

H007 11-21-92 Hoeh Should Christians Participate in Politics Pasadena East AM

Mr. Abner Washington asked me to speak on a particular topic today.

I've titled the subject, Should Christians Participate in Politics? Because it is a matter that we should be able to understand and explain and know why the policies of the Church of God are as they are.

I brought up with me an advertisement by the National Right to Life that appeared in a religious publication, also a news item of various parts that appeared in the same publication, Christianity Today, with respect to the question of participating in politics in black Africa, where in large measure various Christian groups have reached areas that were not reached before.

This is not the Islamic part of Africa, but the Africa where people have become dominantly Christian, who were otherwise tribal and religious background.

It is important, if we answer this question adequately, to know what problems exist today in the political realm and what the consequences are in participating in the political realm.

We also need to know what the Bible teaches on the topic and why and how best to answer those questions, because the matter is something more than politics.

It involves what Christians should do since we live in various countries of the world, and what happens if countries come into conflict with one another in which members live.

Let me read a few of the issues that were raised by the National Right to Life.

This is a perspective that takes the view that one candidate stands for, a certain perspective similar to the National Right to Life, the other candidate does not, and there was a third candidate at the bottom of the page.

The issues that are raised pertain to row versus weight.

We're not dealing here with the economy, but another subject.

Which subject clearly had an effect with respect to why an unusually large number of women voted for one candidate as distinct from the other? What about the appointment of judges by candidates to the Supreme Court, which rules on questions of constitutionality of law? What about the question of unlimited abortion? What about the question of abortion without parental consent? What about abortion as a form of birth control? What about government funding of abortion? These questions were not primary to the education of the public.

It was the economy that was primary in the education of the public, but without a doubt these also were raised.

If I were to pick up ads, which I did not and generally would not find, I would have to ask similar questions.

Where do the candidates stand on the question of national debt, state debt? Where do they stand on the matter of whether employment should take precedence over cutting the national debt or state debts? What should be our policy with respect to the unemployed? What should be our policy to those who don't want to be employed but can? What should be our policy to those who cannot be

employed adequately to take care of their needs and wish to be? What do we do with people who are made redundant on their jobs and have to be retrained? Who shall pay for this retraining? Our tax money? Businesses? Who is to decide what kind of jobs are likely to be productive after training for the next five or ten years? Then what do we do about education? Who shall decide what monies should be spent on education when the state debt actually makes development of educational programs with state monies very limited? What shall we do with sport activities? What shall we do with teachers' salaries? What shall we do with respect to administration? Who is going to provide the monies at collegiate level after the public education through high school? What about the question of private schools, religious and non-religious? Should there be some tax credit? Is this involving the question of religion? Is this undermining the question of the state's right to demand of everyone's support of public education without denying the right to private education but without funding it? And we could go on in other areas as well.

What should be our policy toward aiding other countries when we have problems within our own cities? How should we deal with the question of capital punishment? And I could go on and on which would lead to the simple question does the Church of God have an answer today to all these problems? Do you have an answer to all these problems? Do you know of a candidate or a party that has an answer to all these problems? And how would you register to be a good member of the Church of God? Must you be a laissez-faire capitalist and a Republican? Should you be a Southern Democrat or a liberal Wisconsin or Minnesota Democrat? Should you be independent in your registration? And if so, how are you going to participate in most states to determine who should even be the candidate of the party? For independence, don't vote to decide in most states who the party candidates might be.

In the simple question, should you be a registered voter, how are you going to declare that you can be a conscientious objecter when you participate in politics? Into the army you go, now kill the enemy.

We need to take a look at this problem far more than we have to be able to give an answer.

But let me illustrate a point based on the first subject here.

Where do the candidates stand on abortion? Just so you don't misunderstand, I would like to tell you that I know of no congregation of the Church of God where not a single woman has ever had an abortion.

The Catholic Church has a positive stand.

The Catholic Church has Catholic women practicing Catholics or non-practicing Catholics who have abortions.

The majority, of course, are not of that faith.

