

Human Rights and the Christian Church

**Time to Reflect,
Time to React,
Time to Stand Up**

Dr. Keith Lloyd
Associate Professor of English
Kent State University Stark
kslloyd@kent.edu

Photo: <https://www.scross.co.za/2013/03/human-rights-and-the-catholic-church/> 12/10/2017

1

Human Rights in the Current Political Climate

Overview

- ▶ The Hebrew Bible and Politics
- ▶ New Testament and Politics
- ▶ Origins of the Idea of Separation of Church and State:
 - Reformers
 - Enlightenment Thinkers
 - Founders of the US
- ▶ Jesus and Politics
- ▶ Reality Check
- ▶ What can we do?

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140705162525-2264282-what-the-current-situation-in-washington-can-teach-leaders-and-teams>



Prophecy and Politics in the Old Testament By BERTIL ALBREKTSON.
<https://ojs.abo.fi/index.php/scripta/article/view/679/858>

The Hebrew Bible and Politics

- ▶ The Ancient state of Israel emerged through a series of changes from **tribal confederacy to monarchy**.
- ▶ The monarchy became divided just after the third king, Solomon, ruled, and the country divided into competing nation states – Israel in the North, and Judah in the south.
- ▶ Two kingdoms period;
- ▶ **c.920 BCE - 597 BCE**

Israel was first to fall to the Assyrians in 722 BCE; Judah was later destroyed by the Babylonians (597), restored by the Persians (538), subdued by the Greeks (322), and later destroyed by the Romans (70 AD)



With their belongings slung over their shoulders, welcome captives are being driven out of Ashurbanipal's Ashurbanid, by Assyrian warriors. Relief from Nimrud, time of Tiglath-Pileser III, 8th century B.C.

<http://quotefancy.com/israel-and-judah-map/believers4ever.com/%5Ewp-content%5Euploads%5E2012%5E10%5Ekingdoms%5Eof%5Eisrael%5Eand%5Ejudah%5Emap%5E830.svg.png/believers4ever.com/%5E2012%5E10%5Edifferencebetweenjudahandisrael%5E>

<http://sl.zetaboard.com/anthroscape/topic/3206470/4/>

Tribal Confederacy

- ▶ “Before Israel became a state in the more strict sense of the word she existed as a **tribal confederacy**, and it seems fairly clear that this confederacy was **primarily organized for religious, not political purposes**.
- ▶ What united the separate tribes was **their common worship of Yahweh, the God of Israel**.
- ▶ The political unity seems to have grown out of the religious...”



<https://www.papermasters.com/books-bible-judges.html>

Prophecy and Politics in the Old Testament By BERTIL ALBREKTSON.
<https://ojs.abo.fi/index.php/scripta/article/view/679/858>

Transformation to a Monarchy

- ▶ “After the period of the Judges, **“Israel had been transformed into a monarchy, but the kingdom of Israel was still in a sense the same Israel which had previously been organized as a tribal league.**
- ▶ This meant that the new state could inherit the religious legitimation of the old tribal community: as a kingdom, too, Israel was the people of Yahweh.
- ▶ The **national identity** of the people still had the same **religious foundation.**”

Prophecy and Politics in the Old Testament By BERTIL ALBREKTSON.
<https://ojs.abo.fi/index.php/scripta/article/view/679/858>

Prophecy and Politics in the Old Testament By BERTIL ALBREKTSON <https://ojs.abo.fi/index.php/scripta/article/view/679/858>

Transformation to a Monarchy

- ▶ “the new order needed a special authorization. To be acceptable it had to be associated with the very foundation of the peoples existence: the Yahwistic faith itself. And so there developed in Israel a **sacral kingship**: the ruler in Jerusalem was the son of Yahweh, entrusted with a divine commission.
- ▶ To the covenant of Sinai between Yahweh and his people was added the **Davidic covenant between Yahweh and his chosen king.**
- ▶ The Sinaitic and Davidic covenants were not incompatible but complementary; from a historical point of view they reflect two stages in the development of Israel: Israel as a tribal confederacy and Israel as a kingdom.”



