

CHRIST-CENTERED VOTING

By Adam M. Kuehner

PART ONE: THE VOTER

To most Americans, the practice of voting for political candidates is a religiously neutral exercise. From a biblical standpoint, however, voting is an important aspect of human life, the chief end of which is “to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever” (WSC 1). For the Christian, all of life must be aimed at God’s glory (I Cor. 10:31). This is especially true of matters relating to civil government, which is “ordained of God” (Rom. 13:2) and over which Jesus Christ has been crowned “King of kings and Lord of lords” and “Ruler of the kings of the earth” (Rev. 1:5; 19:16).

The right to elect government officials gives each Christian citizen a share in both the privileges and responsibilities of civil rule. As Jesus observed, “To whom much is given, much shall be required” (Luke 12:48) How ought God’s people to exercise this right of appointing public officials? Scripture tells us that the prophet Daniel did so by appointing “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon” (Dan 2:49). In Psalm 101:6, King David describes his own philosophy of appointing officials in this way: “he who walks in a blameless way is the one who will minister to me.” Like Daniel and David, each citizen is obliged to select godly leaders who will self-consciously labor for God’s glory. Just as employees answer to a supervisor for their conduct on the job, so every voter will someday answer to the Lord’s Anointed King, Jesus Christ, for each candidate, platform, or initiative that he or she has supported. We must all, therefore, strive to be Christ-centered voters.

But what does it actually *mean* to be a Christ-centered voter? To answer this question, some observations are in order. (1) *Morally*, we are bound to obey the voice of God in Scripture, subjecting ourselves to His holy will in all things, including how we vote. To do otherwise would be sin. (2) From a *practical* standpoint, we serve a sovereign God who immutably declares: “those who honor Me, I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed” (I Sam. 2:30). Hence, any approach to social reform which compromises the royal authority of King Jesus is supremely *impractical*. How can such an agenda expect to succeed apart from the sovereign blessing of God? And how can it expect His blessing while remaining indifferent to the glory and kingship of His beloved Son?

The implicit premise of every compromised reform effort is *either* (a) God does not exist; (b) God exists, but is not greatly offended when His honor is publicly disregarded; *or* (c) God is greatly offended when disregarded, but will not punish the offenders. Of course, all three of these premises are erroneous. Disregarding God is highly offensive to Him and such offenses *do* reap His providential displeasure. Hence, Christians must reject any social agenda which fails to reverently submit to His Word. Indeed, advocating such an agenda invites the just wrath of the Sovereign God upon whom they depend for every ounce of their political success. What could possibly be more impractical than that?

By contrast, modern politicians are remarkably consistent in their approach. They truly believe that political agendas rise and fall based upon the will of *the voting public, big corporations, and party elites*. As such, they structure virtually all of their actions around the goal of pleasing (you guessed it!) *the voting public, big corporations, and party elites*. In other words, their all-consuming endeavor is to please those whom they expect to determine their success or failure. Christians *can* and *must* learn from these results-oriented politicians! If, as the Bible teaches, political agendas ultimately rise and fall according to the sovereign will of *God*, then pleasing *Him* must be the foundation of any political reform movement that hopes to experience lasting success!

PART TWO: THE CANDIDATE

In 1651, the Scottish Parliament crowned Charles II king of Scotland, upon condition of his public acceptance of the *Scottish National Covenant* and the *Solemn League and Covenant*, documents outlining the nation’s self-conscious subjection to King Jesus and to the Scriptures as the supreme law of the land. Tragically, the king’s signature was insincere. Soon after his coronation, Charles II disavowed his oath and began prosecuting supporters of the covenants. This sad turn of events demonstrates that no matter how righteous a candidate’s self-professed agenda may appear, it means very little if he cannot be trusted to follow through with it. For this reason, it is crucial that we understand the following two essential marks of a vote-worthy political candidate.

