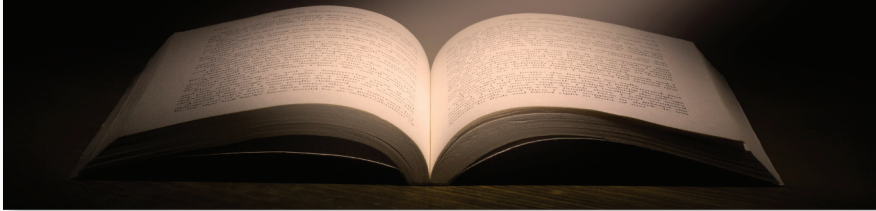


Politics or Religion?



Last Thursday my friend and I chose to watch the Trump-Biden debate rather than go to our Thursday night Bible study meeting, at which we were scheduled to watch "The Chosen", Season 4, Episode 2. Even though he himself wanted to see the debate, the leader of the meeting decided to go ahead anyway because, "There are some who aren't that interested in politics."

That struck me since it dealt with an issue I struggle with often. As the United States and especially California descend into moral, social, and political madness, my temptation is to withdraw into my turtle shell, ignore the hurricane all around us, and live each day doing my assigned work, and staying focused on God and my relationship with Him.

Arguments can be made that the Bible, and especially Jesus Himself, are silent on the issue of political or civic involvement. The closest one gets to a statement about political engagement is Jesus' come-back to the Pharisees who were trying to trap Him, "Then he said to them, 'Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.'" He seemed to be saying that we should keep our temporal and our spiritual lives separated.

Is that what He meant? Did He Himself practice that separation? There is evidence that He treated religious leaders and political leaders differently during the drama of His last week in Jerusalem, before He was crucified. He angrily attacked the Scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy, lying (like their father, the devil!), and leading people to become children of hell like they were. But when confronted by Pilate, He said little, seeming to excuse Pilate, telling him that he what was happening was God's plan, which no human could change. Jesus was clearly focused on spreading His message of salvation, not leading a rebellion against the Roman oppressors, to the disappointment of His followers.

It can be frustrating when the Bible leaves important issues unanswered or unclear, leaving us limited humans to make our way through the fog of uncertainty and indecision as we live out our lives. Don't you sometimes feel like shouting at our Father, "Would You please just tell me what to do?!" I confess that I do at times.

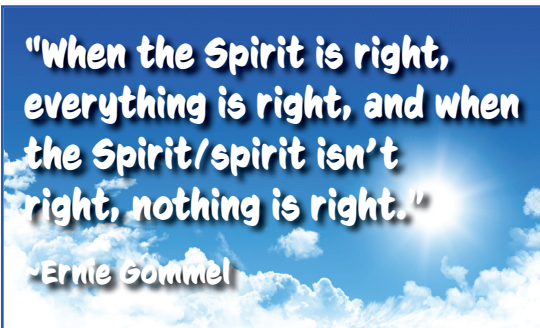
A kind of parallel has emerged into the spotlight recently, when the Supreme Court ruled against federal agencies filling in vague laws with regulations that reflect their own almost universally leftist worldviews. The regulations then become as laws without being passed by Congress, our elected representatives, as required by the Constitution.

In the case of what the Bible tells us, the organized churches fill in the details rather

like the administrative agencies. Each denomination comes up with its own interpretation of the Bible and creates its own set of rules, often differing radically from each other.

Whose set of rules are we to listen to? Catholic or Eastern Orthodox? Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, or SDAs? Calvary Chapel, which is a denomination of non-denominational churches?

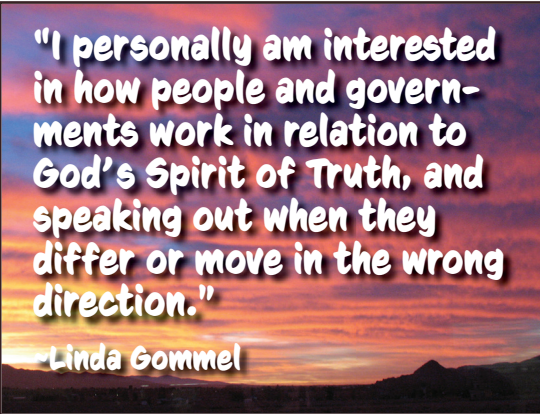
The first answer to that question is Gommel's favorite statement: "It's the Spirit, it's the Spirit, it's the Spirit!" And,, "When the Spirit is right, everything is right, and when



the Spirit/spirit isn't right, nothing is right." Both the secular bureaucratic regulations (laws) and the churches' denominational practices and rules simply encode the ideas of men into stone and thus tend to exclude the Spirit. It's so much easier that way! We know how to act and what we should do! Who needs to ask God when it's written down right there, in our church doctrinal manuals.

