

When Government Intrudes Into the Sphere of the Church

Saturday, September 2, 2023 8:00 AM CT • 53:59

Host: David Wheaton 00:08

When government intrudes into the sphere of the church. That is the topic we'll discuss today, right here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host.

Government mandates during the COVID pandemic, "wear a mask, get vaccinated, shut down your church or be fined and arrested," caused Christians to consider the Biblical line between submission to governing authorities and resisting when the commands go beyond the sphere of their authority. Over the last several months, we have heard from guests such as Pastor Travis Allen and journalist Alex Newman on the increasing authoritarianism in our nation and how Christians should respond.

This weekend in the opening segment, we will be joined by Twila Brase RN, President of Citizen's Council for Health Freedom, to discuss rumblings of COVID mandates being instituted this fall and what was behind the governing authorities putting mandates in place during the pandemic. Then, Jesse Johnson, pastor of Immanuel Bible Church in Springfield, Virginia, and author of *City of Man, Kingdom of God: Why Christians Respect, Obey and Resist Government*, joins us for the remaining two segments to explain how Christians need to clearly understand the differing spheres of authority for government and the church.

This will get you thinking biblically in advance of our upcoming listener event, The Christian Worldview Movie Night on Saturday, September 9, at Fourth Baptist Church in Plymouth, Minnesota, where we will show the Essential Church documentary film, which chronicles how the pastor's of Grace Community Church in Los Angeles and two churches in Canada were fined and/or arrested for gathering their churches to worship during COVID. The film also shows how Christians throughout history have understood the spheres of authority between the church and the state, and when there was a conflict, they concluded, "*We must obey God rather than men.*" Acts 5:29).

Now again, The Christian Worldview Movie Night is Saturday, September 9th, at Fourth Baptist Church in Plymouth Minnesota. Doors open at 6pm. The film starts at 6:30pm. There will be a brief intermission for refreshments and a mini dessert. Then there'll be a pastor panel discussion after the film at about 8:45pm. You are invited to come for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. You need to register by going to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org or giving us a call toll free 1-888-646-2233. We encourage you to invite the elders of your church. If they can't

come, DVDs will be available on site and other resources as well. If you are out of town and can't come to the film in person, we have the DVD available at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org.

One other brief announcement. We also have The Christian Worldview golf event coming up on Monday, September 18th. If you are interested in participating in that, go to our website or give us a call. Let's get straight to the interview with Twila Brase the President of Citizen's Council for Health Freedom.

Twila, it's so good to have you on The Christian Worldview Radio Program today. I want to start with a couple of paragraphs from a recently Associated Press article that was doing a fact check or what they call a fact check on this claim. TSA managers were told on August 15th, that by mid September, they along with airport employees will again be required to wear face masks. By mid October, the policy will apply to travelers as well. Further, the managers were told that COVID-19 lockdowns will return by December.

That was the claim they're "fact checking". I think people have heard about this. Then they say, AP's assessment, False. No such announcement was made to TSA managers, an agency spokesperson told The Associated Press. A spokesperson for the Centers for Disease Control, the CDC and prevention, which issued a now expired travel mask mandate in 2021 confirmed that such rumors are quote, "utterly false." In addition to that, President Biden said recently that, "I signed off this morning on a proposal we have to present to the Congress, a request for additional funding for a new vaccine that is necessary, that works. It will likely be recommended that everybody get it no matter whether they've gotten it before or not." So Twila, we're hearing rumblings of the return to life as it dystopianly was during COVID. The lock downs, the mandates, the mask mandates, the vax mandates, all these things. What do you know about whether pandemic mandates are returning to this country?

Guest: Twila Brase 05:14

The Cleveland Clinic did a study that included more than 50,000 of their own employees. They discovered that the more shots a person had, the more likely they are to get COVID. The more shots, the higher the risk of getting COVID. So these are just things you have to know no matter what Biden might be trying to do with vaccinations. Now, I think the whole thing about masks and vaccinations and the whole thing about a mandate, I like what attorney Jeff Childers said about this, and it's the most succinct way to say it. He doesn't think that this is likely. He has this blog called, Coffee and COVID. I'd encourage everyone to get it. He doesn't think it's likely for four reasons:

1. The legislative environment is completely different. Now we got all these members of Congress, it's run by the Republicans in the House.
2. The social and legal environment is completely different. As you know, there have been lawsuits, lots and lots of lawsuits and a whole variety of things from ivermectin to masking to the vaccines.

And then the Supreme Court has said certain things like large employers aren't required to vaccinate, despite what Biden had said, AI so that's different.

3. They don't have an emergency to justify bypassing legislation and ramming things through. In other words, they don't have an emergency to have and issue emergency use authorizations.
4. They lack the tools they had the first time around. The other thing that they don't have, and this is me speaking, is they don't have the element of surprise.

