to be two alternatives: restitution or permanent removal from the community. The goal is not rehabilitation. It is purging the evil. Incarceration seems not to be one of the tools that God prescribes. Survival of the nation is dependent upon the cleansing. In the course of purging the evil, under God's directive, we are admonished:

*You must not look on him with pity but purge...the guilt of shedding innocent blood, and you will prosper.*²⁵

There remain a number of unresolved issues and their application to:

Capital punishment.

Self-defense.

Imprisonment as punishment.

When to extend grace to the convicted as Jesus did.

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NOTE: All Bible references are from the Holman Christian Standard Bible unless otherwise indicated.

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3. *Ibid.*, Exodus 21:35-36.
4. *Ibid.*, Exodus 22:1-4.
5. *Ibid.*, Exodus 22:5.
6. *Ibid.*, Exodus 22:6.
7. *Ibid.*, Exodus 22:14-15.
8. *Ibid.*, Genesis 1:26-27.
9. *Ibid.*, Genesis 2:7.
10. *Ibid.*, 1 Corinthians 3: 16-17.
11. *Ibid.*, 1 Corinthians 6:19.
12. *Ibid.*, 2 Corinthians 6:16.
13. *Ibid.*, Deuteronomy 19:21.
14. J. Wesley Bready, *England Before and After Wesley* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1938), p. 127.
15. "Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union," 2000, Official Journal of the European Communities, 18 December 2000, Vol. C364, pp. 1-22, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf
16. *Bible*, Deuteronomy 17:2-5.
17. *Ibid.*, Exodus 22:18-20.
18. *Ibid.*, John 8:3-11.
19. *Ibid.*, Deuteronomy 17:7.
20. *Ibid.*, Deuteronomy 19:19.
21. *Ibid.*, Deuteronomy 19:4-12.
22. *Ibid.*, Deuteronomy 19:15.
23. *Ibid.*, Deuteronomy 19:18-19.
24. *Ibid.*, Deuteronomy 17:7.
25. *Ibid.*, Deuteronomy 19:13.

Case Study in Decision-Making: The Official as Shepherd

God uses the picture of the shepherd to describe the tender care of governing officials for the people. The shepherd is responsible for the safety of the sheep and for overcoming the threats to the sheep. Relatively speaking, the sheep are unaware of the dangers and threats to their existence, and unable to meet their own needs. The sheep are dependent upon the shepherds and their diligence for their safety. Some view the shepherds as superior to the sheep. However, who are really the masters? Realistically, it is the sheep who are the masters and the shepherds who are the servants. It is the needs of the sheep that dictate every action of the shepherd.

Early, God referred to Cyrus II, King of Persia 559-530 B.C., in this way:

God...who says to Cyrus: My shepherd, he will fulfill all My pleasure.¹

As in the case of Cyrus, the determination as shepherd has nothing to do with what the official thinks of God. Speaking of Cyrus, God said:

I, the Lord, the God...call you by your name....I give a name to you, though you do not know Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other; there is no God but Me. I will strengthen you, though you do not know Me.²

God made the point very clearly when He chose one head of nation who was literally a shepherd by background. Speaking of God:

He chose David His servant and took him from the sheepfolds; He brought him from tending ewes to be shepherd over His people...His inheritance. He shepherded them with a pure heart and guided them with his skillful hands.³

Nelson Mandela, in his autobiography,⁴ correctly uses the analogy of shepherding to describe the governing process.

In democratic forms of governance, many of the shepherds will be selected by the sheep themselves. How is the shepherd to treat those sheep that originally preferred a different shepherd? Once the shepherd is placed in responsibility for the flock, he/she does not have the privilege of distinguishing the level of care provided for different sheep within the flock. The shepherd has responsibility for all of the sheep, not just the ones who may have chosen this individual as shepherd.

God Condemns the Evil or Irresponsible Shepherds:

This is what the Lord God says to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds...who have been feeding themselves! Shouldn't the shepherds feed their flock? You eat the fat, wear the wool, and butcher the fatlings, but you do

not tend the flock. You have not strengthened the weak, healed the sick, bandaged the injured, brought back the strays, or sought the lost. Instead, you have ruled them with violence and cruelty.”...Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord. “As I live”—the declaration of the Lord God—“because My flock has become prey and food for every wild animal since they lack a shepherd, for My shepherds do not search for My flock, and because the shepherds feed themselves rather than My flock, therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Lord God says: Look, I am against the shepherds. I will demand My flock from them and prevent them from shepherding the flock. The shepherds will no longer feed themselves, for I will rescue My flock from their mouths so that they will not be food for them.”⁵

God has high standards for those who shepherd on His behalf. He has little tolerance for those who mistreat our Master’s sheep.