<http://www.biblestudywithrandy.com/2016/05/is-king-david-a-new-adam/>

Unification of Temple and Monarchy

- ▶ “The god whom the new king on Zion served and represented was the old tribal god Yahweh, and this combination of continuity and innovation was symbolized by **David's ingenious move in bringing the Ark, the most important cult object of the ancient tribal league, to the capital of the new kingdom, the recently conquered Jerusalem.**
- ▶ The fusion of old and new was finally manifested in the temple of Solomon: **the Ark of the Covenant rested in the Holy of Holies of the royal sanctuary.**”

Resistance to Monarchy

- ▶ Not all regarded the monarchy as a divine gift; certain traditions in the Books of Samuel, for instance, express a **strongly critical attitude towards the new constitution:**



the people's wish to have a king like all other nations is seen as apostasy from Yahweh, the true King of Israel. "Yahweh said to Samuel, `... **they have not rejected you: it is I whom they have rejected from being king over them'** " (I Sam.8: 7).

But it was not this opinion that prevailed.

Prophecy and Politics in the Old Testament By BERTIL ALBREKTSON.
<https://ojs.abo.fi/index.php/scripta/article/view/679/858>

<https://michaelwallenmeyer.com/2017/06/15/1-samuel-and-modern-day-politics/>

The Court Prophets

- ▶ The monarchical period of Hebrew history included “court prophets,”
- ▶ “The political part played by the **professional and court prophets** is fairly unequivocal.
- ▶ In Israel like everywhere else in the ancient Near East their task was **to pronounce blessings in the state cult and to secure success and prosperity.**
- ▶ By men like Micah and Jeremiah they were accused of being false prophets: "They say: 'All is well, all is well', though nothing is well" (Jer. 6: 14; cf. 23 :16 ff.).”

The Cultic Prophets: The “Conscience of the State”

- ▶ *The great prophets do not act as representatives of certain political groups, they do not foment rebellions, they do not conspire against the kings, they do not want to subvert the social order.*
- ▶ *But they serve as the conscience of the state.*
- ▶ The principles they rely on are no new political programmes or revolutionary doctrines: *they remind the kings of the justice of which they are in charge*, of their duties according to the covenant with Yahweh, of the demands which are embedded in the religious legitimation on which the kings themselves base their claims.

<http://nathanhart.org/rivulets/david-bathsheba-nathan-and-god/>

See 62: God and Government (Luke 20:19-26) Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh, 2004. for a longer discussion on the context of Jesus' response in Mark 12.
<https://bible.org/seriespage/62-god-and-government-luke-2019-26>

Dependence on Yahweh

- ▶ It seems incontrovertible that practical considerations of what was politically possible and realistic acquiescence in compromise were entirely foreign to the prophets.
- ▶ Israel should radically abstain from all military alliances and all dependence on human powers and rely solely on the help of Yahweh—it is perhaps not unreasonable to call such a defence policy utopian.



<http://prophecytoday.uk/study/teaching-articles/item/489-jeremiah-prophet-of-doom-or-prophet-of-hope.html>

The prophetic politics is utopian in its very point of departure, its basic presupposition, which has been termed "**the prophetic postulate**"

See 62. God and Government (Luke 20:19-26) Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh, 2004. for a longer discussion on the context of Jesus' response in Mark 12.
<https://bible.org/seriespage/62-god-and-government-luke-2019-26>

Summary: Politics and the Hebrew Bible

- ▶ The Hebrew Bible promotes the idea of a state dedicated to the service of Yahweh.
- ▶ Views differed on the switch from a tribal confederacy to a monarchy, but the latter was institutionalized in the Davidic covenant [and the New Testament re-affirms this legitimacy as the lineage of Jesus].
- ▶ **In either form, it is not a good model for a modern pluralistic nation.**
- ▶ [The same problem applies in the New Testament, given the nature of Jesus' rule as monarch of the church.]

Implications in the roles of the prophets

<https://bjconline.org/religious-freedom-mlk-days-celebrate-the-powerful-impact-of-religious-liberty-0115172/>

- ▶ **pronounce blessings in the state cult and to secure success and prosperity.**

Court Prophets

"The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool."
 —Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., *Strength to Love* (1963)



Cultic Prophets

"serve as the conscience of the state."