But the fact remains that in our society it would be difficult for a minister to overlook the fact that there are people who come into our fellowship who have had abortions, speaking of women.

There are those who grew up in the Church who have had abortions.

There are those who wish they hadn't.

And there are those who take the view it should be the right of one to make his or her own decision in the matter.

And in such decision making, what role should the Father play if you know who he is? What role should the parents play? You see how many of the problems in education, how many of the problems in international relations and conflicts over territory, how many of the problems involving abortion, involving drugs and capital punishment all involve the question of how you deal with problems after the problem has arisen.

We would not have to deal with the public debt if Democrats and Republicans and independents, whatever group, the Socialist Labor Party, all the others who participated in this country had not in fact created the problem in the first place.

Where would abortion as a normal means of solving the problem of sexual promiscuity even be an issue if sexual promiscuity were not a part of society? You see, the laws of man are in most instances dealing with problems after social problems have arisen, after economic problems have arisen, and after territorial or national problems have arisen between sovereign states.

For that matter, suppose you were an independent and decided to write in a candidate for the president and the church all wrote in the name of Jesus Christ.

What if by chance he, you pardon the fact that this is an impossibility since he lives in another realm, but suppose this were the case, he in fact were elected.

But Congress would be basically as it is, and the judicial system would be as it is.

How would you decide, if you were Jesus, to enforce the law? For you would be required to take an oath on this book, which book has very little to do with the laws of the land, strange as that may seem.

Though we say they are based on the Ten Commandments, I would find the question of abortion running into conflict with one of them right away.

And if I were to look at the question of the economy, I'd find it running into conflict with that other commandment.

You shall not steal, even the government shouldn't.

But we have taken monies from our children and our grandchildren in order to satisfy the decisions we wanted to make in our generation or our parents or grandparents' generation.

And when we come to the question of how we should deal with enemies, how would Jesus have had to handle the Cold War? You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

You shall even do good to your enemy.

How are you going to? Would Jesus have put his approval on nuclear weaponry? Would he have supported the Star Wars program, as the administration's enemies like to call it? How would he handle educational decisions such as keeping prayer out of the school, for the Supreme Court has made a decision? You see, even Jesus could not be the administrator of a country where the courts of the land rule on a constitution and the laws of the land passed by the Congress, the House of Representatives and the Senate, where those laws deal with matters that do not conform or even have to conform to the principles of the Ten Commandments.

Now, the most obvious one I haven't even raised, is what you're going to do with respect to the Sabbath in a country such as ours with freedom of religion.

So if you are going to say, we live according to the Bible, we think and practice in our lives what the Scripture says, how could you practice what the Scripture says when in fact none of the candidates is prepared to do what the Scripture says, when in fact the courts of the land do not base their decisions solely on this book or in many cases must base it on laws that in fact are in conflict.

And when the legislatures as a whole are lawyers, or if you like to listen to the legal programs on radio, then you might be interested also in what insurance companies are like that you have to regulate.

Who do in general follow one word of advice from Nancy Reagan? When it comes to any problem you have with respect to your insurance after you have paid it, the answer is just say no! And then you go to the lawyer to find out how to be paid.

This is the world in which we live and I think that very often we don't quite know what it's like to participate in politics with all these problems.

And then there is one other aspect.

Suppose none of the candidates really understand the big picture or maybe they understand one thing and not another.

The real question is what would God want to have done? Does God only think that a nation drifting further and further in sin should have a ruler who is more and more righteous? Or does God sometimes think in terms of what a nation deserves? There was an experience long ago of a nation that got into trouble with the Almighty later and started out in serious trouble at the beginning.

We call that nation Israel.

You remember the story? No sooner had they crossed into the area of the Sinai having escaped servitude in Egypt that they wanted to do things contrary to what God asked them to do.

Now it turned out that this nation in fact had been delivered because God had chosen to intervene and experience that very few nations otherwise have had.

God says on occasion through the prophets that he did place certain nations where they now are and that is for reasons.

But here was one that ended in captivity so to speak servitude and was delivered and the first thing they did was essentially give lip service to what God had said and then to go ahead and do their own thing.