That element of surprise caused all sorts of fear in the American people. I don't know how premeditated all of this was, but the fact of the matter is, once they saw an opportunity to shut down the American public or to try, they took advantage of it. I don't think they knew whether it would work or not, and it did. Then they just kept it going. So they don't have that either. It will be much more difficult for them to actually do these kinds of mandates in the future without something huge happening.

Host: David Wheaton 07:23

As you look back on this period of time, what are the three or four most important takeaways that you have observed during the coming out of the COVID pandemic? It can be a worldview issue, your perception of how people think, or how government operates, or how organizations like the CDC and NIH operate. It could be to do with a vaccine. Really it's a very broad question intentionally to get your takeaways from what took place, to us.

Guest: Twila Brase 07:54

People who are afraid, are easy to control, causing the loss of their lives, their relationships, their businesses, their income, and even schooling for their children. They were willing to give it all up because they were afraid. Another thing that I would say is that truth can be hard to find when government and the media joined together to create a false narrative based on fear.

Then the unwitting public believes it and they don't actually go looking to see if there's something else out there that's true. Ultimately, you have to understand that the government cannot be trusted. It's not here to help you, to protect your safety, to tell you the truth, or to save your life. In fact, it might purposefully be doing the exact opposite. It's unfortunate, but I do also think that people have to remember that we have a government of, for, and by the people. Too many people have forgotten that and have not lived that way, and look to the government in Washington DC or in their state capitol for everything. The fact of the matter is that you should never want that kind of power over your free life.

The governor of Mississippi, Governor Tate Reeves, put out an amazing statement that made me want to applaud. One of the things that he said was, "In the first days of national unity, it seemed ridiculous to assume that bureaucrats and experts were trying to seize power. Now, it seems ridiculous to assume that they wouldn't try it again. The simple answer to the question being posed by experts is no, we will not return to widespread masking or COVID rules." People have a right to make

their own decisions, to decide how much risk they tolerate, and no matter what pronouncements come down from the Biden, Fauci administration, we will go to school, we will go to church, we will go to work and we will play sports. We will live in self determination, not top down fear."

Host: David Wheaton 09:48

That's very well said. That segues well into the next question here that many Christians and political conservatives say that COVID was a manufactured crisis, whether it was intentionally released or accidentally released, it was taken advantage of like this is an opportunity, a crisis, don't waste an opportunity on this crisis. It was released to take authoritarian control over people and populations, and condition people for the global reset of the World Economic Forum.

Alex Newman has talked about that on our program, that this vaccine passport, which you've discussed extensively, they want to get that so they can really control people. Where you can travel, what you can buy, what you can sell, where you can go. Even for depopulation purposes. You'll hear those on the left saying, "well, there's just too many people in the world." So as you look back again, do you think the controlling mechanisms that were put in place by the government and others in authority were purely about saving people's lives as they said, or were there nefarious authoritarian purposes to at all?

Guest: Twila Brase 10:54

Well, I do think that the email that has now been unredacted, and made available to the public where it shows that Fauci knew right from the very beginning that the scientists were concerned that this did not look like something that could naturally evolve, it looked like it was manipulated. The other thing that I look at is when the pandemic planning began. I look at the fact that the CDC put out a model State Emergency Health Powers Act right after 9/11. It seemed very opportunistic to me. It was six weeks exactly after 9/11.

They asked every state to empower the health departments in a health emergency. So I look at that. Then I look at the fact, I think it was in the year 2000, that they started holding nearly annual meetings to cover a variety of these topics, like what to do with misinformation, how to get people to take vaccines, how to prevent them from traveling, all of these things that we experienced, they came together internationally. A lot of the government agencies were at those meetings. They came together to discuss how to do this.

One of the things apparently that they said was, we would never be able to lock down people because they would never actually agree to that. But apparently, they found a way. All they needed was enough fear to actually make it happen. I feel like it was certainly an opportunity that was taken. But you know what to think about the fact that Fauci knew from the very beginning, the scientists were telling him that this isn't a natural sequence, this virus doesn't have a natural sequence in it, then that makes you think, Well, why would they not actually announce that?

Then when they knew that ivermectin was certainly safe and effective, and they've known that for years, why did they say it wasn't? So that there are so many parts about this, it makes you think that if it wasn't originally planned, it was certainly a huge opportunity for them to do what they wanted to do.

Host: David Wheaton 12:55

It certainly was. Twila Brase with us today on The Christian Worldview. She is the co founder and President of Citizen's Council for Health Freedom. They have their annual event coming up in St. Paul, Minnesota on Thursday, September 7th. You can find out more at cchfreedom.org. I'm going to ask you about that in just a second, but one more question that's actually unrelated to COVID.

You and I had talked some this summer. I was due to get my driver's license renewed. There are a lot of options for driver's license now. When I was growing up, you just went to get your driver's license renewed. There was one kind of license you could get. Now there are about three different kinds of licenses you can get. I don't remember the names of them all. I'm sure you will. I called you because I remember you saying something about one in particular, you said, Get this one, don't get these other two. Briefly inform all of us, our listeners as to which one driver's license you recommend and why.

