



# Pastor's Pen

## *Faith in God, not in Government*

*I believe this article written by Greg Johnson, one of our elders, is very timely. While the Bible states in Psalm 33:13, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord," it's the people who attract that blessing; not something mandated by government. Please Enjoy! --Pastor Gary*

The recent election and other recent events have left many wondering if the United States is still a Christian nation. Although this nation was founded on Christian principles by devout Christian men, we have seen an erosion of that foundation to the point that the founders of this country would not recognize it, in fact would be ashamed of it. Their wisdom kept them from making the United States officially "Christian." Instead they guaranteed everyone free exercise of his religious beliefs and prohibited government from establishing a state religion. You might think it would have been better had they made the United States officially Christian, but I assure you it would not. To make my point, I point across the Atlantic to Europe which is full of officially "Christian" nations that are hostile to God and His Word. A nation's seal of approval on a church is the kiss of death. Europe is full of huge beautiful tax-supported churches that are empty and dead.

The reason for this is simple: Government cannot officially endorse anything without governing (controlling) it; and God will not be controlled by men. In Jeremiah 2:13 God says, "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." The living water of the Holy Spirit cannot be contained in government cisterns. Ezekiel 47:1-12 describes the Holy Spirit's living water. It flows from the temple and becomes a mighty un-crossable river. Verse 11 clearly shows that the healing power of that river is only where it flows. The stagnant backwaters remain dead.

Jesus said to give to Caesar what was Caesar's and to God what was God's. Governments are ordained by God. Jesus told Pilate he would have no power over Jesus if God had not given it to him. But God is not ordained by governments. The province of government is the temporal, your body and your actions. The province of God is the eternal, your spirit and your thoughts. Thus God's law is higher than man's. If they conflict, we must obey God. Daniel could not cease to pray no matter what the King decreed.

While we should never wish for persecution, neither should we fear it. Jesus said don't fear man who can only kill the body, but fear God who can send both soul and body to hell. Just as the state seal of approval is death to the church, so persecution can breathe life into the church. The early church flourished under the cruel and zealous persecution of Rome. We see in Acts chapter 8:3, 4 that it was the persecution led by Saul that jump-started the fulfillment of the Great Commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel. Modern examples of the church flourishing amid persecution abound in places like China, India, and Islamic countries.

Our faith cannot be in government; it has to be in God. While we have enjoyed the blessings of liberty and will hopefully continue to do so, it may be that as the light of God's love shines out from us against the black back-drop of a society that has shunned God and lost its way, this will be the church's finest hour.



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