So when the Lord spoke at Sinai and asked the people whether they were willing as their Constitution to have the basic Ten Commandments and a covenant, the answer of course was all that the Lord has said will we do only to discover they broke their word in a matter of days.

So they came into the Promised Land after a generation had disappeared.

I'm not even dealing with the question of how you punish a nation but God showed what would have to happen to any nation if he were running the show that that nation disobeying as a whole as that generation did they would all be dead and so that entire generation died except for a certain named few.

Even Moses did not enter the Promised Land when he lost his temper in a tragic mistake that he made a man who otherwise was probably the most remarkable single person in the whole of the

biblical account for no man in the Bible has ever been known historically by more people throughout time than Moses has even though others of course think of Paul or David.

They were not dealing with the question of Jesus Christ after whom the whole religion is named.

But the nation went up and down during the days of the judges.

I will not address the question of the form of government that Israel had for the present time because we want to look at other factors first.

But there came a time when a certain judge named Samuel had children who were not and they were no longer children they were adults no longer doing what was appropriate and the community was upset.

I'm moving along in time just to tell a part of the story here that's very important to question what would God want and so we are introduced to a problem in first Samuel that you generally are familiar with chapter 8 and in first Samuel chapter 8.

We are given the story that when Samuel was old he made his son judges over Israel in verse 1.

They did not do what was right they walked not in the ways that Samuel did but turned aside and once they had been made judges all you could do was discipline them because their judgeship came as a result of the fact that they inherited an office for they were of the priestly line.

They were not subject to election.

So all the elders of Israel verse 4 gathered themselves together and came to Samuel and said you were old and your sons walked not in your ways.

Now make us a king to judge us like the nations.

Now Samuel knew that this was wrong.

You see if it were right there would have been a king long before.

If there should be a king among mortal men then God had overlooked something if such a king had not already been appointed.

So Samuel brings this matter to God.

This thing displeased Samuel when they said give us a king to judges and Samuel prayed to the Lord.

Now you know what Samuel had in mind.

This kind of thing that they should have a king to judge them like the nations around about going after the form of human government that he could see was giving the people certain powers to decide who should be ruler.

And so Samuel wanted to know how to address and put a stop to the problem.

But the answer from God was not what Samuel expected.

Hark and he said to the voice of the people in all that they say to you for they have not rejected you Samuel you who have been a judge but they have rejected me that I should not reign over them.

So God did not deny that in fact what the people had done was clearly wrong.

But he said nevertheless you do as they ask.

You let them have the kind of government that they deserve.

That's what it is.

They have decided as it says here in accordance with their behavior.

Look at what follows.

According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt even unto this day wherewith they have forsaken me and served other gods.

So they do to you they're treating you in the same way they've been treating me since the days of Moses.

Now therefore harken unto their voice.

How be it? Protest solemnly unto them and show them the manner of the king who will reign over them and then the chapter goes through the kind of person.

He will use government to take your fields to take your vineyards in your olive yards the best of the land and give them to his servants.

He will try to redistribute property and he will take taxes up to 10%.

Even God hadn't thought of the king going much further than that.

He had never met the Scandinavians.

Well he knew what was in the human heart I perhaps should correct that.

But he you know he didn't want to make it seem so outlandish that you would discover that the king would take 10, 20, 30, 40, 50%.

And if it isn't the king it would be parliament.

Samuel wouldn't have been believed.

So Samuel just said well let's and God said let's leave it at 10 and see if that's what the people want.

He'll take your men's servants and your maid servants your young men and he'll put them to work.

In this case not always voluntary.

That could be in the army or in that case a certain civil corps over which they had little choice.

He'll take a tent of your sheep and he'll make you servants.

All sorts of things the government has the power to do.

I skipped over earlier verses where even the military is involved.

He will appoint captains over thousands, captains over 50s.

And there will be instruments of war.

All sorts of problems will arise.

Now you might have reason why did God make this decision? Well the answer of course is he said that the people have been doing what is wrong and what you Samuel have been doing all along is trying to prevent them from going any further.