Guest: Twila Brase 13:48

I recommend that if you have the opportunity in your state, that you choose a standard driver's license instead of a REAL ID. The standard driver's license will be stamped with the words, NOT FOR FEDERAL PURPOSES or NOT FOR FEDERAL IDENTIFICATION. You want that one because you do not want to be adding to the number of people who have a REAL ID. The REAL ID is a national ID. Once too many people have the REAL ID, you can expect the federal government to just mandate it across the country. It is not mandated no matter what the signs at the airport say to you. It is not mandated.

You can use a passport to fly. You can use about 16 different types of identification, military. If you're in the United States, and if you have an enhanced driver's license, you can use that. But the whole idea here is not to accept it, not to take the REAL ID. This is a way to let the federal government control everything about you, and know every place that you use it. They're moving to digitize it. As a matter of fact, there's a brand new rule that just came out where they're saying that driver's licenses that are digital, they're going to allow them to be effective whenever that final date for REAL ID is. They will allow the digital ones to work as well.

So they're moving the entire identification system across this country into digital ID. That will be just like China, where they can track everything that you do, every dollar that you spend will be all available to the government to track ,and we must stop that and not let that happen. So do not take the REAL ID, take a standard driver's license. Then just go get your passport for when you have to fly.

Host: David Wheaton 15:45

Good advice. Thank you for that, Twila. The final question for you is, tell us about your upcoming Citizen's Council for Health Freedom event on Thursday, September 7th. I know you have Fox News's Pete Hegseth coming, who's actually a Minnesota native. Tell us more about that event.

Guest: Twila Brase 16:01

Yes, we're excited to have Pete. The last time I heard him speak, he was on fire for freedom, for Christianity, for his children and his grandchildren, so I'm very excited to have him. Our event is called, Our Fight to Stay Free. That's the topic that he'll be talking about.

This is an event to raise funds for everything that we do to fight for the patient and the doctor to be free from the government, free to work together, free from the health plans and those controls, and to move our entire country back to health freedom like it used to be. The event as you said, it's Thursday, September 7th. Dinner begins right at 6:30pm. You can register at cchfreedom.org. We will have a very fun, live auction. People have called it a hoot, actually, who've been there before. We would love it if you would come and join us and to support us in this way.

Host: David Wheaton 16:54

I'm sure some of our listeners in this area of the upper Midwest will likely want to come to that and certainly bid on those homemade cupcakes that you auctioned off last year, Twila. Those looked very, very good. Anyway, I hope the event goes well for you and Citizen's Council for Health Freedom. Thank you so much, as always, for coming on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. All of God's best and grace to you, Twila.

Guest: Twila Brase 17:17

Thank you, David.

Host: David Wheaton 17:20

You can find out more about Citizen's Council for Health Freedom and the excellent work they do and also their upcoming event on Thursday, September 7th, by going to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org.

After this break, we'll hear from Jesse Johnson about how the authoritarianism of the COVID pandemic was a crisis that shouldn't go to waste for Christians in the church. In other words, the church needs to understand the differing spheres of authority for the state and the church. You are listening to The Christian Worldview Radio Program. I'm David Wheaton.

Featured Resource: Essential Church Movie 17:50

God's truth is enduringly true throughout all the generations. It transcends culture. The church is always going to be an embattled people. If it's swimming with the tide, it's not being the Church of

Jesus Christ. Look to the past, learn from the past, because the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

That was from the just released documentary, The essential Church, which chronicles how three churches followed God's command to gather during the pandemic rather than comply with arbitrary government mandates. Normal retail is \$19.99 plus shipping for this two hour film. For a limited time, you can order the DVD for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Order at TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll free 1-888-646-2233, or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Children's Resources 18:51

Scripture commands that children ought to be brought up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Offering Biblically sound resources for children is one of our top ministry priorities. At our store at the ChristianWorldview.org, you will find carefully selected children's Bibles and books along with video and audio resources. Check out the Bible infographics for kids books, Little Pilgrims Progress, and the popular Adam raccoon set. Theo is a 15 episode video series addressing key doctrines of the faith that is a must see for children and adults.

Satan and the world are bent on capturing the heart and mind of your child. Instead, get sound resources that will train them up in the way they should go. Browse and order at TheChristianWorldview.org or give us a call for recommendations at 1-888-646-2233. That's 1-888-646-2233 or TheChristianWorldview.org.

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry. Our topic today is when government intrudes into the sphere of the church. Our guest now is Jesse Johnson, the pastor of Immanuel Bible Church in Springfield, Virginia.

Jesse, you have a new book, titled *The City of Man, Kingdom of God: Why Christians Respect, Obey, and Resist Government*. I want to start out with a quote from page 12 of the book. You said, "But for me, COVID-19 exposed the most glaring deficiency in the church, one that was not ecclesiological but theological. American Christians lacked a biblical understanding of how churches should relate to government."