God gave us the example of the good or responsible shepherd:

What man among you, who has 100 sheep and loses one of them, does not leave the 99 in the open field and go after the lost one until he finds it? When he has found it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders, and coming home, he calls his friends and neighbors together, saying to them, “Rejoice with me, because I have found my lost sheep!” I tell you, in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous people who don’t need repentance.⁶

We learn a lot about God’s and Jesus’ attitude toward the sheep. And we have a good model for what we should do in caring for the sheep.

After defining the sheep, Jesus tells us what we are to do with the sheep:

Shepherd My sheep.⁷

God gave us His admonition for shepherding those entrusted to us through His servant:

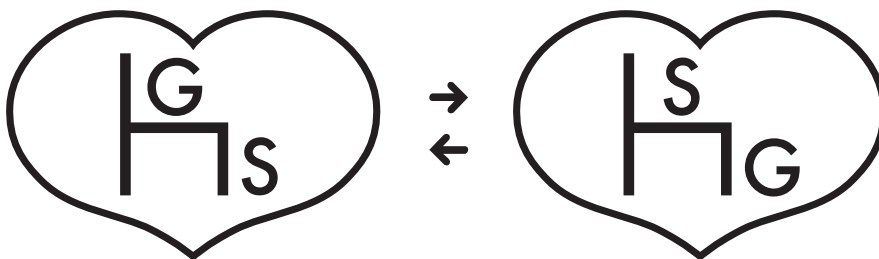
I exhort the elders among you: shepherd God’s flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but freely, according to God’s will; not for the money but eagerly; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.⁸

The analogy is with God as the Chief Shepherd and ourselves as His under-shepherds.

In order for us to be the servant-leaders that God intends for us to be, we have an obstacle to overcome—ourselves. The official has two natures within his/her life:

1. a God-sensitive nature (G) that cares about the needs of the people; and
2. a selfish nature (S) willing to collect some personal benefits as a “reasonable” perk of office.

The challenge may be illustrated this way:



There is tension as to which of our two natures is going to dominate our official actions.

The official faces challenges that the average individual does not face. If the official gives in to his/her selfish nature, the consequences can be great. Lord Acton expressed it clearly when he said “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”⁹ Because of this, many disillusioned citizens have lumped together all officials, and indeed all politicians, as crooks. This is definitely not true. I have met some of the finest human beings who happen to be an official of their nation.

On the other hand, I have watched some of the finest human beings enter office who subsequently lost their human sensitivity and compassion for their people during their years in office. I have watched people, who started out wanting to make a difference in the lives of their people, forget that they were there to serve the people. What happened?

I am convinced that the danger can be best understood, if we look at it this way: If you have two dogs, and feed one more than the other, which will one become stronger? Of course, the one that is better fed. There is one thing we can be sure of: The official will be surrounded by those who want to benefit from being close to power. They will cheer him/her on to take power wherever possible, and its perks. If the official gives in to his material side, those around him/her will also be able to benefit materially. This will become a loud chorus in the life of the official. This group of people will feed one dog in the life of the official to the exclusion of the other.

Then, who will feed the other dog — that side that will care for the people, especially the powerless? How can the other dog be fed? I submit to you that this requires a conscious effort on the part of the official. No one else can be expected to look out for the feeding of this dog — the God-sensitive side of the leader’s life. No one will receive immediate reward for feeding this dog. However, the integrity of the official’s core being is dependent upon feeding this side of him-/herself. I submit that the official must personally ensure the feeding of the spiritual side of his/her being. What can the official do? Ultimately, the official must have the heart attitude of submitting to God. I believe that God gives us the answer through the following instruction:

*Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*¹⁰

As an ongoing effort, we are admonished to cleanse ourselves and to actively flee from the worldly attractions that draw us in, and that we so easily give in to. The cleansing of ourselves is an ongoing effort elaborated elsewhere:

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*¹¹

This is the practical step in response to the command to “flee from youthful lusts.” At the same time, we are admonished to actively pursue noble values:

...pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

In other words, we must move away from the negative, and move toward the positive. The promised result is that we “will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.”

For me, with a selfish human nature that continually wants to sidetrack me, the truth that has saved my life is:

*I have been crucified with Christ; and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*¹²

As diagrammatically shown here, I am the one who must take the initiative to suppress my selfish nature and I must seek the power of God in doing this, because, humanly, I am too weak to accomplish this in my own strength. Once I have given the seat of my will to God, He will gladly accept my invitation.