Trying to teach them what is right and judge righteously.

And now finally in your old age they insult you and say hereafter we just want a king.

So God decides here that a nation may indeed deserve the kind of ruler it gets.

It just may.

And so he said this is what you should do.

You listen to them and you let them have their way and you watch what happens.

And the nations will learn that people who go in this direction can make some various serious blunders if they take upon themselves to make decisions when they do not know the will of the Lord.

And how could the people know when Samuel didn't even know without asking God for the answer? Now that does not mean that every time a new person comes to public office that God has made a decision because this person is righteous that's why he should be there or because this person is not that's why he should be there.

We could go through but I think that is one of the most important aspects of the story.

We discover that sometimes God might not choose the candidate.

Now what happened is God chose the man who would have been most impressive on TV.

It's what the people wanted, head and shoulders above everyone else.

Taller, good looking, a certain weakness of course that the press would discuss.

But the end result was he was elected.

God said he's okay for you, right? You like him? I'm not forcing anybody on you you don't want.

So the people said fine as a whole except it were those who were disgruntled and who published things in the scandalous sheets about King Saul.

And had talk shows for that day.

I mean this is what politics involves doesn't it? And it turned out that Saul had one fundamental weakness.

Saul was weak.

I tell you that's fundamental.

And we know the very grave tragedy.

But God hid one thing from the people.

He still remained king behind the scenes.

Because he had chosen this nation.

They had agreed that he should be Lord and King.

And so the eternal Adonai the Lord Curios in the Greek form of the Old Testament when translated.

He remained king.

And he let Saul sit on his throne with him.

He never abdicated.

Oh well that means that the nation had not understood.

That God was already the king from the time of Sinai.

An invisible one to most people.

A God who was not that real.

And the ruler was not the judge.

The judge was the chief administrator under the ruler.

For he had told Samuel here they have not rejected you.

But they have rejected me that I should not be king.

They wanted me out of the way.

Because all they could see was you as judge.

They could not see the Lord said to Samuel that I have been king.

And have been working through the judges to deliver the nations.

And allowing them when they finally get into trouble.

To be delivered by someone whom I appoint.

So God was their king.

Now what was unusual about this is when the Egyptians looked at the children of Israel.

In the promised land.

When the Syrians looked.

When the kings of the Phoenicians looked.

When the kings of the Arabs looked.

They found a people who had judges but no supreme ruler.

Albeit of course there was a strange thing.

A box called an ark.

And it was supposed to be a being who sat on that ark.

Now but nobody have seen him.

A very strange religious idea.

He dwells in a room.

In a tabernacle.
And these people who have judges.
Think they have a god and a king in there.
On that box and once in a while people will carry the box around.
As they move from place to place.
But nobody ever sees anybody there.
Remember years later the Romans came into the temple.
And they found.
That in reality there was nobody in that room.
Not even the box.
That had long since disappeared from the history in the first century AD.
But it is significant.
That Saul in fact.
Was allowed to sit on the throne of the Lord.
Now if you have any doubt.
Just remember that if God is still king.
And if you sit as king.
You're sitting on his throne with him.
Albeit it is not in heaven it was a throne on earth.
The chief office.
And Saul.
Was raised to that level.
Now it doesn't say so.
But it still was the Lord's throne.
And I will show you in a moment.
That after the death of Saul.
David came to the throne.
And finally David dies.
And Solomon comes to the throne.
And so we read with respect to Solomon.
First Kings 2 12.

The days of David drew near that he should die.
And he charged Solomon.
First Kings 2 12 certain things.
And in the 12th chapter David is now dead.
Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father.
And his kingdom was established greatly.
So this was David's throne.
And now it is also Solomon's throne.
But if you read first Chronicles.
The parallel story.
You will discover who sat on the Lord's throne before Solomon.
First Chronicles 29.
Verse 23.
Then after David died.
Solomon sat listening carefully on the throne of the Lord.
Adonai.
Curios.
The one who was the Lord.
Words that were substituted for Yahweh.
Which cease to be pronounced.
So Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as King.
Instead of David his father.
Now we discover the remarkable thing.
That the throne of David was also the throne of God.
And God was King as much in the days of David.
As he was to be in the days of Solomon.
As he had been from the time of Sinai to Samuel.
And therefore most certainly in the days of Saul.
So God did not abdicate his responsibility as the chief ruler.
Over this nation.
Whom he had called out.