The second answer returns us to the main question: Politics or Religion? Since the Bible isn't specific about our engaging in politics, it's up to each of us in our individual church or Spirit-family groups to decide what God wants of us in each situation, and even if He wants certain ones of us to make "politics" our life's work (for Him, of course!).

I've sometimes been written off as a political junkie, and it always grates on me since I don't consider myself that way at any level. Merriam Webster Includes these definitions in its discussion of politics: "the art or science concerned with guiding or influencing governmental policy; the total complex of relations between people living in society". That's what I personally am interested in how people and governments



work in relation to God's Spirit of Truth, and speaking out when they differ or move in the wrong direction.

When Pastor John MacArthur of Grace

Community Church refused to close his church during the Covid Pandemic, was that engaging in politics? If so, was that bad? Did he give glory to God through the stand he took? Did he put in their places the arrogant bureaucrats who are generally hostile to those who believe God is their God and not the government, and who also had an agenda against churches? I believe his stand was courageous and honorable in God's eyes.

Are we to do that kind of thing as our rule of living? It depends. It's the Spirit, it's the Spirit, it's the Spirit! We are to live as He directs, from day to day. We are NOT to live by manmade rules and regulations that remove from us the responsibility we have to God to seek God's will and to live our lives in relationship and obedience to Him!

As our world and our nation darken even further, this issue will become more and more challenging. Will we represent God whichever way He directs, or will we chicken out and stay in our chicken coop?

Linda Gommel

NEIGHBORHOOD CLEAN UP

SAT, JULY 27, 2024
9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

AT Lucerne Valley Market & Hardware

32946 CA-18, Lucerne Valley

San Bernardino Code Enforcement and Solid Waste Management Divisions will be providing **BULKY TRASH collection containers for the FREE disposal of accumulated trash, e-waste, and tires.**

WE CANNOT ACCEPT HAZARDOUS WASTE. This includes motor oil, and oil filters, anti-freeze, gasoline, drain cleaner, pesticides, fertilizers, fluorescent lights, wood preservatives, pool and hobby supplies, auto/furniture paint, paint thinners, polish products, medications or similar products.

WE WILL ACCEPT: Household trash, bulky items, green waste and vehicle tires, (we do not accept concrete.) Urban Conservation Corps will be present to accept electronics: (TV's, COMPUTER MONITORS, VCR's, STEREOS, CELL PHONES, MICRO-WAVES & MORE)

For current information, please call the Household Hazardous Waste Program 1.800.OILY.CAT (1.800.645.9228)



Cosponsored by San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, Lucerne Valley, and San Bernardino County Fire Protection District

LVEDA Meeting

(Lucerne Valley Economic Development Association)

Monday, **July 29th**

5:00 pm at the Moose Lodge
on Foothill Road, just west of Tradepost Road.

Reports from our **County, State and Federal Representatives.** Progress reports from County Sheriff's Department, CHP and Code Enforcement.

SEE NEXT WEEK'S COMMENTARY PAGE FOR PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS.

On The Lighter Side of Serious Stuff . . . from the Web

WATCHING THE U.S. PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE:



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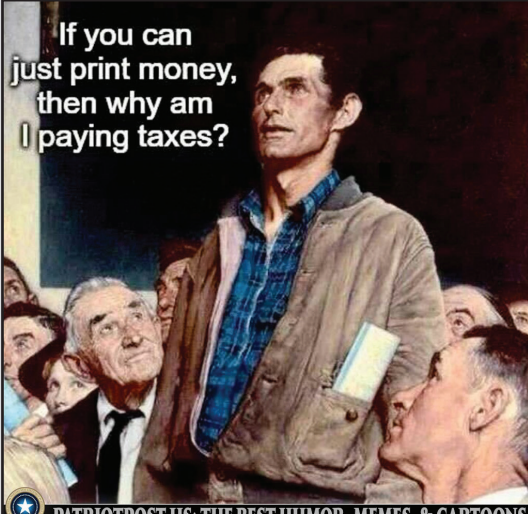
WHEN WE CHANGED THE CLOCKS THIS YEAR I DIDN'T EXPECT



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