ESSENTIAL MARK #1 – *He must be a credibly professing Christian man.*

There are two kinds of individuals in this world: (1) those who have been made alive by the Spirit of God and are being conformed daily into the image of Christ, and (2) those who remain dead in their sins, blinded and enslaved by Satan, and dominated by selfish lusts. In other words, a man is either a servant of Christ or a bond-slave of the devil. The Scriptures are clear that there can be no middle ground (Eph. 2:1-6). “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other” (Matt. 6:24).

While God alone infallibly discerns men’s hearts, Jesus commanded his followers to “know a tree by its fruit” (Luke 6:44). But what does this mean? *First*, it means that those who profess no allegiance to Christ and have no interest in His church ought to be taken at their word and regarded as spiritually dead (1 Tim. 2:12). *Second*, those who profess allegiance to Christ, while remaining indifferent toward His Word and unresponsive to His church, ought to be regarded as religious hypocrites rather than brothers in Christ (Matt. 18:17). And *third*, those who profess allegiance to Christ, but who belong to secret societies, heretical groups, or false churches (e.g. Mormons, Freemasons, Romanists, etc.) ought to be regarded as under the dominion of Satan, who is himself the author of every false religion (1 Cor. 11:1-15). Over against these negative examples, the vote-worthy candidate will be a man unashamed of the gospel and holding active membership in a true Christian church. He will be a man whose sworn allegiance to Jehovah is unmistakable, who regularly studies the Scriptures, and who is not afraid to openly avow the supreme authority of King Jesus, even in the public square.

Some may ask, “*Why must the vote-worthy candidate be a godly man? Why not a godly woman or a godly young person?*” According to Scripture, God has assigned ordinary human leadership to adult males (1 Cor. 11:3, 8, 11-12). The application of this principle in the church originates from its regulation of the family, as Paul makes clear in 1 Tim. 3:4-5, requiring an elder to be “one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?).” Moreover, the Scriptures teach that male headship in the state is but an extension of male headship in the family, as was evident when God instituted civil authority among “Noah and his sons” (Gen. 9:1-7), among Israel and the chosen “men” from its patriarchal “tribes” or “father’s houses” (Deut. 1:13-15; 1 Chron. 26:30-32). It would be unreasonable, therefore, for a husband to be the authoritative *head* of his wife in the household only to be *under* her authority in the civil realm (Eph. 5:22-24).

In fact, the rise of women and young children to civil authority is specifically cited in Scripture as a mark of God’s judgment. In Isaiah 3:11-13, the LORD rebukes the wicked Israelites, declaring, “*Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him. As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My people! Those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths. The LORD stands up to plead, and stands to judge the people.*” One example of this is the extraordinary case of the prophetess Deborah, whom God

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installed as a judge in Ephraim during a time when the male tribal leaders failed to properly lead (Judg. 5:1-9). This is not to say that Deborah’s godly counsel was a judgment or that the Ephraimites had reason to rebel against her, but the fact that God invested her with civil authority was a mark of His displeasure with the Ephraimite men of that generation. Similarly, while Christians today are by no means exempted from submitting to youthful or female rulers, Scripture is clear that this phenomenon is extraordinary, unnatural, and to be avoided whenever possible.

Experience confirms that some Christian candidates will be godlier than others. However, any politician who lacks a credible profession of faith in Jesus as His Savior and Lord *cannot* be considered vote-worthy. Electing such a candidate – no matter how right he may be on *this* or *that* particular issue – is very dangerous, because it puts the civil sword into the hand of Christ’s enemy. No matter what “values” a Christ-less candidate may profess to uphold, he remains under the dominion of sin and Satan, who has blinded his mind (2 Cor. 4:4). While God often, for the good of His church, restrains such rulers from being as wicked as they might otherwise be, it is unreasonable to expect God to do so when His own people have themselves *willingly* voted them into office (1 Sam. 8)! In such instances of recklessness, rather than presuming upon God’s merciful restraint of the wicked, Christians should expect to see their society given over to even *more* extreme violations of moral law (Rom. 1:26-32).

