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CHOOSE CAREFULLY IN 2016: FREEDOM OR TYRANNY!

Ronald Reagan's timeless analysis given decades ago is more relevant today than ever before. He said, *"This is the issue of this election: whether we believe in our capacity for self-government or whether we abandon the American Revolution and confess that a little intellectual elite in a far-distant capitol can plan our lives for us better than we can plan them ourselves."*



President Reagan realized that American liberty was not built upon a monolithic, centralized national government controlling every area of our lives. He recognized that America was founded upon decentralized plan of self-government which was lived out by our Christian ancestors and enshrined in our Constitution.

Voting wisely this fall is absolutely vital if we are to maintain any measure of freedom. But equally urgent is the need for Americans, especially Christians, to focus the other 364 days of the year on **mastering the art of self-government**. Samuel Adams pleaded with his generation to unite and teach their children "the art of self-government" and the "virtues of Christianity."

A 17th century philosopher of liberty, Hugo Grotius, said that only a self-governing individual can lead a family, city or nation: "He knows not how to rule a **Kingdom** that cannot manage a

Province; nor can he wield a Province that cannot order a **City**; nor he order a City, that knows not how to regulate a **Village**; nor he a Village, that cannot guide a **Family**; nor can that man govern well a Family that knows not how to govern **himself**; neither can any govern himself unless ... he be ruled by God, and (wholly) be obedient to Him."

Here is a brief summary of America's founding strategy to build a self-governing republic.

Individual Self-Government: The redeemed individual, walking in a renewed loving relationship with his Creator is the starting point for building a free and prosperous, self-governing republic. Our loving Lord supernaturally replaces a repentant individual's "heart of stone" with a new heart and new spirit which empowers him to love God and his neighbor as himself. (Ezekiel 11:19) When this redeemed Christian voluntarily chooses, for the most part, to do what is right, then there is no need for a big government welfare or police state ruling by force.

Family Government: Throughout Scripture, the driving engine in the building of a self-governing republic is the family. The commission for family government is given in Deuteronomy 6: 4-12. First, we as individuals are to know God and love

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Him with all our heart, soul and strength. Then we are to teach our children God’s Word and purpose throughout the day. **Scripture delegates all education to the parents, not to civil government:** “These words which I command you today shall be in your heart and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.” Then we are to commit ourselves, our homes and our businesses—all we are and do—with obedience to God’s Word. We can then expect blessing to come to our cities and nation. We can also expect blessing to ourselves and our children to a thousand generations! (Deuteronomy 7:9)

Church Government: Scripture teaches that church government is directed by character-filled elders and deacons chosen by the people. The church is commissioned to teach the Word of God to individuals and families, to preach the Gospel, care for widows and orphans, and care for the poor and needy in the local community. **The churches and private charities provided the safety net or welfare system of America for centuries,** according to Marvin Olasky in his classic book, *The Tragedy of American Compassion*. Only in the 20th century did civil government begin to become a monolithic, god-like provider for much of our population. Olasky recommends that we return our welfare needs, as much as possible, back to the loving care of churches and private charities, away from corrupt government bureaucracies. Today’s government welfare makes up much of our bloated, bankrupt federal budget, whereas, private, voluntary love and charity comes from voluntary tithes and sacrificial service, at no cost to the taxpayer.

Civil Government: As the individuals, families and churches are fulfilling their responsibilities, civil magistrates are to protect the righteous, approve

good deeds and punish evildoers. **Civil servants are to be “ministers” of God in their limited sphere of authority, not secular overlords.** (Romans 13:1-4) Civil government was created by God. (Genesis 9:5-6) Limited jurisdictions or boundaries of power were set for each institution including the family, church and civil government. The people of a nation are held accountable for the well-being of their country. They are also responsible for the choice and obedience of their rulers. (Deuteronomy 16:18-20; 1 Samuel 12:24-25)

The future of our republic does not rest only on the election of civil leaders, but especially on “ordinary families” doing the right thing over the long haul. Our Lord is changing the world by His people one individual and one family at a time. **We must choose one of two opposing strategies.** The first is the grassroots-up model upon which America was successfully built. The other is the top-down scheme promoted by the enemy of our souls. We must choose carefully, for one leads to tyranny and death, while the other will ensure freedom and prosperity for our children and our children’s children.

As Dr. George Grant says, “This is the great lesson of history: **It is ordinary people of authentic Christian faith who are ultimately the ones who are best able to shape the outcome of human events—not kings and princes, not masters and tyrants.** It is laborers and workmen, cousins and acquaintances that upend the expectations of the brilliant and the glamorous, the expert and the meticulous. It is plain folks, simple people, who literally change the course of history—because they are the stuff of which history is made. They are the ones who make the world go round. For as G.K. Chesterton said, ‘The most extraordinary thing in the world is an ordinary man and an ordinary woman and their ordinary children.’”

— Marshall Foster



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