



Civil authorities are servants of God, with a twofold mission: to promote the common good and to restrain evil.



Dr. Robert J. Pacienza,
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Impact

A Newsletter of Coral Ridge Ministries

God's Two-Fold Design for the State

by Dr. Robert J. Pacienza

Many Christians treat government as though it were a human invention, one that God used for his purposes during Bible times, but an institution about which he may not care today. They're mistaken. God designed the state for a specific, limited purpose. The clearest and most concise expression of God's design and purpose for civil government is found in Romans 13:3-4:

"For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out

God's wrath on the wrongdoer."

Paul tells us here that civil authorities are servants of God, with a twofold mission: to promote the common good and to restrain evil. And this limited mandate is achieved through "the power of the sword."

But what if the state violates that calling? In that case, Scripture is also clear: *"We must obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5:29). If the government forbids preaching the gospel, that is an unjust law we must not obey. The early apostles faced this same choice—and chose to proclaim Christ, even when it was illegal. Had they not, we might never have heard the Good News.

And why is God's design for government limited to these two functions: promoting the common

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A Call to Prayer from Jennifer Kennedy Cassidy

The American Civil Liberties Union is no fan of prayer or chaplains in public schools. After “See You at the Pole” launched in 1990, the ACLU branded the student-led prayer event unconstitutional. It later backpedaled, calling the flagpole gathering outside school hours “permissible.”

Now the ACLU is taking on a new “threat”—chaplains in public schools. Four states—Texas, Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana—allow chaplains in government-run schools. Some 14 other states have considered doing the same. The ACLU is putting up a fight, claiming these on-campus chaplains are “unconstitutional,” violate the “separation of church and state,” even “endanger students’ well-being.”

ACLU Gets It Wrong

But just as in 1990, the ACLU blunders badly. First Liberty Institute notes that courts have upheld government chaplains in numerous contexts. And the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the First Amendment does not “compel the government to purge from the public sphere’ anything [that] endorses or ‘partakes of the religious.’”

Kids in school need all the prayer they can get. If you have school-age children, consider supporting their participation in See You at the Pole on September 24 (syatp.org). And I urge you to pray regularly for students in your community—perhaps choose a school near you and ask God to bless, protect, and save students and staff there. ●



Jennifer Kennedy Cassidy,
Daughter of D. James
Kennedy and Chair, Coral
Ridge Ministries Board
of Directors

God’s Two-Fold Design for the State

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good and restraining evil? The answer is so the church could have maximum impact and influence.

The Church’s Vital Role

For most of the last two thousand years, wherever Christianity was free to flourish, the church has led the way in caring for the world. To whom did the poor, the sick, the orphaned, and the hopeless turn? The church. Who educated all social classes, launched foreign aid, supported the arts, and ministered to the “least of these”? The church.

U.S. history is bursting with examples of the church’s extraordinary positive impact, as well. It was the church that

- Provided the New World with a bottomless well of Christian worldview-equipped civil leaders during the 17-19th centuries.
- Founded America’s first and most reputable institutions of higher learning, such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton.
- Inspired the abolitionist movement, following in the footsteps of British Christian anti-slave trade leader William Wilberforce.

But because of sin, we now live

in an upside-down society in which government has maximum influence, and the church has marginal influence. What Paul wanted us to understand is that the state has a lane within which it should stay. The state’s lane begins where the church’s lane ends. The state does not have the authority to tell the preacher what to preach, the church how to worship, or the family how to operate.

The Church’s Abdication

Tragically, the modern church has abdicated its role. Many pastors and churches have surrendered their prophetic witness, retreating from the public square. Meanwhile, the state continues to grow in power—often with little resistance. But Francis Schaeffer put it plainly: “*The state is to be an agent of justice, to restrain evil by punishing the wrongdoer, and to protect the good in society. When it does the reverse, it has no proper authority. It is then a usurped authority and as such it becomes lawless and is tyranny*”

This is why it’s so critical to elect leaders who align with God’s framework for government. If rulers are called to promote good and restrain evil, then we must do everything in our power to support candidates who embrace that Christian theological framework. Why would we not want to advance God’s presence and proper place in the public square? ●

With our deepest gratitude for your generous gift of \$60 or more...

A Strong Constitution: What Would America Look Like If We Followed the Law. For too many years, the Constitution has been treated as a “blank check” instead of a check on government power. In this book, Robert Knight, a respected Washington, D.C. journalist, gives you positive steps to restore constitutional government to “We the people.” PLUS our gripping documentary, *Attack on the Constitution*. This new CRM film features Coach Joe Kennedy, Jack Phillips, and Mark Houck, champions of faith, who have firsthand experience with judicial tyranny.

Or request just the book, *A Strong Constitution*, with thanks for your generous ministry support.



Your choice:
Streaming Link or DVD

Coach Kennedy Shares Gospel at D.C. Event

CRM's Capitol Hill-based outreach, the D. James Kennedy Center for Christian Statesmanship, hosted a *Politics & Principles* luncheon in July featuring Coach Joe Kennedy. A standing-room-only crowd of more than 150 congressional staffers and interns attended.

Coach Joe, a retired Marine, won a landmark religious liberty ruling at the U.S. Supreme Court in 2022. At the luncheon, he shared his compelling testimony and gave a clear presentation of the gospel. Attendees came from both Republican and Democratic offices, affording a rare moment of bipartisan interest in the relationship between faith and public service.