This has been a topic over the last many years now, with COVID, and after the death of George Floyd, here in Minneapolis. You write about this in the book, that we've come to a point in our country where Christians are having to examine their allegiances to God versus government and what the Bible calls for. How did we get to this point and why did it take until now to really make an examination of this for Christians?

Guest: Jesse Johnson 21:26

Well, I think we got to the point because the US basically has always functionally had what I'll call the Lutheran understanding of church and state, which is basically obey government at all times, unless the government tells you to sin. That's been the normal way American evangelicals have always approached this topic. That has worked in our American history because there have not been times, for the most part, where the government has commanded us or called us to do something that is sinful or forbidden, doing something that our consciences compel us to do. That's been true through most of American history. That is the reason Americans bought into that view of the relationship between church and state.

I studied the Puritans. They understood the government had more of a limited role. They understood Romans 13 to teach that you have a government when the government is fulfilling its function in the world, which is very different than saying obey it, unless it tells you to sin. Rather, obey it when it is fulfilling its God appointed function.

In most of American history, there's likely not a lot of daylight between those two, but COVID brought out that the government did begin regulating churches and telling you how many songs you could sing and where you could sit. In our case in Northern Virginia, they were telling us what instruments you could play and what instruments you couldn't play in church. But is it the government's role to regulate what instruments you use when you worship the Lord? The Puritans make pretty compelling theological arguments that really go all the way back to Augustine, that says the government cannot regulate those things.

Host: David Wheaton 22:55

I'd like to ask about the process your church went through during COVID. The film, The Essential Church, was just released. It chronicles what happened to Grace Community Church, which you're well familiar with, in Southern California, and also a couple of pastors. James Coates and Tim Stevens, up in Canada. The problems they had with government in defying the government mandates.

Now the government put these mandates in place ostensibly for churches to keep people "safe" from getting sick with COVID. They wanted people to either not go to church, close them down, but if they did allow you to go to church, like in your case, explain what the process was.

There were things like, sit every other pew, park in every other parking space, don't use wind instruments, you can't sing. The government also does things like have health and building codes inside churches for how your Hvac system needs to be and what kind of fire alarms, and churches seemed to comply with those things with government, because their safety measures, keep people safe. So what was the process your church went through during this time of COVID in light of the

mandates that it sounds like you were receiving? How were those to be differentiated from other, "safety mandates" that the government puts on churches, aside from just catching a virus?

Guest: Jesse Johnson 24:22

Yes, that's a great question. In our area, the government ordered churches closed along with everything else. We complied because, if a hurricane is coming, you cancel church. If a storm is coming, you can cancel church with a clear conscience, and that's what the government did.

They said, a storm is coming. A tsunami of illness is going to take over our country, and we don't know what's there. So for the good of the country, everybody shut down and of course we did. But then, as the weeks went by, fifteen days became several weeks, and started to enter into its second and then its third month. It became pretty clear at that point, that the restrictions they gave us were not proportionate to what was actually happening.

The disease was targeting certain demographics, not others. The government restrictions then started to get lifted on shopping malls, movie theaters, and on casinos, but then when they were lifting the rest of society, they begin to clamp down even harder on churches. This became very evident in the wake of the George Floyd murder.

You saw these riots in the streets in Washington, DC, where all the stores are boarded up and you saw political leaders out there at the riots. You saw the mayor of DC, not just at the riots, but then telling everybody how important it is to not travel, to not leave the district, then she flies off to a funeral. Then she comes back, and she's not following her own restrictions while she's making restrictions on churches even more severe.

So it became very clear, this is no longer about an illness. This is about controlling a certain part of the population and regulating the worship of the church. That's what government is not allowed to do. Now you asked about fire alarms and such. You know, fire alarms don't regulate church worship, building occupancy doesn't regulate church worship. Building Occupancy says, Hey, in our county, both the grocery stores and the movie theaters and the churches need a certain number of exits and parking spots for a certain number of seats. That's commonly agreed upon, and it facilitates safe worship.

It doesn't restrict it. The COVID regulations turned that on its head. The code regulations became shopping malls, movie theaters, and casinos can open at this capacity with churches at a much, much less capacity. Concerts can have whatever instruments they want, but not churches, and all these other things that begin to be regulating the church worship. That's what the government has not been allowed to do by God. God has never given the government the authority in the church age anyway, the authority to regulate the worship of God's people.

Host: David Wheaton 26:40

Jesse Johnson is our guest today here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. He is the pastor of Immanuel Bible Church in Virginia. We have links to his church's preaching at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. He's also the author of, City of Man, Kingdom of God. That's the book we're discussing and the topic we're discussing today here on the program. Jesse, explain when and why government was instituted. You go back into the early parts of Scripture and government wasn't there at the very beginning in Genesis chapter one. So tell us when government was instituted and the four things it was originally created to protect.