Furthermore, casting a vote for an unbeliever openly defies the authority of King Jesus. Psalm 2 is clear that every civil magistrate is duty-bound to “*kiss the Son*” (in worshipful submission to His royal authority) and to “*trust in Him*”. All who refuse will be “*dashed to pieces as a potter’s vessel*” and “*perish in the way*”. Of the presently exalted Christ, Psalm 110:5-6 says this: “*The Lord is at your right hand; He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nations; He shall fill the places with dead bodies; He shall execute the heads of many countries.*”

If our exalted Lord is actively destroying rulers who refuse to “*kiss the Son*”, ought Christians to vote for these individuals? How can the *body* of Christ support those against whom its exalted *Head* has openly declared war? This would be thoroughly inconsistent with the very fabric of union with Christ, with whom all believers are presently seated in Heavenly places (Col. 3:1). Indeed, what loyal subject would dare lend support to a national foe while sitting in the King’s presence? And what bride (Eph. 5:25) would seek to advance the cause of her husband’s enemies? How outrageous! Yet this is precisely what takes place when Christian voters support Christ-less candidates.

With respect to Christ, the Bible is clear that the Father “put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church” (Eph. 1:22). As such, a very real chain of command has been established by God, obliging every civil ruler to submit to Jesus as a superior civil officer. Too few Christians recognize the significance of this. *Think about it*: How many church members would vote for a deacon who did not recognize the authority of the elders? How many corporations would hire a CEO who refused to acknowledge the authority of its board of directors? Indeed, how many Americans would vote for a President who refused to acknowledge the authority of the legislature or judiciary? Such things are self-evidently absurd. Common sense tells us that *no* individual is fit for *any* office in *any* context if he does not openly acknowledge all legitimate authority to which he is accountable. How then can Christians, who claim to believe that Jesus is the “Ruler of the kings of the earth” vote for rulers who deny His lawful authority over them? If the rejection of the Supreme Court’s authority would disqualify a candidate for office, how much *more* so a denial of the supreme authority of the Judge of all the earth!

Of course, this in no sense takes away from our duty to *submit* to ungodly officials and to *pray* for their restraint and illumination (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Tim. 2:1-2). But submitting to a Christ-less magistrate is a far cry from actively supporting his candidacy.

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ESSENTIAL MARK #2 – *He must demonstrate wisdom and godly character.*

When electing civil elders to rule over their tribes and clans, God gave Israel the following instructions through Moses: “Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them heads over you” (Deut. 1:13). Later, in Deuteronomy 17:18-19, Moses advises Israel concerning their future election of a king, that he must write out his own copy of the Scriptures and “read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left.”

Our sinful tendency as fallen creatures is to selfishly abuse whatever power or authority we possess. For this reason, a vote-worthy political candidate must have a proven track record of unselfish leadership and God-fearing personal integrity, both at home and in the workplace. If a man has been an unfaithful husband or a negligent father, can we really expect him to be a faithful and diligent steward of civil authority? If he has involved himself in questionable business transactions, filed dishonest tax returns, or refused to be forthright about major public accusations, can we really expect him to enforce the law equitably upon others?

In addition to personal integrity, the vote-worthy candidate must bring a measure of wisdom and experience to the table. He must be familiar *not only* with the Scriptures, but with all of life, including the society and people which he is to govern. Anyone who reads the Proverbs of King Solomon will be struck not simply with his knowledge of God’s Law, but also with his knowledge of human nature, human relationships, economics, and the created world. Without a working knowledge of these subjects, a ruler’s familiarity with Scripture is unlikely to produce real solutions to the problems of the commonwealth.