*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*¹³

We must allow God — Jesus — to live our lives for us. I don't think anyone can argue that this is an offensive concept. Jesus is generally considered the most moral person who has ever lived by followers of all religions. Buddhists admire Him. Hindus admire Him. Muslims admire Him as a great Prophet. When I first heard this concept of allowing Jesus to live my life, I was extremely sceptical that it could work. However, I learned that our daily lives can be broken down into a thousand smaller decisions. Then, at each decision point, we must ask "What would Jesus do if He were making this decision instead of me?" If we did this, who ultimately would be living our lives? Of course, it would be Jesus Himself! I found that it is amazingly easy to determine what Jesus would do when faced with each of these decisions. The challenge for us is to have the will to do what Jesus would do — what He would want us to do in each situation.

Once we have dealt with this obstacle — our self, we are free to shepherd the sheep assigned to us. Jesus instructs us "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."¹⁴ Out of love and obedience to God, we can love ourselves with God's kind of love, and out of that love, we can love others the same way. Then, we are ready to start serving the sheep, looking out for their best interests.

Questions for Further Consideration

1. Which of the seven values in Filter #2 are satisfied when the governing official operates with the attitude of a shepherd?
2. The ruling political party, by policy, delivers better services to the constituents electing representatives from the ruling party. Is this consistent with the official as shepherd? What impact would the criteria of Filter #2 have on this policy?
3. One presidential candidate in a multi-ethnic nation threatened the voters from an ethnic group other than his own that if they did not vote for him, he would not provide services for them. Is this consistent with the official as shepherd? What impact would the criteria of Filter #2 have on such a policy?

References

NOTE: All Bible references are from the Holman Christian Standard Bible unless otherwise indicated.

1. *Bible*, Isaiah 44:24, 28.
2. *Ibid.*, Isaiah 45:3-5.
3. *Ibid.*, Psalms 78:70-72.
4. Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1994), p. 19.
5. *Bible*, Ezekiel 34:2-10.
6. *Ibid.*, Luke 15:4-7.
7. *Ibid.*, John 21:16.
8. *Ibid.*, 1 Peter 5:1-4.
9. John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton, Lord Acton, Letter to Bishop Mandel Creighton, 5 April 1887, quoted in John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, 15th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980), p. 615.
10. *Bible*, 2 Timothy 2:20-22.
11. *Ibid.*, 1 John 1:9.
12. *Ibid.*, Galatians 2:19-20.
13. *Ibid.*, 2 Corinthians 5:17.
14. *Ibid.*, Matthew 22:37-39.

Case Study in Decision-Making: Abraham Lincoln Dealing with Dissent in His Cabinet

Abraham Lincoln invited risk when he chose his Cabinet. He invited two of his competitors for the Presidential nomination in 1860: William Seward as Secretary of State and Salmon Chase as Secretary of the Treasury. The competition continued. Mid-way through his term, the crisis erupted. Chase attempted to dislodge Seward. He enlisted a number of Senators in the process. The easiest way for Lincoln to resolve this dispute would have been to dismiss both of them. Lincoln decided that he needed both of them in his cabinet so he dealt with the conflict in this way: He received resignations from both of them. Then, Lincoln rejected both of the resignations. The conflict died and never resurfaced.^{1,2}

Which guidelines could have caused Lincoln to take this approach in dealing with this challenge?

References

1. Benjamin P. Thomas, *Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1952), pp. 351-355.
2. Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005), pp. 487-495.

Decision-Making Filter #3

Government Decision-Making Filter #3: Asking God to Guide Us Directly

Decision-Making Step No. 3 is in reality the first step. It is based upon the recognition that there is a sovereign God ruling over the universe who has plans for us and our nations and that He delights in making them known to us. Coupled with this is the fact that in reality those human beings who have authority within their nations are God's regents over their nations.

God: *For I know the (1) **plans** I have for you, **plans** to prosper you and not to harm you, **plans** to give you hope and a future.*¹

What are the plans? There are plans that are completely good.

The Reality of God's Stable Plan.

God: *I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. (3) **I make known** the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: (2) **My purpose will stand**, and (4) **I will do all that I please**. From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man **to fulfill My purpose**. What I have said, (4) **that will I bring about**; what (1) **I have planned**, (4) **that will I do**.*²

Four distinct elements are described here:

- (1) God initiates a plan.
- (2) He sticks to the plan.
- (3) He makes known His plan.
- (4) He implements His plan.

Then, God Willingly Reveals That Plan to Us.

God, referring to one of the four elements above: (3) *I will **instruct you** and (3) **teach you** in the way which you should go; (3) I will **counsel you** with My eye upon you.*³

The Condition for His Revealing His Plan to Us.

Of God: (3) *He **guides** the humble in what is right and (3) **teaches** them His way...Who, then, is the person that fears the LORD? (3) He will **instruct** him in the way chosen for him... (3) The LORD **confides** in those who fear Him; (3) He **makes** His covenant **known** to them.*⁴

To whom? To those who are willing to humble themselves before Him. Thus, Abraham Lincoln expressed it correctly when he said:

*I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had no where else to go.*⁵

We can only gain the full benefit of God's guidelines for making decisions when we are willing to completely humble ourselves before Him. When Steps #1 and 2 do not give us what we need, then we must do as Abraham Lincoln indicated and bow before our Lord until He makes our next step clear. When we humble ourselves before Almighty God, He will guide us and His guidance will be consistent with Steps #1 and #2.