And he had not placed himself.
In that capacity over any other nation.
He selected this people exclusively.
To see what could be done with one people.
A people who had been instructed since the days of Abraham.
Had a better chance to know because they had a written record.
No other nation preserved this book.
This book came to be preserved among a particular people.
The children of Israel.
And so God dealt with them.
And it is remarkable that indeed he even allowed human government.
He allowed people to sit on this throne so to speak.
Who did good and those who did evil.
In fact.
He even allowed the nation to split up.
Let's turn to another story.
This is a story from second Chronicles.
Since we're this area.
We'll turn to chapter 11.
I presume that if you look carefully at all your extensive markings.
In the book of second Chronicles.
You will find it to be your lair to see in part of the Bible.
Most of you haven't digested this book.
I once had a Bible.
A man who's no longer with us.
A person of prominence in the church.
I would usually bring to meetings where Mr. Armstrong was.
Not my regular Bible.
But one in the office that I kept.
So that I didn't have to take my Bible back and forth all the time.
One stayed at home and the other for ready reference.

And I opened it up and there were no markings.

And a man then in charge of the business office said.

That's my fair to see in Bible.

It was unmarked, unstudied.

But I hope that your.

Absence of notes in second Chronicles should stimulate you to reread.

Some very interesting things that are not even found in first Kings.

But here's the story.

First Chronicles.

I shouldn't have said second Chronicles.

I was my Bible breaks at this very point.

It's at the.

Oh, I've read that.

All right, let's go on to the story.

This is one of Rehoboam that I wanted to get to.

Yes, 114.

Excuse me.

Chapter 11 verse 4.

Now, Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem and he gathered the people together.

After the nation had chosen to split, which I won't cover today.

And the word of the Lord came to the advisors of Rehoboam.

And in verse 4, it says.

You shall not fight against your brethren.

Return every man to his house for this revolution, this thing, this dividing of the country into two nations is done of me.

After all, God had said to Rehoboam.

That he would have this remnant.

And he had told it through the story that got out to his father, Solomon.

But that 10 of the tribes would be removed from Rehoboam.

So Solomon knew what was going to happen after his death.

And Rehoboam knew also what was going to happen.

Because the word got out to remember in Jeroboam had to flee to Egypt.

This is of me.

And the nation of Judah, coming in history now to be known as Jews, obeyed the words of the Lord and returned from going against Jeroboam.

So God even here initiates a revolution, if you please, by promising one man 10 of the tribes and the other two.

God made that decision.

But Rehoboam thought he could reverse the decision.

Now a revolution isn't always very nice.

In fact, this could have been a civil war.

And there was a moment of time when there was this kind of conflict within the nation Israel later in the days of Jibu, where a person rose up against the dynasty of Ahab, Omri.

Is it possible that God causes a revolution, that God can bring one about? Is every revolution of God? Now there's no question in our time we had members in a country called Rhodesia.

And the government of Mr. Ian Smith had revolted against the throne of Great Britain.

And we had members who were forced into the army.

Now mind you, this is not the blacks, this is talking about the whites.

A government that was not going to accept the decision of Great Britain or of the throne.

And a civil war of some years was fought.

Today black and white live in a different kind of state that revolution failed.

Much earlier, nearly wrecked the people of God who were saboteurians, there arose a revolution in 1776 over the question of who pays taxes to whom.

When the question of representation didn't seem to be fair to some.

So we had a situation that 13 colonies revolted and formed the United States of America.

Now there is a democracy that didn't revolt next door.

And we have members who live in that country called Canada.

There were other colonies in Australia and New Zealand who didn't revolt.

Who is to say that because Canada didn't revolt, New Zealand didn't revolt, Australia didn't revolt at certain other times, that it is not safe to live in those countries.