In Jeremiah 23, God rebukes the “shepherds” (i.e. rulers) of His people for abusing their authority. Rather than tending to the needs of the people, they oppressed them for personal gain. Sadly, human governments are frequently guilty of such tyrannical abuses of power. When evaluating a political candidate, therefore, it is important to observe his sensitivity and care for the needs and liberties of even the most vulnerable members of society. A vote-worthy candidate will attend to the legitimate concerns of every citizen under his charge, defending the cause of the oppressed *and* preventing envious class warfare from victimizing the wealthy. He will attend to the genuine needs of the widow and orphan without using such legitimate expenditures as a pretext for massive state expansion and taxation.

PART THREE: THE PLATFORM

It may rightly be said that a good platform is meaningless without a godly man to enforce it. However, we must not suppose that electing a credibly professing Christian will, by itself, guarantee God’s blessing. We must also evaluate his stated agenda or platform. This, of course, presupposes the existence of an objective standard of evaluation. When asked to define this standard, Christians today offer a variety of answers. We will briefly consider two common (but erroneous) standards, followed by a look at the Scriptural standard.

ERRONEOUS STANDARD #1 – *The “Lesser of Two Evils” Approach*

What happens when a vote-worthy candidate is nowhere to be found on the ballot? Ought Christians to simply look at the platforms of the two *major party* candidates and vote for the (so-called) lesser of two evils? According to many Christians today, the answer to this question is a rather passionate *Yes!* There are, however, several major problems with such an outlook.

First, this supposedly *pragmatic* approach has proved a dismal failure, particularly in the United States. Writing in 19th century America, Presbyterian minister R.L. Dabney observed,

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American Conservatism is merely the shadow that follows Radicalism as it moves forward towards perdition. It remains behind it, but never retards it, and always advances near its leader. This pretended salt hath utterly lost its savor: wherewith shall it be salted? It is worthless because it is the ‘conservatism’ of expediency only, and not of sturdy principle.¹

Voting for the lesser of two evils, at *best*, puts society on a *slower*, more *gradual* road to perdition. And such gradual declension is often more dangerous, in that it occurs at a less disturbing, less noticeable pace. In truth, the triumph of *lesser evil* is of great use to Satan, because it allows moral decline to press onward, cleverly disguised as moderation.

Consider, once again, the effect of this philosophy on American politics. Are not today’s conservatives more unbiblical than yesterday’s liberals? And yet, are we not constantly being told to vote for *them* in opposition to the *more evil* alternatives? Such an environment creates wily politicians, who know full well that they can continue to live immorally and support unbiblical legislation, so long as they appear ever so slightly less evil than their opponents.

Second, if Christians are required to support the lesser of two evils, then they would technically be required to vote for Stalin over Hitler (or *vice versa*), which is patently absurd. Incidentally, if the current trend of moral backsliding continues, the prospect of seeing a *Hitler* or a *Stalin* on our ballot may not be so far-fetched!

Finally, this flawed approach typically opposes third party Christian candidates on the supposition that they have no chance of winning. Godly men with Scriptural principles are effectively discouraged from running for office, since they cannot even count on *fellow evangelicals* to vote for them! In this sense, it guarantees the political dominance of *evil* candidates, thus perpetuating the status quo of moral declension. And that is an evil far more severe than enduring another four years of any one official.

ERRONEOUS STANDARD #2 – The “Few Key Issues” Approach

Some Christians argue for a more objective standard by which to evaluate a candidate’s platform. They seek, as it were, to draw a line in the sand with respect to vote-worthiness. This standard, they contend, is to be defined by a few key moral issues. In order to achieve reform on these crucial issues, however, great latitude is afforded with respect to a candidate’s religious and moral convictions. An advocate of this approach might say, “*I will vote for any candidate who opposes abortion and homosexual marriage, even if he is not a Christian and has no professed allegiance to Jesus Christ.*”

Almost without exception, the key issues valued by these voters are taken from the *second table* of the moral law, which commands love and peace between man and man. At the same time, the issues that are often perceived as *non-essential* – as mere icing on the cake – relate to the *first table* of God’s law, which commands supreme love for God and His glory. “*If we could just end abortion and stop homosexual marriage,*” these voters contend, “*then perhaps we could gain sufficient momentum to move forward incrementally toward a more Christian society!*” As you might imagine, there are several glaring problems with this approach.