Guest: Jesse Johnson 27:20

The government comes into the world after the flood. There's a big Christian nationalist argument now that says the government would have been there, even in a pre fallen world. Had Adam and Eve not sinned, they would have had children, and they would have had competing interests and there would've been governments to regulate that. That's really a deification of government, because that's not what you see in the Bible.

Before the Flood, there was extreme chaos and anarchy in the world. The world was ruled by violence, there was no government, there was no checking of sin. We know when Cain murdered Abel, he wasn't brought before a magistrate, he was brought before God, who banished him, and forbid other people from harming him. He was marked so he wouldn't be harmed. Of course, in that environment, the world was overrun by violence. After the flood, God reestablishes order on the earth, reestablishes the family with Noah, tells them, be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and restates the creation mandate.

But this time there's going to be government. This time there's going to be a human institution that will check evil, that will bear the sword to punish evildoers, whoever sheds men's blood by men's hand shall his blood be shed. Now it's man's hands that will be enforcing things.

When you look at that section of Scripture, Genesis 8:9, you see a few different components wrapped up in this launching of government. You see the establishment of the family, to protect children, to protect marriage, you see the food source introduced there, where now all of the animals are given to mankind to eat. You have worship in there, that Noah gets off and sacrifices animals to God. The nations are going to expand, and they're going to scatter after the Tower of Babel. There's this idea that worship is built into the DNA of how people are supposed to relate to God, so God gives government not to regulate worship, but to protect people's ability to worship. You can even make an argument for religious freedom from there and a lot of Baptists have done that. Then finally, God gives government to check evil and protect human life. That's the command. Whoever sheds man's blood by man's hands shall his blood be shed.

So when you start to go through the Bible now, you're going to see governments all over the world that have that function given to them. They're regulating the food source and trade, and all that. They're regulating the family, giving laws that allow property passed down and children to be protected. They're protecting the freedom of worship, and of course, they're keeping the peace and punishing crime. That's true of Israel. That's true of non Israelite governments. That's true of the pagan nations in the Old Testament. Even their governments functioned well, when they did those things. You get to the Church Age, the church is now going to not have one government, but transcend the world, bringing the Gospel inside lots of other different nations with their own governments.

Host: David Wheaton 29:58

Jesse Johnson with us today on The Christian Worldview. As you mentioned those four things, why government was instituted, to protect the freedom of worship, to protect the family structure, to protect the food supply, and to protect life, you think of our current government right now in the United States, that even during COVID, you talked about the first one, they weren't protecting the freedom to worship. They certainly do not protect the family. They're trying to redefine God's definition of the family. They're not protecting necessarily the food supply. I won't get into the weeds on that right now, but they're trying to destroy farming, in light of this, "climate emergency," that farming is a big contributor to carbon release. They certainly don't protect life from a standpoint of children in the womb.

So it seems that our government has really been flipped on what it should actually be doing and is going directly against God's will. In light of that, you get into in your book, explaining some of the historical understandings of how Christians should relate to the state. I'm going to ask you to talk about two different eras. One was during the Reformation time in England with the king and believers like John Bunyan, and how the state was trying to interfere with preaching and what they could preach and so forth.

Could you talk briefly about that, and then the follow up to that is also the Revolutionary War, or maybe a better term, the war for independence, which took place in early American history. Christians at that time, had a government of Great Britain, who was according to the Declaration of Independence, usurping, going way beyond what they had promised. A war broke out as a result of it and Christians joined in to push back against, what I would say, was the governing authority at the time of the British government. Explain how those two eras can be helpful for us today.

Guest: Jesse Johnson 31:54

The Puritan era really shows the difference between the idea of what I'm calling the Lutheran view of government, a big government all times listing intelligence to sin, and what became the Puritan view of government, which is big government when it's operating according to God's design. You saw that in the period scenario, when King Charles 1 for example, starts trying to regulate the worship of

people, not just in England, but in Scotland, mandating the use of the Book of Common Prayer. Let's assume that the Book of Common Prayer is theologically accurate and legitimate just for the sake of this discussion, and there's nothing wrong in it or bad in it. Is it sinful then to use that book to structure corporate worship? Well, no, it's not sinful. But is it wrong for the government to dictate how churches should worship and the Puritan answered with, Yes, it is, but it has not been given to the king.

When the civil war started in England, they banned churches from meeting at the gates of London. So the churches are meeting at the gates and they're often praying for soldiers in the Civil War, and the government banned that. Is it wrong to pray at a gate for soldiers? Of course not. You can pray at home for soldiers or you can pray at gates for other reasons. But it got to the point where this is not the government's job to do this. They passed the the four mile act that said pastors couldn't minister more than a certain distance from their home. Well, is it wrong to preach more than four miles from your house? Of course not. But that is beyond what God gave the government to do. So the Puritans are resisting all of those commands, and saying, it's not given for the government to do these things.