The New Testament and Politics

- ▶ New Testament writers, as they had in the issues of slavery, gender, and relations between Jews and Gentiles, **chose to support the *status quo*.**
 - "There is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." (Romans 13:1b)
 - "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, **for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.**" (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

In light of the first passage:
 Do we simply **acquiesce even when a government is unjust or corrupt?**

In light of the second:
 Are Christians praying mostly **just to be left alone?**

See 62: God and Government (Luke 20:19-26) Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh, 2004. for a longer discussion on the context of Jesus' response in Mark 12.
<https://bible.org/seriespage/62-god-and-government-luke-2019-26>

The Reformation: Two Kingdoms

- ▶ At the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, **Martin Luther articulated a doctrine of the two kingdoms.**
- ▶ Those of the **Radical Reformation** (the Anabaptists) took Luther's ideas in new direction, most notably in the writings of Michael Sattler (1490-1527), who agreed with Luther that there were two kingdoms, but differed in arguing that these two kingdoms should be separate, and hence ***baptized believers should not vote, serve in public office or participate in any other way with the "kingdom of the world."***
- ▶ While there was a diversity of views in the early days of the Radical Reformation, in time Sattler's perspective became the normative position for most Anabaptists in the coming centuries.^[13]



Anabaptists came to teach that *religion should never be compelled by state power, approaching the issue of church-state relations primarily from the position of protecting the church from the state.*

Separation of church and state. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Separation_of_church_and_state
Photo of Sattler : <https://ml.bethels.edu/issue/vol-64/article/anabaptist-beginnings-july-1523-february-1527-greb/>

Two Kingdoms

- ▶ The **two kingdoms doctrine** is a Protestant Christian doctrine that teaches that God is the ruler of the whole world, and that he rules in two ways. The doctrine is held by Lutherans and represents the view of some Calvinists^[1].
- ▶ According to the doctrine, *God rules the worldly or left-hand kingdom through secular (and, though this point is often misunderstood, also churchly government, by **means of law** [i.e., the sword or compulsion])*
- ▶ and in the heavenly or *right-hand kingdom (his spiritual kingdom, that is, Christians insofar as they are a new creation who spontaneously and voluntarily obey) through the **gospel or grace.***



<http://www.visionmedia.com/biography/martin-luther/579.aspx>

Martin Luther used the phrase "two governments" rather than "two kingdoms." His and Philip **Melancthon's** doctrine which was later labeled "two kingdoms" was that ***the church should not exercise worldly government, and princes should not rule the church or have anything to do with the salvation of souls.***

Two kingdoms doctrine. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two_kingdoms_doctrine

Two kingdoms doctrine. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two_kingdoms_doctrine

When Church and State are One

- ▶ In the 1530s, Henry VIII, angered by the Pope Clement VII's refusal to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, decided to break with the Church and set himself as ruler of the Church of England.^[17]
- ▶ The monarchs of Great Britain have retained ecclesiastical authority in the Church of England since Henry VIII, having the current title, *Supreme Governor of the Church of England*.
- ▶ England's ecclesiastical intermixing did not spread widely, however, due to the *extensive persecution of Catholics that resulted from Henry's power grab*.



<https://www.thinkinglink.com/scene/493066003308085249>

This eventually led to Nonconformism, English Dissenters, and the anti-Catholicism of Oliver Cromwell, the Commonwealth of England, and the **Penal Laws against Catholics and others who did not adhere to the Church of England.**

Intolerance continues in the Colonies

Is the US a Christian Country? See
<https://www.thoughtco.com/is-the-united-states-a-christian-nation-248215>

- ▶ One of the results of the persecution in England was that some people fled Great Britain to be able to worship as they wished – **but they did not seek religious freedom, and early North American colonies were generally as intolerant of religious dissent as England;**
- ▶ Puritan Massachusetts, for example, did not allow standard Church of England worship. Some of these people voluntarily sailed to the American Colonies specifically for this purpose.
- ▶ After the American Colonies famously revolted against King George III of the United Kingdom, **the Constitution of United States was specifically amended to ban the establishment of religion by Congress.**

Two kingdoms doctrine. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two_kingdoms_doctrine