First, by lowering the *vote-worthy threshold* to just a few moral issues, it leaves the door wide open for candidates who lack a credible profession of faith in Christ. The Pope, for instance, opposes *both* abortion *and* homosexual marriage; but would any blue-blooded Protestant ever suggest coming under the civil authority of the Papacy?

Second, the *few key issues* approach is inconsistent with the sovereignty and holy jealousy of God. In our world of sin and misery, societal peace and liberty are attained solely by God’s goodness. Hence,

¹ Discussions by Robert L. Dabney, Volume IV: Secular (Harrisonburg: Sprinkle, 1979) 496.

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when a society disregards its *first table* duties – thereby robbing God of His due honor – is it not pure folly to expect Him to shower it with the *second table* blessings of peace and liberty?

As we know all too well in the United States, a society which seeks to maintain *horizontal* morality (between man and man) without self-consciously recognizing its *vertical* relationship to God in Christ, will eventually be given over to all manner of *horizontal* wickedness and perversion (Rom. 1:18-32). God will not allow His creatures to ‘get along well’ without Him! Only when He is acknowledged and worshiped, will He rend the heavens and pour out peace and liberty upon a nation. First table sins must be addressed *before* second table problems can be substantially resolved, since the *latter* are God’s judgment on a nation for its tolerance of the *former*. Until God’s people begin to realize this *God-centered* paradigm, abortion and homosexual marriage will continue to prevail as tokens of divine wrath.

Third, advocates of this approach have adopted unscriptural moral priorities, which lack due sensitivity to the sinfulness of first table transgressions. After the tragic events of 9-11, some misguided Christian leaders suggested that God was judging America for homosexuality and abortion. Such statements reflect an unhealthy moral bias, which views second table issues as the primary basis upon which God deals with human societies. Biblically speaking, this is incorrect. Romans 1 informs us that sins like abortion and homosexuality are not so much the underlying *reason* for God’s judgment as the *judgment itself!*

A more accurate diagnosis of contemporary American culture would stress its remarkable indifference (if not hostility) to Scriptural truth and to the Lord Jesus Christ. Of the cities which refused to hear the gospel, Jesus declared, “*Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!*” (Mark 6:11). If God truly does view a society’s rejection of His preached word as more heinous than the violence and perversion of Sodom and Gomorrah, then the political priorities of most American evangelicals stand in need of some serious correction!

All in all, we must *reject* the ‘*few key issues*’ approach for its failure to distinguish between the deadly *disease* of godlessness which plagues modern society and the various ethical *symptoms* which often appear on the surface as a result.

OUR STANDARD: *The Scriptural Approach*

According to the *Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America* (RPT), there are at least three general qualifications that must characterize the platform of a vote-worthy candidate. We will now attempt to consider these qualifications and how they serve as helpful guides for the Christ-centered voter.

QUALIFICATION #1 – A stated intention to publicly “kiss the Son”

RPT 23:4 states that “Every nation ought to recognize the Divine institution of civil government, the sovereignty of God exercised by Jesus Christ, and its duty to rule the civil affairs of men in accordance with the will of God. It should enter into covenant with Christ and serve to advance His Kingdom on earth. The negligence of civil government in any of these particulars is sinful, makes the nation liable to the wrath of God, and threatens the continued existence of the government and nation.”

The engine of national politics has no neutral gear. Every vote cast brings a people either one step closer to *reformation* or one step closer to *destruction*. Voting for a candidate that is indifferent toward the legal recognition of King Jesus is a step toward divine judgment. Of course, even *if* voting for Christ-rejecting “conservatives” *could* guarantee certain temporal advantages (e.g. protecting property rights and preventing unfair taxation), our Lord requires His followers to “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:33).