That was John Bunyan's quarrel. He could preach if he was licensed, and as a Baptist, that would have been very difficult. But he said, I'm not doing that. I'm not going to allow the government to regulate who's preaching in the Baptist churches. I'm not going to do it. He spent a decade plus in jail for that. You see so many examples like that.

Of course the United States was founded with that desire, to leave that kind of regulation of worship and go to a new place where there was more freedom in worship. You mentioned the second component, the Revolutionary War, the War for Independence. I've read Christian arguments arguing against the Revolutionary War, or in favor of the Revolutionary War. In the United States, it's easy to lose sight of how much time had gone by between the founding of the colonies and the Revolutionary War. You're talking more than 100 years. You're talking three or four generations. This gets to the heart of Romans 13. Christians are called to obey the government that checks evil and that collects their taxes. They're the ones that you're supposed to obey. You don't obey a government on the other side of the world that's not collecting your taxes and not checking evil. You obey your government.

So in the American colonies, the colonial governments that were established by the king of England, by the British Crown, when those governments that are operating under the right authority are saying the penalties that the colonies are going through is too much and we're going to start our own government, you can see how at the very least it's a gray area. At the very least you can see how Christians, according to their conscience can take either side In the conflict and American history comes out of that. Of course, we come into a nation that says the government is not going to regulate church. It's not going to regulate worship. There's going to be freedom, according to your conscience to serve God, as you see fit inside of our nation. And that's the nation we have.

Host: David Wheaton 35:16

Pastor Jesse Johnson with us today, author of City of Man, Kingdom of God. There's much more coming up. You are listening to The Christian Worldview Radio Program. I'm David Wheaton.

Speaker Series Audio on USB Drive 35:27

There is a war ongoing. There are two sides in this war. There are those who are with Christ and there are those who are against Christ, and sometimes it's not always easy to see the difference. But as we go through this information about The Great Reset, I think you'll find out very quickly what side these great resetters are on. Their own words condemn them. Know that this has implications for everything. For education, for health care, for your job, for business, for government, for law, and for property rights. The social contract as Klaus Schwab will explain.

That was journalist, Alex Newman, speaking at our recent Christian Worldview Speaker Series Event on being informed and prepared for The Great Reset. Alex's presentation is full of sound bites from those who are seeking to transform the world into a godless dystopia. You can download the audio of the event or order a USB thumb drive by going to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org or calling toll free 1-888-646-2233.

Upcoming Event: TCW Golf Event 2023 36:28

David Wheaton here inviting you to The Christian Worldview golf event on Monday, September 18th at Woodhill Country Club in Wayzata, Minnesota. This is a rare opportunity to experience a classic course in immaculate condition with challenging greens in a beautiful setting, all in support of The Christian Worldview Radio Program.

Golfer Registration includes lunch on the lawn, practice range, player gift, and 18 holes with cart followed by appetizers and awards. Bring a foursome or we can fit you into a group. Also, contact us about sponsor opportunities, whether or not you are attending or local to Minnesota. We hope to see you Monday, September 18th. Registration deadline is Labor Day. To find out more and to register, visit TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233. That's 1-888-646-2233 or TheChristianWorldview.org.

Host: David Wheaton 37:34

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print letter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry. Our topic today is when government intrudes into the sphere of the church. Our guest now is Jesse Johnson, the pastor of Immanuel Bible Church in Springfield, Virginia.

On page 34 of your book you say, A government that redefines marriage, promotes gender ambiguity, or tolerates abortion has ceased to function properly, and has failed at one of its most basic tasks. Do

you think Christians today are much too inactivistic with regard to what's taking place in our country? Are we too passive when it comes to petitioning government or being vocal and visible out in the streets? I mean, look what's taking place. Sixty plus million babies have been murdered in this country in the last 50 or 60 years. The sexual depravity being imposed on the country and schools and corporations and every other way. Men dressed as women dancing erratically in front of children. It seems that perhaps Christians are maybe too passive. Should we be more active? How do you see our role in the midst of where we are right now?

Guest: Jesse Johnson 39:07

I completely agree with your description of our society continuing to crumble more and more into sexual immorality and abortion. You see this just in the last decade where President Obama, when he was elected the first time, was against gay marriage and described abortion as something that should be safe, legal and rare. We're not talking ancient history here. We're not talking Jimmy Carter. We're talking President Obama, not that long ago.

Now those very ideas would be laughed out of the Democratic Party, laughed out of the halls of government. President Clinton signed an order in the 1990s mandating the military follow, and celebrate June as pride month and have a certain number of events on every base, every outpost, and all these metrics to match. This had never been repealed. President Bush could have repealed them, he did not. President Trump could have repealed them, of course he embraced that kind of thing. So yes, I completely agree that our country has declined in that concept of morality over the last 20 years specifically.

