

INTER - OFFICE

AUSTRALIA

To: All Ministers

Date: 11 May 1979

Department:

Subject: PCD Information on Voting

From: Reg. Wright

Please find attached our current P.C.D. special letter that we are sending out in response to the question as to whether a Christian should or should not vote.

This information was compiled after discussion and counsel with Mr Wilson and is being forwarded to you at his request.

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Dear Reader,

You asked should or should not a Christian vote in an election?

As we do not have an article on this question at the present time, we trust the following information will be of help to you.

For almost six thousand years man has demonstrated that he is utterly incapable of rightly governing himself. Because man has rejected God and His laws we are today close to the very brink of world suicide. The only hope of justice -- of peace -- of truth -- of right solutions to this world's problems, is the coming in power and glory of Jesus Christ to set up WORLD GOVERNMENT OF GOD! The living Christ is coming as King of Kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-21), to put down the rebellion of warring nations (Rev. 17:14), and establish God's World-ruling Governments over all nations (Daniel 2:44; 7:9, 13-14, 18, 22-27; Isaiah 9:7).

The hope of a true Christian lies not in the governments of this world, but in the resurrection (Acts 23:6; 24:15) to immortality -- eternal life -- as a Co-Ruler under Christ. Jesus said, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 2:26). And again, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne (on this earth)" (Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 22:3; Rev. 3:21). And ". . . we shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:10).

The Apostle John, in vision, saw a preview of the beginning of that rule and world government: "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:4).

Therefore, it is important for each individual Christian not to align himself, support, or become involved in the politics or political groups of this world. In Revelation 18:4 God commands His people to "come out of her (Babylon -- this world's religious and political systems) that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues."

The Bible clearly shows that the present system of voting a man into office will not exist in the coming Kingdom of God. The

Kingdom of God is not going to be voted in by men, but established by Jesus Christ. When that time comes, ". . . The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). Jesus Christ will take the rulership of this earth to Himself. And Christ will appoint those who are to rule under Him.

So the clear Biblical instruction is that Christians are not to participate or involve themselves in the politics of this world. Christians look to God and His government totally, and are to be totally uninvolved in any other government.

In many Western countries there are no laws of the land requiring its citizens to vote in elections. Voting is voluntary. In these countries it is easy for Christians to remain separate from any political involvement. However, in some countries, such as Australia, citizens are required to vote. Voting in Australia is compulsory.

The Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918-1962 states that it is the duty of every Australian elector to record his vote at each election (Section 128A, Sub-section 1). It provides that every person who is entitled to be enrolled must ensure that his name appears on the Electoral Roll. It is an offence if a person does not do this.

The Act provides that, where a person fails to register a vote at an election, and does not have a valid or sufficient reason for not voting, he shall be guilty of an offence for which the penalty shall not be less than \$2 or more than \$10.

In view of the Biblical teaching in Romans 13:1-7 and I Peter 2:13-14 where Christians are instructed to be subject to the civil authorities of the land, in those countries where voting is compulsory, the Christian is faced with the following alternatives:

- 1) register a vote, as required by the laws of the land
- 2) not register a vote, being prepared to submit to the prescribed penalty.

In considering these alternatives the final decision rests with the individual Christian.

Some may prefer not to vote, being fully prepared to suffer the penalty by paying the prescribed fine. In those instances where the Christian chooses not to vote, after the election the non-voter usually receives an official form from the Electoral Authorities, asking for reasons why he did not vote. This form must be completed, and returned to the Electoral Authorities. On the form the non-voter should state the truthful reason why he did not vote. For example, "I did not vote because to do so would be contrary to my religious convictions." This explanation, or something along similar lines, seems to have been accepted on occasions by the Electoral Authorities as a valid reason for not

voting. On other occasions this explanation has not been accepted and the non-voter has had to pay the fine.

Others, not wanting to break the laws of the land, may prefer to vote, yet in their minds they are not participating or being involved in politics, but merely obeying the law. Those who choose to register a vote should vote properly, and not turn in an "informal vote" (that is, to deliberately mark the ballot paper incorrectly), as this is also against the law of the land.

In the final analysis, no matter which choice the individual Christian may make with regard to voting, the principle of not participating or being involved in the politics of this world cannot be too strongly emphasized. Each individual Christian realises deeply that the present system, the existing human governments, are here only for a short time -- soon to be replaced by the Government of Almighty God.