Protestants and Politics

- ▶ Protestants basically invented the idea of separation of church and state.
- ▶ This makes sense because until that time, all Christian countries were Catholic and state and church functioned together as one.
- ▶ In order to break with the Catholic church but not break with ruling monarchs, Protestants responded with a **two kingdom** interpretation.
- ▶ However, Medieval Europe could not comprehend entirely secular states. So *whole countries and principalities allied themselves with either the Catholics or the Protestants, and intolerance of one for the other [as well as Jews and Muslims] fomented.*

Catherine de Medici Gazing at Protestants Massacred in the Aftermath of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, Edouard Debat-Ponsan (1880)

Map of Catholic and Protestant Spheres of Influence



Enlightenment Views

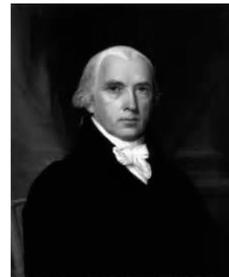
- ▶ The concept of separating church and state is often credited to the writings of English philosopher **John Locke** (1632–1704).^[18] According to his principle of the social contract, ...
- ▶ These views on religious **tolerance** and the importance of **individual conscience**, along with his **social contract**, became particularly influential in the American colonies and the drafting of the United States Constitution.

Locke argued that the **government lacked authority in the realm of individual conscience**, as this was something rational people could not cede to the government for it or others to control. For Locke, this created a **natural right in the liberty of conscience**, which he argued must therefore remain protected from any government authority.

Two kingdoms doctrine. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two_kingdoms_doctrine

Enlightenment Views

- ▶ At the same period of the 17th century, **Pierre Bayle** and some fideists were forerunners of the **separation of Church and State**, maintaining that faith was independent of reason. During the 18th century, the ideas of Locke and Bayle, in particular the separation of Church and State, became more common, promoted by the **philosophers of the Age of Enlightenment**.
- ▶ Montesquieu already wrote in 1721 about **religious tolerance** and a degree of separation between religion and government.^[22]
- ▶ Voltaire defended some level of separation but ultimately **subordinated the Church to the needs of the State** while
- ▶ Denis Diderot, for instance, was a partisan of a strict separation of Church and State, saying *"the distance between the throne and the altar can never be too great"*



According to James Madison, perhaps one of the most important modern proponents of the separation of church and state, Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms marked the beginning of the modern conception of separation of church and state.

"wall of separation between church and state"

- ▶ Thomas Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptist Association in 1802.
- ▶ **Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church and State.**^[25]
- ▶ Jefferson was describing to the Baptists that the United States Bill of Rights **prevents the establishment of a national church**, and in so doing they **did not have to fear government interference in their right to expressions of religious conscience**. The Bill of Rights was one of the earliest examples in the world of complete religious freedom (adopted in 1791, only preceded by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in 1789).¹

Bill of Rights First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Separation of church and state. From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Separation_of_church_and_state

<https://ratical.org/co-globalize/BillOfRights.html#1>

<https://alittlebitleft.wordpress.com/2015/07/04/the-u-s-is-founded-on-separation-of-church-and-state/>

Reasons for separation of church and state:

- ▶ Two Kingdoms (Luther, Anabaptists) (Madison)
 - The rule of law (the state, the church hierarchy)
 - The rule of God (the spiritual priesthood of believers)
- ▶ Social Contract (Locke): “natural right in the liberty of conscience”
- ▶ Faith is independent of reason (Pierre Bayle, etc.)
- ▶ Religious Tolerance (Montesquieu)
- ▶ Church subordinate to the needs of the state (Voltaire)
- ▶ *"the distance between the throne and the altar can never be too great"* (Denis Diderot)
- ▶ “religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions” (Jefferson)



Locke

The idea of the separation of church and state was a **Christian idea**.

- to **protect Christians** from State influence.
- to **promote tolerance** of other views

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:John_Locke.jpg

Jesus and Politics

- ▶ The New Testament makes it clear that Jesus was not a political leader, and that he actively resisted being so.
- ▶ He directly resisted getting into a political squabble when his enemies tried to entrap him with the question of paying taxes. If he said no, he would be considered an insurgent by the Romans; if yes, then a traitor to Jews who wished to foment rebellion.



“Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ And they marveled at him.” (Mark 12:17)

<http://journey66.blogspot.com/2010/10/render-unto-caesar.html>

<http://www.pathos.com/blogs/kateohare/2017/03/finding-jesus-enn-trade-fake-news-believer/>

Jesus and Politics

- ▶ A King, but not of an Earthly Kingdom
 - “My kingdom is no part of this world.” (John 18:36)
 - “Jesus, knowing they were about to come and seize him to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain all alone,” (John 6:15).

- ▶ Jesus answered [Pilate], “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above.” (John 19:11)
 - Some refer Jesus’ comment to Pilate as confirming the later Christian teaching about rulers being placed by God. But that is not exactly what he is saying here. He is pointing out that Pilate is part of God’s plan, though he doesn’t know it.

See 62. God and Government (Luke 20:19-26) Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh, 2004. for a longer discussion on the context of Jesus’ response in Mark 12.
<https://bible.org/seriespage/62-god-and-government-luke-2019-26>

Jesus and Political Leaders

- ▶ Matthew 23:27, Jesus denounces as “hypocrites” the scribes and Pharisees: **“for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.”**

The ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible called the Septuagint goes ahead and translates ἵπποκρίτης as “hypocrite,” which is **Greek for stage actor.** The generally accepted explanation for the subsequent semantic evolution is that **hypocrites, like actors, put on a show of being something they are not.**

<https://sites.google.com/site/holystudyguide/part-ii/whited-sepulchres>

Roy Moore and the Wages of Hypocrisy By [Mark Silk](#) 11-13-2017 Sojourners
<https://sojo.net/articles/roy-moore-and-wages-hypocrisy>

You will know them by their fruits ...

- ▶ ¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.



Matthew 7:15-20 New King James Version (NKJV)

<https://www.apsnet.org/edcenter/intropp/lessons/fungi/ascomycetes/Pages/BrownRotStoneFruits.aspx>

You do the math

- ▶ Recently Christians have been using platforms and public statements as litmus tests for political candidates.
- ▶ Republicans, taking on the mantle of conservative Christianity and knowing that it would promote their cause, slid a provision that allows churches to support political candidates into their tax reform bill.
- ▶ Some candidates promote themselves as “Christian” candidates.
- ▶ The line between church and state grows thinner.
- ▶ Christians seem to have forgotten that the separation is to their advantage.
- ▶ This situation almost *promotes* jumping on the bandwagon and violating the principle of conscience.
- ▶ Churches then become superpacks.
- ▶ What are their fruits?
- ▶ So does protection and tolerance.
- ▶ The founders and Reformers recognized the dangers of a state church.
- ▶ Should Christian denominations be battling for supremacy in the house and senate?

Reality Check: Is this Helpful?

- ▶ **Would Jesus vote Republican?**
- ▶ <https://www.raptureready.com/would-jesus-vote-republican/>
- ▶ **Republican Party Christian?**
- ▶ https://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view_all&address=364x1208179
- ▶ THE BLOG 05/17/2013 09:43 am ET **Updated** Jul 17, 2013
- ▶ **Republicans Aren't Christians.** By [Bob Burnett](#)
- ▶ https://www.huffingtonpost.com/bob-burnett/republicans-arent-christians_b_3292022.html
- ▶ **Should Christians Vote Democrat? Beliefnet - Beliefnet**
- ▶ <http://www.beliefnet.com/news/politics/should-christians-vote-democrat.aspx>
- ▶ Reality: <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/party-affiliation/>

| Religious tradition | Republican/lean Rep. | No lean | Democrat/lean Dem. | Sample Size |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---------|--------------------|-------------|
| Buddhist | 16% | 16% | 69% | 264 |
| Catholic | 37% | 19% | 44% | 7,202 |
| Evangelical Protestant | 56% | 16% | 28% | 8,593 |
| Hindu | 13% | 26% | 61% | 199 |
| Historically Black Protestant | 10% | 10% | 80% | 1,916 |
| Jehovah's Witness | 7% | 75% | 18% | 245 |
| Jewish | 26% | 9% | 64% | 847 |
| Mainline Protestant | 44% | 16% | 40% | 6,083 |
| Mormon | 70% | 11% | 19% | 664 |
| Muslim | 17% | 21% | 62% | 237 |
| Orthodox Christian | 34% | 22% | 44% | 186 |
| Unaffiliated (religious "nones") | 23% | 22% | 54% | 7,556 |

Reality Check II
 Pew Research Center

Which Christianity? Which Faith? Which religion?