That being said, I would blame the culture for that, I would blame sin for that, I wouldn't blame Christians for that. Could Christian speak out more against it? Yes, of course. There's an infinite number of opportunities for evangelism. Part of what's happening in our country is the judgment of God. This is the slide of Romans 1. Once that kind of sexual immorality is embraced in culture, were given over to worship of the Creation rather than the Creator. That's what happens when God judges the nation. Christians can be light, they can speak out against it, they can rescue the unborn, they can try to put it into child trafficking, they can do so much for good, as they're speaking the gospel into dark worlds. But that's not a promise that the world was stopped being dark.

I call the book, City of Man, Kingdom of God, it's a riff off of Augustine, who had an incredible observation that even Christians would disagree with today, it seems like. Augustine's observation is that Rome was at its most secure when it was its most pagan. When Rome began to embrace Christianity is when Rome collapsed. So this is how Augustine writes, City of God, if you're familiar with that book.

He starts with the basic question, are Christians to blame for the decline of the Roman Empire? Because now the Roman Empire is moving away from the Pantheon and towards the worship of the

triumphant God. It seems like their borders are crumbling, their capital, of course, ends up getting moved, everything is falling apart. Augustine argues that there's two different cities that are involved. There's the city of man on earth, and there's a city of God in heaven.

The fates of those two are not intertwined. People misunderstand Augustine. He's not arguing for some kind of political nihilism or apathy or anything like that. But he is making the point that sometimes the kingdom of God shines brightest and is strongest in the darkest of places. If you make the goal of the kingdom of God to transform the kingdom of man, you're conflating your kingdoms. There's two different spheres that you've got going on. There will be Christians that live and thrive in completely godly lives that are honoring the Lord in all they do in a country that is dark and depraved. It is not their fault the country is dark and depraved. It's people who embrace sin, that are kind of steering the truck off the cliff.

Host: David Wheaton 42:16

Jesse Johnson with us today here on The Christian Worldview, the pastor of Immanuel Bible Church in Virginia. We have links to his ministry at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org.

On page 39 of your book, *City of Man, Kingdom of God*, you write this. When you believe it is the government that bestows your rights, you look to the government instead of to God as having the final say about the purpose and parameters of your existence. You trust in the government for protection, provision, and prosperity. You look to the government for your paycheck, health care and education. The government becomes the warehouse of your rights, and government programs become the pipeline of your wealth and identity.

If you believe that, you'll be using your life to advocate for all kinds of solutions God did not design government to be capable of producing. I wouldn't know the percentage, but I think there's a large percentage of Americans who have that view of government today. That government is here to be our primary helper, funder, sustainer. This is a two part question. How is it possible to change that particular perception of reliance on government? Because it wasn't that at an earlier time in America. It was much more perceived government is to be limited. The second part is, How should pastors be informing their congregants about what is going on with government politically and morally, and not to be so much under the authority of government as to be supported by it?

Guest: Jesse Johnson 44:00

There's a language shift. When people start appealing to government for privileges of worship or something like that, that's where they're revealing that they are really not understanding the way God made mankind. COVID-19 did bring this out big time in our country. When the government withdrew the right to worship, you have governors and stuff that are talking about how they're suspending this right. You have to appeal and you can use the legal process to try to regain that right. Ultimately, the right to worship didn't come from the government. I mean, that's the big point.

Worship pre-dates, government. People, because we're created in the image of God, have the ability and the so called right to worship according to conscience prescribed by the Word of God. The government is not the source of that, therefore they can't really cut that off. Now they can make the believers life miserable, and they can drag believers into court and all this, which Jesus says they'll do of course. He says you'll be dragged into court, but the right to worship doesn't come from the Government.

You do see that in a lot of Western countries, where the government sets itself up with this attitude of, you can worship when we tell you, you can worship. That plays out in a worldview, even to the irreligious. There are so many people that have their jobs from government. They look to government for their happiness. When there's a problem in life, they blame the government. Global warming, they blame government. Shootings in schools, they blame government. Traffic, they blame government. Anything that happens. People have this idea that the government is all benevolent, which is, of course, wrong. They have this idea that government is all powerful, which is also wrong. But you know what? That appeals to people in government. People who are in government like to think of themselves as powerful, and like to think of themselves as good. When I say that, I don't mean your typical middle class government worker who's just making a living. I'm talking about when you start into the political world, it's a tale as old as time. All the way back in Ecclesiastes chapter 4, chapter 8. In Ecclesiastes, it describes government leaders that think of themselves as all righteous and all good and all powerful. That creates an environment very difficult for believers to navigate.

Host: David Wheaton 46:10

Jesse Johnson with us today on The Christian Worldview. The issue of Christian nationalism has arisen more prominently as a result of government mandates and the demoralizing of our society. People see what's going on morally. People see the overreach of government, it's godless. And so they see a mandate in Scripture that Christians have a call to take dominion, to rule in all the different institutions. Government, education, corporations and every area of life, Christians need to take dominion. So there's that. But in light of what Jesus said in John 18:36, *"My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place."*

Give us a final exhortation today as we think about the push for Christian nationalism. It's tempting for patriotism, for Christ to reign in government and our laws to reflect what the Bible says. That's how Christ is going to rule someday. I believe in the millennium. He's going to reign and purposely put out biblical principles in the law for people to follow. And yet, when Christ was actually here in His first advent, that's not the way he told his followers to live in this, "City of man." So talk about the bit of a contrast there between Christian nationalism and how Christ actually lived and what he said during his life here on Earth.