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If we, as Christian voters, would simply stick to our Christ-centered principles, would not God freely bless our nation with an unprecedented safeguarding of our life, liberty, and private property? Would He not graciously furnish us with "all these things"?

QUALIFICATION #2 – *A self-conscious appeal to the authority of Holy Scripture*

RPT 23.15 affirms the citizen's duty to "vote for civil rulers who fear God, love truth and justice, hate evil, and are publicly committed to scriptural principles of civil government." RPT 23.29 then declares that "the Christian should support and vote only for such men as are publicly committed to scriptural principles of civil government."

Some might read these statements and conclude that they simply require a candidate's platform to include one or two positions that agree with the Bible. For instance, a professed atheist candidate may oppose high taxes and advocate capital punishment for convicted murderers, both in keeping with the Bible. Such a candidate, on this interpretation, would qualify as vote-worthy simply because he holds positions that can be traced back to Scripture.

However comforting such an interpretation may be for the average American "values voter", it fails to capture the *Testimony's* straightforward meaning. More is required than an agreement with the Bible on a few matters of public policy. If this were the case, every candidate on earth would be vote-worthy, since every man, by the light of nature, holds to one position or another that is traceable to the Ten Commandments (Rom. 2:14-15). By contrast, RPT 23.29 speaks of the vote-worthy candidate's duty to "openly inform those whose support he seeks of his adherence to Christian principles of civil government."

While Christian principles may yield a variety of perspectives on key issues, a vote-worthy candidate will always ground his platform on the authority of Scripture as the infallible Word of the Triune God. As God's servant for our good (Rom. 13:4), this is the very least we should expect from him.

QUALIFICATION #3 – *A consistent public witness against anti-Christian principles*

Consider the following statements from the RP Testimony relating to the taking of civil oaths:

- **RPT 23.26:** It is the duty of the Christian to ascertain whether any prescribed oath of allegiance to the civil authority involves acceptance of the unchristian principles stated or implied in its constitution of government. If the oath of allegiance to civil authority explicitly or by clear implication requires support of anti-Christian, atheistic, or secular principles, then the Christian must refuse on these grounds to take the oath of allegiance. Acts 5:29; Acts 4:18-20.
- **RPT 23.28:** It is the duty of the Christian Church to testify to the authority of Christ over the nations, against all anti-Christian, atheistic, and secular principles of civil government, and against all sinful oaths of allegiance to civil governments. When the Church by orderly processes in her own courts determines that the oath of allegiance to a civil government compromises the Christian's loyalty to Christ or involves the Christian in the support of sinful principles of civil government, the Church must require her members to refuse such sinful oaths.

The RP Testimony is quite clear that all Christians must refrain from taking unlawful oaths and (by implication) from putting others in a position to take them. It also asserts that all Christians must strive to bear a consistent witness against all anti-Christian principles of government. This includes every citizen, including all voters, candidates, and elected officials.

Quite naturally, this general principle begs to be applied concretely to specific oaths of office, thereby raising a difficult question: *According to the above principles, is it lawful for a Christian to swear unqualified allegiance to the U.S. Constitution or to vote for someone who would do so?* Historically, the RPCNA has given various answers to this question, including (a) strictly prohibiting

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the oath, (b) allowing the oath alongside an “explanatory declaration” of Christ’s supreme authority, and (c) allowing unqualified acceptance of the oath (as is our present practice).

The chief concern regarding unqualified oaths to the U.S. Constitution has always been that this document establishes human government upon the authority of “We the people” rather than “the LORD and His Anointed” (Ps. 2:1-3). Apart from a casual reference to “Anno Domini” (i.e. “In the year of our Lord”) and some borrowed Christian notions of limited government, the entire document is thoroughly and self-consciously “without Christ” and “without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12). So far from covenanting with Christ to advance His kingdom and vowing to punish all outward violations of God’s moral law, it establishes a form of pluralistic “religious freedom” which places Christ and His truth on equal footing with all other religions (See Article VI; First Amendment).

