

The Church is the most powerful agency for political and civil leadership change in the United States. This is why the IRS has demanded that 501(c)3 churches agree to the following: *“No substantial part of the activities of the corporation shall be carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.”*

Some may argue that this is only one reason and that there are many other reasons for this restriction – including the false concept of Separation of Church and State. However, the purpose of this positional paper is to document only the specific subject of regulating and restricting churches from engaging in and exercising their potential to effect change, or maintain a standard of leadership in the Public Square – and sadly, most churches are falling headlong into an exaggerated and unnecessary compliance.

Please notice that the regulation begins with the words “No substantial part...” This would be best understood as suggesting that the majority of the work of the church is not political or legislative. We would agree. However, most churches interpret this to mean “No part” not, “No substantial part.” Therefore, a portion of the activity of the church may *“be carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation.”*

The church in this country is (generally speaking) the numerically largest member body of persons. The church is therefore an agency or group of people with the numerically largest group of voters in the nation. This is likely true in most American cities – not just at the national level. Therefore, a church with good information and strong leadership can literally change the direction of a city, state, and county. We as believers can, in the most positive way, secure for our communities and for our nation, the greatest possible candidates for office, men and women who will hold a biblical standard and properly represent the people they are called to serve. However, many pastors and church leaders are afraid to use their God-given positions to influence legislation and leadership – as if it is an unimportant stewardship to the Christian.

There is really no difference between being a good steward of our finances or material possessions and exercising good stewardship over the “house” we live in: America – whether national, state, or local. Although pastors and church leaders have little or no problem talking to their congregations about money, they will typically shrink back when it come to community, state, or national leadership – which, by the way, also includes civil control of the finances of the people. Churches and their pastors are not only privileged with the blessing of communicating the Good News, but are also responsible for proclaiming and maintaining truth. This would include moral values and Biblical principles.

One might suggest that the maintenance of truth and moral or Biblical principles should only apply within the local church; but where do we read this? I see no Biblical mandate that suggests that a country that was influenced and developed under the rule of a Judeo/Christian ethic should be allowed to deteriorate into a pagan or humanistic society simply to comply with a so-called prohibition enacted by the government that had already been neglected by Christians and their influences.

The second phrase in the agreed upon regulation says, “*and the corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.*” Herein note that the regulation does not say that a church cannot publish or distribute a voter guide that includes several or all candidates. It also does not suggest that a church cannot encourage voting or even help with voter registration. Therefore, once again I suggest that church leaders should help the members of their congregations to obtain good information and act accordingly.

I believe that our stewardship in the political and legislative arena is a mandate – not an optional part of our faith. This may not be the case where believers are born or raised in a country that does not share our foundational principles, but it is here in America – and it certainly was in Israel. The fact that the leadership (and the people) in Israel neglected their God-given commands was the cause of great distress, tragedy, and discipline in their land. It has and will be the cause of demise in our land too.

Pastors must take up the call and encourage the members of their congregations to be active participants in the stewardship of their cities, counties, states, and their nation. Anything less is to teach negligence. No pastor would suggest that a member of their community neglect the care and upkeep of their home, automobiles, etc. Neither should we suggest the neglect of our governance.

Finally, even if the above explanations are insufficient in the minds of our leadership teams and/or among pastors, I would remind us all that the 501(c)3 designation is unnecessary altogether, and if it is an impediment to following Biblical mandates, it should be relinquished for the sake of our call.

Today we face unprecedented decline in the American culture. This is no time to walk away from our duty. We have a powerful voice, and we must act upon our moral responsibility – and vote. The Church is certainly the most powerful agency for political and civil leadership change in the country.

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There were approximately 118 Million total votes cast in the 2012 presidential election. 49.9% went to President Obama and 47.2 went to his challenger. This is a difference of only 3,186,000 votes. It is said that there were over 9 million Christians who as registered voters did not vote in the 2012 election. Had they voted, the election results could have (or shall I say would have) turned out very differently. This statistic is only intended to be an illustration. As such I do not wish to have us divert our attention to the national level activity over and against our need to be active at the local and state level as well.