References

NOTE: All Bible references are from the New International Version unless otherwise indicated.

1. *Bible*, Jeremiah 29:11.
2. *Ibid.*, Isaiah 46:9-11.
3. *Ibid.*, Psalm 32:8.
4. *Ibid.*, Psalms 25:9, 12, 14.
5. Abraham Lincoln, after the Union defeat at the Second Battle of Bull Run, 26-28 August 1862, in a statement to his intended secretary, Noah Brooks, *Harper's Monthly*, July 1865, quoted in Elton Trueblood, *Abraham Lincoln: Theologian of American Anguish* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 76.

About the Author: Dr. Gary I. Allen

Dr. Gary Allen is President of the Christian Mission for the United Nations Community. Dr. Allen is an internationally known brain scientist. He worked under the Nobel Laureate Sir John Eccles, considered by most as the greatest brain scientist who has ever lived, and later succeeded him as the Director of the Laboratory of Neurobiology at the State University of New York at Buffalo School of Medicine. Dr. Allen has also served on the faculties of the University of California at Berkeley and New York Medical College.

Dr. Allen led research teams of visiting international scholars in the study of brain mechanisms used in controlling skilled movements. He has trained some of the leading brain scientists in Asia, Europe and North America. He has published 40 articles in scientific journals, and has lectured throughout North America, Asia and Europe.

Dr. Allen completed his undergraduate education in electrical engineering at Cornell University. He earned his Ph.D. in neurophysiology at the State University of New York at Buffalo School of Medicine.

Dr. Allen has spent more than a quarter century at the United Nations working with diplomats and visiting Government officials, exploring the applicability of faith in God to problems facing nations and leaders. Dr. Allen, together with his wife Elaine, founded the Christian Mission for the United Nations Community in 1983.

Christian Mission for the United Nations Community

The Christian Mission for the United Nations Community is a non-denominational Christian organization based at the United Nations serving as a spiritual resource and encourager for Government officials and others who are seeking solutions to the problems confronting our world.

The Christian Mission for the United Nations Community is motivated by a concern for mankind and a love and respect for those who are seeking to solve the problems facing the global community. It is convinced that there is a God who has created mankind out of love and that He is actively working out His plan for individuals and nations today. It is convinced that it is of paramount importance for individuals and nations to understand the mind and plans of the One who is working out their destiny. Otherwise, mankind could be fighting the very One trying to promote well-being and, as a result, bring unnecessary suffering.

The Christian Mission for the United Nations Community also believes that the spiritual dimension is important personally for those serving their nations. It agrees with the late Dr. Charles Malik, the former Lebanese Ambassador to the U.N., who served as President of the Thirteenth General Assembly, when he said:

*The needs of the world are much deeper than political freedom and security, much deeper than social justice and economic development, much deeper than democracy and progress....The deeper needs of the world belong to the sphere of the mind, the heart and the spirit, a sphere to be penetrated with the light and grace of Jesus Christ.*¹

The Christian Mission for the United Nations Community focuses a large part of its energies on Government officials who are either posted at the United Nations or who visit the U.N. in the service of their nations. The members of this team research and write on Biblical principles for national development. They also make themselves available to serve those in national leadership.

The ideas that led to the establishment of the Christian Mission for the United Nations Community developed during the years following 1978, when Dr. Gary Allen and his wife, Elaine, began serving the U.N. community and travelling to serve those in leadership throughout the world. The Christian Mission for the United Nations Community is an independent organization, not affiliated with any denomination.

This effort receives all of its finances from the contributions of private individuals plus a few church congregations, who believe in what it is doing. No funds are received from Government agencies. The strict standards of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability are adhered to.

References

1. Dr. Charles H. Malik, Reference unknown.

For Further Information

Our goal is to serve you as you serve your people. We would love to dialogue with you on any questions you might have as a result of the ideas presented here. We would welcome the opportunity to learn how we may serve you and your people better. Please address your communication as follows:

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WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT DECISION-MAKING IN GOVERNMENT

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If I had the benefit of this teaching when I served in the government, I would have been far more effective.

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DR. GARY AND MRS. ELAINE ALLEN

Dr. Gary Allen is President of the Christian Mission for the United Nations Community, which his wife Elaine and he founded in 1983. Dr. Allen is an internationally known brain scientist. He has spent more than a quarter century at the United Nations working with diplomats and visiting government officials, exploring the applicability of faith in God to problems facing nations and leaders.



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