That it was only safe to live in the country where a revolt occurred.

Because that's what we do.

Some of your ancestors were here before that revolt occurred called the Revolutionary War.

All my ancestors and all my wives came to this country afterward.

In fact, far as I know, all of our, but one person, all of our family came to this country after the Civil War.

Now if you had been living in the last half of the 18th century, that's the 1700s, what would have been your position? The churches that were keeping the Sabbath were split over the map.

They were split.

Some did not go into the military and others thought they could.

Only to discover life was not quite what they thought it would be.

There were people who left and were called traitors and went to Canada.

And now we want to have a free trade agreement with the descendants of those traitors.

Why? Well, because it's now practical and the problem is over.

But what would you have done? What should the church have done? Well, let's look at one side of it.

Was it possible for a colony ultimately to have the kind of freedom without a revolutionary bloody war? Well, of course.

It was possible to have a Canada, an Australia, and a New Zealand without a revolution.

Countries that share remarkably in the sense of freedom.

On the other hand, there is something unique about this country.

For if this country had not been involved in a revolution, the policies pertaining to public media would not have allowed, as they do not allow in Britain today.

The world tomorrow to be broadcast in Britain from British stations, whether radio or television.

If there had been no revolution, there would be no world tomorrow broadcast and no work called the work of the World Wide Church of God.

Now we have British brethren who keep asking, they have had this question in their minds.

Why did God allow his work to begin in the United States? I mean, why did they deserve to have it start there? That's their point of view. Many of them.

I used to be asked that question.

It's basically settled, but not to their satisfaction.

It's one of those mistakes that Christ does from time to time make.

No, it doesn't mean that the awfulness of the consequences of the Declaration of Independence or the Revolutionary War was the way to go.

On the other hand, among men, would there have been any other way than that? So God used people, essentially the hotheads from Massachusetts, to stir up the trouble that led to one thing after another.

My wife and I recently had the chance to perceive some of these things when we visited Jamestown and had the story of the Revolutionary War presented.

Now it was a little different but very similar to events that we recently experienced in Los Angeles.

Only this was not over a judicial decision.

It was over a question of taxation.

But it was riotous nevertheless.

Is a Revolutionary War of God? The answer is not everyone.

But this one, no doubt, as we examined the rest of the story was because without it we would not have had the kind of freedom of governance pertaining to the media.

We could not have done anything other than have magazines on newsstands.

We could never have used radio.

We could never have used television.

And we wouldn't be here where we are.

That's the reality.

So God had a reason.

Why did he allow a revolution in the days of Jeroboam? Because if the ten tribes had been left with the tribe or the house of Judah, there is no telling whether we would ever have had the Bible preserved.

The way that nation was going, the question would have to be raised.

Would the ten tribes have ever ultimately allowed the scripture to be preserved as it is? On the basis of the fact that they never repented when they went the wrong direction, as kings of Judah regularly did.

So it is that God is able to bring a message, but he doesn't always do it in ways that we might think.

Now this is taking a look at the subject perhaps a different way than most of us would have chosen to do because we could have specialized in New Testament verses.

But we have a few more minutes, so we'll take a look at what Jesus says about this problem.

But we now have a good backdrop to understand the nature of the problem.

Jesus said in John 18:36, If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight.

Now when the kingdom was of this world and Yahweh, or the Lord, sat on the throne of Israel and continued to on the throne of Judah, His servants did fight.

The law was very simple.

For a people who were essentially unconverted, the law read as follows.

You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy because you can't fight and win a war when you love your enemy.

You wouldn't be killing him now, would you? And if he's coming to attack you, what could you do other than to kill him to stop him? So you see, in this world we are confronted with the fact that

when a nation, a kingdom, a government, a nation state, whatever you want to call it, has a government and considers itself to be a part of this world.

You have no choice.

But as Jesus said, if my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would fight.

If this world is your world, and people as a whole either hate their enemies and fight them, or they run for cover for lack of faith and compromise, well that kingdom isn't going to survive.

But Jesus, when he was born of Mary, was now different.