During a time when virtually every state in the union required legal witnesses, jurors, and magistrates to swear an oath to the Triune God and His Word, and when the state constitution of Massachusetts required its municipalities to fund local Christian congregations, the U.S. Constitution charted a new course of secularism that was eventually imposed upon the states, leading our nation precisely to its present state of agnosticism. Without a divinely revealed foundation for truth and morality, it should not surprise us to witness the unprecedented ethical chaos that has enveloped our society. The false religion of pluralistic secular humanism which today dominates our government and nation is largely the result of the principled secular humanism of the U.S. Constitution.

Nevertheless, this is a difficult issue, worthy of all due caution. At this point, it is not our desire to draw dogmatic conclusions, but to ask pertinent, respectful questions, such as the following:

1. Can a Christian consistently bear “testimony against all... secularistic principles of civil government” if he publicly takes (or votes for someone who takes) an unqualified oath to “support and defend” a secular-humanist constitution?
2. Can a Christian consistently swear an unqualified oath to “support and defend the U.S. Constitution against all enemies foreign and domestic” if he himself is at enmity with its most fundamental principles of pluralistic secular humanism?
3. If it would be *unlawful* for a Christian to swear unqualified allegiance to an *Islamic* constitution, what makes it *lawful* for him to swear unqualified allegiance to a *secularist* constitution?
4. May the Christian swear allegiance to the U.S. Constitution with the implicit understanding that his oath is subordinate to the Scriptures? (If so, where does one draw the line?)
5. If a Christian states an “explanatory declaration” qualifying his allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, should this satisfy his conscience, or must he simply refuse the oath altogether?

It is to be admitted that reasonable Reformed Christians, elders, and denominations may disagree on how best to answer these difficult questions. Nevertheless, these are questions that must be thoughtfully considered by all who desire to engage in Christ-centered voting.

PART FOUR: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

When individuals are converted to Christ, reconciliation to God is always the foundation of ongoing renewal (Ps. 130:4). Similarly, it is not until a nation cries out to King Jesus - humbly seeking God’s forgiveness and renewing grace through Him - that it may expect lasting revitalization. Until Western society is transformed by the gospel, there is every reason to expect things to go from *bad* to *worse*. Nevertheless, there is great reason for hope as we carry out the Great Commission: “*Lo, I am with you always,*” says our Lord, “*even to the end of the age*” (Matt. 28:20).

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Perhaps the most challenging aspect of Christ-centered voting is that it requires a great degree of trust in God. From a merely human standpoint, it makes little sense to spurn popular consensus in the name of honoring Jesus. In our own day, political coalitions that ignore Him usually prove much more competitive than those that honor Him as King. Hence, many Christians are tempted to throw Christ-centered voting “under the bus” in favor of what they regard as more pragmatic solutions. Such believers genuinely desire to make a tangible, discernible impact upon their world *now*, even if this impact is very slight and comes at the high cost of unbiblical compromise. While we may sympathize with such admirable motives, this ‘tyranny of the urgent’ is no excuse for reducing or abandoning the robust, *Christ-exalting* civic agenda of Biblical Christianity.

God calls each generation of Christians to honor His Son in their society, regardless of whether this produces an immediately discernible impact (Phil. 2:15; Dan. 3:17-18). As loyal subjects of King Jesus, it is our duty to honor Him in every aspect of our lives, including at the voting booth.

Will you, out of a genuine zeal for His glory, commit yourself to vote *only* for godly candidates who avow explicitly Scriptural principles? As we have seen, both the word of God and the *Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America* require it. How will you respond to this counter-cultural aspect of Christian doctrine? Will you submit your political involvement to the teachings of Scripture? Will *you* ‘kiss the Son’ this November? The choice is yours!