Reality Check III

- ▶ Generally speaking, Republicans/conservatives prefer smaller government and more individual freedom, while Democrats/liberals/progressives prefer more governmental oversight of society and the economy. Conservatives argue for capitalism, that is free, for the most part, from governmental control, while liberals/progressives have more socialistic tendencies in regards to the government's role.
- ▶ The Bible does not explicitly endorse either capitalism or socialism. God has given governments the freedom to have as much authority as is needed to fulfill their God-given roles of enforcing justice and building order in society (Romans 13:1-7). So, in regards to the size and scope of government, Christians can be libertarian, conservative, liberal, or progressive.
- ▶ **None of those persuasions are inherently evil or ungodly. ...**

Should a Christian be a Republican or a Democrat? Should a Christian be a conservative or a liberal/progressive?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Republican-Democrat.html>

Both systems have strengths and weaknesses, and, **historically speaking, both systems have proven themselves capable of fulfilling the basic biblical responsibility of government.**

Things to think about: Things You Can't Do While Following **JESUS** Mark Sandlin

- ▶ **10) Force your religious beliefs and practices on others.**
- ▶ **9) Advocate for war.**
- ▶ **8) Favor the rich over the poor.**
- ▶ **7) Cut funding that hurts the least of these.**
- ▶ **6) Let people go hungry.**
- ▶ **5) Withhold healthcare from people.**
 - Every year, 45,000 people die in the U.S. because of the lack of healthcare. We Christians like to talk about "saving" people. Well, I know of about 45,000 people who'd love for us to do it and we should – because that's how love works.

10 POLITICAL Things You Can't Do While Following Jesus
By Mark Sandlin 6-12-2013 Sojourners
<https://sojo.net/articles/10-political-things-you-cant-do-while-following-jesus>

Things You Can't Do While Following Jesus Mark Sandlin

- ▶ 4) *Limit the rights of a select group of people.*
- ▶ 3) *Turn away immigrants.*
- ▶ Christian heritage runs through Judaism. We are an immigrant people. Even our religion began somewhere else. Our spiritual ancestors, Abraham and Sarah, were told by God to pick up what they had and start traveling. Moses, Miriam, and Aaron led a nation out of Egypt, into the desert and ultimately to new lands. Even Jesus spent part of his childhood as a foreigner in a foreign land. As Exodus says, we know how it feels to be foreigners in a foreign land. If you don't think being foreigners in a foreign land is still our story, ask the Native Americans. At best, turning away immigrants makes us hypocrites; at worst, it makes us betrayers of our ancestors and our God.
- ▶ 2) *Devalue education.*
- ▶ 1) *Support capital punishment — execution.*

Mark Sandlin currently serves as the minister at **Vandalia Presbyterian Church** in Greensboro, N.C.

There is a reason they are all in one amendment ...

Attacking one is weakening all ...

- ▶ “Trump, Calling Journalists ‘Sick People,’ Puts Media on Edge”
- ▶ “Fox's pro-Trump hosts are working overtime to discredit Robert Mueller”
- ▶ “Christian Support for Roy Moore ‘Looks Like Hypocrisy to the Outside World’”
- ▶ “Trump Shares Inflammatory Anti-Muslim Videos, and Britain’s Leader Condemns Them”

Congress shall make no law respecting an **establishment of religion**, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or **abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press**; or the **right of the people peaceably to assemble**, and to **petition the Government for a redress of grievances**.

What higher role is there?

- ▶ *The great prophets do not act as representatives of certain political groups, they do not foment rebellions, they do not conspire against the kings, they do not want to subvert the social order.*
- ▶ *But they serve as the conscience of the state.*



<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/time-magazine-10-controversial-people-year-article-1.2040428>

Find the good trees

- ▶ ¹⁵“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

▶ Matthew 7:15-20 New King James Version (NKJV)