He was a human being.

He was not on a box that didn't exist in the temple because the Ark was not there.

The Ark had ceased to be known in ancient Judah from the time of Nebuchadnezzar.

He came as a servant, not as a king in that day.

But he was born to be a king.

We know this.

But when he came to Pilate, Pilate asked him if he indeed was born, was a king.

And he said very clearly, to this end was I born.

But my kingdom, he said, is not of this world, I am not setting up a nation state.

Now that puzzle pilot, what kind of a dreamer from Galilee was this man? Who thought he was a king, and yet imagined that it wouldn't be in this world.

That it would be in another world, and ultimately would be on earth, ruling over the world at another time.

But you see, Jesus said of people who want to have citizenship in that kingdom, he said, love your enemies.

Do good to those who spite you.

Pray for those who abuse you and accuse you.

And when you are in court, turn the other cheek.

Doesn't say to do that at all times when somebody is breaking into your home.

He's talking about a judicial system that you have not selected, but is the reality.

So here we have what is basic.

Now we can understand why John also says whoever hates his brother is a murderer.

And why Jesus said you should not kill, and furthermore you shouldn't hate.

Now any military government knows that you can't train soldiers, whether men or women, and particularly men.

That's why they don't prefer to put women in combat.

It's a little more difficult to get them to hate other women.

Now they might do that naturally for other reasons, but not for the same that men do.

Women can easily be jealous of one another, but the idea of fighting is simply more natural to the man than the woman.

That's by the nature of the impact of our hormonal differences.

Once in a while there will be an eccentric nation of the Amazons of times past, but that's a little different.

So Jesus was saying that your behavior in fact precludes.

If you love your enemy, you do good.

I'm reminded of the story of another person of another religious group in Germany in World War I, who was forced into the army, though a conscientious objector.

And he would not shoot at the enemies of the states, so the Germans simply took him by one hand, and took him by the other, and brought him to the front as the Germans moved forward in time.

And again, this German survived, and those who pushed him forward were shot.

And he survived to tell the story at the end of the war.

That was a Jehovah's Witness. It could have been a member of the Church of God. It doesn't matter.

But sometimes you have to risk your life for your convictions.

Anyway, Jesus set the stage.

Our citizenship is in heaven, Paul later said.

We wrestle not against Canadians and Mexicans.

We wrestle not against Cubans or even Russians, now that's past, whatever nation.

Iraqis, Serbians.

Paul says in Ephesians 6-12, let's turn to that as we close.

Ephesians 6-12, that there is a warfare in which we are involved.

This warfare is quite a different kind.

Not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness or wicked spirits in high places.

Now he says the armor that you should put on in terms of what the Roman soldier wore is the armor of God, not the armor of Rome or America, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day.

So stand with your loins girded with truth and righteousness.

See, I'm skipping.

And the good news of peace and with faith and salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.

I'm not even reading the kind of normal weaponry the Roman soldier used or the modern soldiers.

I'm just pointing up that it doesn't tell you that you have to have an automatic rifle or a bazooka.

It doesn't mean you have to have an airplane or a tank or a submarine.

That's not the means by which we war.

And the connection of this with politics is very clear.

Because if we involve ourselves with the politics of this world, instead of awaiting the kingdom of God, we will have done what the bulk of the Christian world did at the beginning of the fourth century of the present era.

And let me conclude with that.

After there was a great drift and a falling away, because the great falling away did occur in the last half, or essentially the last third of the first century, so that when we look at the story of Christianity as it comes to light in the second, we recognize something quite different from that which is explained in the Book of Acts and the rest of the New Testament.

And these people nevertheless did not enter into the Roman army and did not enter into the political realm, because in Rome you voted if you were a citizen.

But Paul does not discuss the question of voting.

In Romans 13.1-7, that's for your notes, not for our reading.

He does not discuss the question as if what should you do if you're in the army.

Christians for approximately two and three-quarter centuries did not participate in the politics or the warfare of the Roman Empire.

But once Christianity came to be one of the accepted religions, because there were more and more volunteers in the military, and Constantine had a dream, a vision.