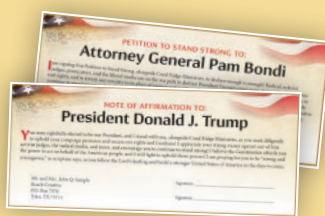
Equipping Christian Leaders

These young leaders are not only pursuing careers in policy and government. Many are also seeking clarity on how their faith can shape their professional lives and public policy.

Moments like this embody the mission of the Center for Christian Statesmanship. They happen through the generosity of good friends like you who believe in sharing Christ on Capitol Hill and equipping Christian leaders for public life. Your generosity expands the Center's reach and strengthens everything we do to bring hope to the nation! ●

Your Signed Notes, Petitions to Trump, Bondi

The Left has flooded American courts with lawsuits to stop or frustrate the President's agenda. In a show of support, friends of Coral Ridge Ministries signed a "Note of Affirmation" to President Donald J. Trump and a "Petition to Stand Strong" to Attorney General Pam Bondi. Thank you to all who added their signatures to these expressions of support and encouragement, which CRM sent to Trump and Bondi in July! ●



Letters from Friends . . .

We really appreciate your ministry and the work you're doing in Washington.
— *Jessica L.*

I got saved when I was 8 years old, while watching Dr. Kennedy on TV. I love the way Dr. Rob delivers the message each week. — *Shawn M.*

I'm so glad you guys are standing on biblical truth when so many others are wishy washy, white toast. I'm pulling out your envelope to donate. — *Mary W.*

We're eager to hear from you, too! Just send your comments or questions to letters@crm.tv.



PROVIDENCE
forum

REVIVING THE SPIRIT OF LIBERTY

Dr. Franklin Saves the Day

by Jerry Newcombe, D.Min.

We are often given the impression that the founding fathers intended a "strict separation of church and state" with no religious references allowed in the government.



Jerry Newcombe, D.Min.,
Executive Director of CRM's
outreach, Providence Forum*

But in reality, on June 28, 1787, during an impasse at the Constitutional Convention, one of the least orthodox of the founding fathers—Dr. Ben Franklin—called on the convention to pray to help break the logjam. This speech turned out to be a positive turning point in a convention that almost seemed doomed to failure.

"God Governs" in Human Affairs

Said Dr. Franklin (as recorded by James Madison):

"The small progress we have made after 4 or 5 weeks close attendance . . . is methinks a melancholy proof of the imperfection of the Human Understanding. . . .

"I have lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth—that God Governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?"

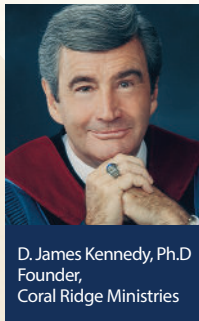
The founders prayed together at a local church soon after this speech, and they were, by God's grace, finally able to produce the Constitution on September 17, 1787. ●



The Declaration & the Constitution

by D. James Kennedy, Ph.D.

Liberty is what America is about. The Declaration of Independence declared our liberty; the Constitution guaranteed it—it secured “the blessings of Liberty....”



D. James Kennedy, Ph.D.
Founder,
Coral Ridge Ministries



CORAL RIDGE MINISTRIES

Founded by D. James Kennedy

John Quincy Adams, America’s sixth president posed this question in an 1837 Fourth of July oration. Why is it, he asked, “that, next to the birthday of the Savior of the World, your most joyous and most venerated festival returns on this day?”

Adams’ answer? “Is it not that, in the chain of human events, the birthday of the nation is indissolubly linked with the birthday of the Savior? That it forms a leading event in the progress of the gospel dispensation? Is it not that the Declaration of Independence first organized the social compact on the foundation of the Redeemer’s mission upon earth? That it laid the cornerstone of human government upon the first precepts of Christianity?”

Try saying that today in polite company and you’ll quickly discover just how far our nation has strayed from its foundation.

But Adams is not alone in linking Christianity and political liberty. John Winthrop, the great Puritan founder of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, spoke in 1645 of “the other kind of liberty I call civil or federal.” That liberty, he said, “is of the same kind of liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.”

Winthrop, and many others who, like him, drew their political philosophy from Scripture, contributed to a moral tradition, a common understanding of liberty and law, that came to fruition on July 4, 1776. On that day, 56 brave men put their lives at risk by agreeing to a document severing all ties with Britain and declaring “that these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States.”

The Declaration of Independence

is America’s founding document and is the statement *par excellence* of the principles on which our fair, but now much troubled, nation was founded. The Declaration explicitly acknowledges God four times. We are told in the Declaration that all men are “endowed by their Creator” with the unalienable right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” The Declaration cites the “laws of nature and of nature’s God” and appeals to Him as the “Supreme Judge of the world.” Finally, the Founders express their “firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence.”

These first principles articulated in the Declaration were not withdrawn when the U.S. Constitution was approved by Congress. The Framers did not need to restate in the Constitution what they had already established in the Declaration.

Not, of course, that there is no reference to God in the Constitution. The Constitution explicitly recognizes the Christian Sabbath in Article I, Section 7, which gives the President 10 days, “Sundays excepted,” to return or sign a bill. The Constitution also closes with a date reference that indicates it was unanimously approved on September 17, “in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven. . . .”

Liberty is what America is about. The Declaration of Independence declared our liberty; the Constitution guaranteed it—it secured “the blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.” The unmistakable source, as John Quincy Adams so rightly said, is Christ, our Redeemer, who announced nearly 2,000 years ago his mission “to proclaim liberty to the captives . . . to set at liberty those who are oppressed.” ●

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