Guest: Jesse Johnson 47:49

You're exactly right. Tempting is the right word for it. Especially the younger generation. Guys in their 20s right now. I see them being siphoned off to Christian nationalism very quickly, because a sense of it is frustrated. I mean, if I can speak in over generalizations, I think a lot of the college students today and the young guys in their 20s, they look at the boomer generation, they look at guys in their 60s and 70s and they say, Hey, you shut down our country, you shut down our schools, you shut down our churches, because you were afraid of a virus. You prioritized yourself. You tanked the presidential election. You tanked our economy. You tanked education. There's a real sense of anger towards the older generation.

That plays into their political outlook. They look at the political leaders, and you're seeing this on both the right and the left, by the way. They look at the political leaders that went before and they're like, you guys just caved on everything that mattered, everything. So you're seeing a rise of Christian nationalism on the right and you're seeing a rise of this desire for a more strong kind of One World governmental force on the left, also.

The temptation is there in both camps to say the generation before us just failed us in every conceivable way. The solution is to have a stronger government going forward that represents the values that we hold dear. Now, I say it's a temptation on the right, too, because that's not the way God designed the church. The church is not supposed to regulate government and government is not supposed to regulate the church. In this church age, beginning on Pentecost all the way to the rapture, to the kingdom, the church is a multinational, multi ethnic organization. The New Testament has a remnant theology. We're the diaspora. We're believers that are cast out in the world. We are growing the church, we're making disciples, we're adding to our numbers day by day, but that's not taking over the government. That is growing the church in an international way.

Now you hope that believers get placed in the government. You pray for that, and you pray for government leaders to come to faith. You want your government to more accurately reflect biblical values. Of course you do. But that's not Christian Nationalism. When you read the books about Christian nationalism, the arguments for Christian nationalism, there's very much in there, this idea that government should be regulating church, they should be rebuking slothful ministers is a phrase that's often used, they should be establishing Christian laws, they should be making a nation that reflects Christianity.

Now, to be clear, there's a moral truth about marriage and about sexual immorality, and moral truth about freedoms that we have that you want government to reflect. That stuff is natural law. You don't have to be a Christian to recognize that marriage is between a man and a woman. You don't have to be a Christian to recognize the drag story hour in libraries is immoral and ungodly. But Christians are designed to expose the world to moral law to natural law. They're designed to call people to repent of sin, and to be baptized and join the church and grow the church, not the government.

I do think there's a distinction between the city of man and the kingdom of God, and one that will remain that way until the Lord does come and set up His kingdom. We're not going to set up God's kingdom for Him. He's going to come and do that Himself. In a sense, my Premillennialism plays into this. I think Christian nationalism is dangerous because it tries to move the kingdom to the church age, as opposed to looking forward to the return of Christ. He's going to return. The disciples asked in the beginning of Acts 1.

After Jesus taught for 40 days in the kingdom, the first question, after 40 days of a kingdom lecture was, Lord is it at this time you're going to establish your kingdom? Jesus said, No. You go into all the world, you preach the gospel to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, uttermost parts of the earth. You go do that. It's not for you to know the day and the hour. That's for him to know. So we look forward to the Lord's return. In the meantime, we call people to repent, we confront them for sin, and we preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Host: David Wheaton 51:39

Thank you Jesse for coming on The Christian Worldview today. I Wish all of God's best and grace to you and your family and your church.

Guest: Jesse Johnson 51:46

David, thank you for having me. Thank you for all the work you do to help equip the next generation of followers of Christ.

Host: David Wheaton 51:52

We have Jesse's church sermons and new book, *City of Man Kingdom of God*, linked at TheChristianWorldview.org. We are completely out of time.

Just a reminder about The Christian Worldview Movie Night. We're going to be showing *The Essential Church* on Saturday, September 9, at Fourth Baptist Church in Plymouth, Minnesota. You are invited to come. Go to our website or give us a call to register. One final most important point, Jesus said *Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* That's from John chapter three.

If you haven't been born again or aren't sure, we urge you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. If you have questions, give us a call or go to our website and click on the page, "What must I do to be saved?" Thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview. Let's remember that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. Until next time, Think biblically, live accordingly, and stand firm!

The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end. To hear a replay of today's program, order a transcript or find out, "What must I do to be saved?" Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll free 1-888-646-2233. The Christian Worldview is a listener supported nonprofit radio ministry furnished by the Overcomer Foundation. To make a donation, become a Christian Worldview Partner, order resources, subscribe to our free newsletter or contact us, visit TheChristianWorldview.org, call 1-888-646-2233, or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. That's Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. Thanks for listening to The Christian Worldview.