Well, it turned out that the bishop at Rome was consulted by the emperor and asked to participate in government.

And finally, Christians came to be the dominant factor in the Roman Empire.

And after its collapse was the core of the revival of Rome in the west.

And as a result, Christians went into politics and went to war so that there came to be a holy empire and other nations.

Now, presumably, even though they were both Christian, the one was holy and the others were not, because we didn't say holy France, holy Spain, or holy Portugal.

It was the holy Roman Empire of the German nation.

Now, in reality, there was nothing holy about it or the other nations.

But the French and the British war, the Hundred Years War between two Christian nations, the Thirty Years War between Protestants and Catholics, different groups, the wars that affected Spain, Portugal, France, Austria-Hungary, the Italian states, the Low Countries, wars in the Balkans.

All these were between Christian countries.

In fact, you go Slavia.

Orthodox Serbs, Communist-influenced and led in part.

Catholic Croatians, Catholic Slovenians, and now Catholics, Orthodox and Muslims, Warring and Herzegovina, Bosnia.

This is not a very pretty picture.

So the Church of God has understood clearly that we cannot participate in the politics of this world and make it claim that we can be conscientious objectors.

Our role is to set an example of good citizenship and good behavior.

The world has to solve its own problems.

We set an example by not creating them in the first place.

That's your duty.

We are citizens of another kingdom.

Being such citizens, we demonstrate the legitimacy of conscientious object or status by not participating in the politics of this world because if we do, you have no justification for not going to war and learning to hate your enemy, or at least to be under the military service as the Seventh-day Adventists who do not have a true conscientious object or status, but non-combatant status, some members have to recognize, as in South Africa, we have to recognize their limits, but we do have a conscientious object or policy in terms of what our responsibility should be.

I had to appear in the Korean war time to present this very case, so I know personally what it means.

Yes, we pay taxes.

The judge wanted to know why I would not go to war.

He really was an interesting judge.

And when I explained to him, we do not vote, he said, you have proved your point because when you claim the right to vote, you have no true justification not to defend that country which is the center of your citizenship.

He said, you know the Church of God and the Mennonites are the only two congregations who have had conscientious object or status.

In the Civil War, we did not fight one another.

It wasn't a question of states' rights or holding the union together.

Who should have been president of the union beginning in 1961? There were many who thought it shouldn't be Abraham Lincoln.

It turned out that he was a minority candidate who had the plurality of votes.

Well, God knows why he was allowed to be president, but there are many who would have, even to this day in certain states, still thought that states' rights were the way to go.

Before the Civil War, the United States of America are, since the Civil War, the United States of America is because states' rights was a part of the issue that was then settled.

There was one nation, not separate states, in a looser union.

In the World War, we call World War I, the Church of God and the Mennonites also took that view.

And in World War II and since.

So one of the reasons, as I explained to Mr. Tkach some years ago when he posed the question, the government of the United States recognizes conscientious objector status.

But to participate in politics would be to set that aside.

And then you would each have to battle the problem in terms of how you're going to deal with the military.

We are citizens of another kingdom.

We are learning to exercise good citizenship by paying our taxes.

We are learning also to administer the laws of God so that when Jesus Christ comes, we will not have the problems of a judicial system, the problems of an executive, the problems of a legislative that every country is beset with today.

These nations are trying to solve problems that are simply beyond them.

Europe is trying to solve problems of how to get other nations there together.

And I think that's in microcosm the way the whole world is.

If Europe has this much trouble, what would it be like to make the world one without the government of God? There are many other verses.

We have literature on the topic.

The legal department makes available a booklet on this subject.

If any of you were interested, Mr. Link could tell you about it.

He works in the legal department.

The others do, for that matter, just happen to have talked to him last on this topic as a booklet.

But any of the others whom you know who work in the legal department could also give you information about the literature that is available should the question arise for any young men of legal or military age.

I want to thank Mr. Washington for the opportunity to discuss a topic here that is very important, not just once in four years, but is important in terms of the life of the church around the world in all nations.