

Column

With change comes both hope and trepidation. This is true, for example, when a couple gets married; when a new baby is born; a new career is begun. In like manner these conflicting emotions arise with the election of a new President.

The hope is that four years hence the people of these United States will be more prosperous, more secure, more united. The fear is that bad decisions will result in personal freedom being diminished, economic calamity, unnecessary wars and the unravelling of law and order.

In reality, the future of the nation does not hinge solely on the man who occupies the oval office. Wisely, the founding fathers wove into the fabric of this republic checks and balances. We have three branches of government, not one, as many of us were taught in civics class in high school (I'm not sure if this subject is still taught. If it isn't, it ought to be).

Interestingly, the reason for distributing power among these three branches likely came about from the Founding Fathers' reading of scripture. There they learned that humans are susceptible to what in Christian parlance is called sin. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" says the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah.

Moreover, what the framers of the republic read in scriptures they saw validated in history. "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely," famously observed 19th century British historian Lord Acton.

Checks and balances serve to moderate both hope and fear, as they limit what any single elected official, including a President, can do. A good man cannot do all the good he wants to do, and an evil one is limited in his mischief.

What should the response of Christians be to government? It certainly should not be one of disengagement. By disengagement, I mean staying in our own little safe places and in so doing turning

over the business of government to unbelievers and secularists. Christians should both vote and be a part of the conversation.

More important still, Christians have a clear mandate in scripture to pray for those who bear the authority of government. We find that mandate in 1 Timothy 2:1:

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men:" For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour."

Christians are people of two homelands. Our true country is above. Our true King is Jesus. Even so, we are called to be salt and light where God has planted us . . . to bring the rule of heaven to earth as best as we can . . . to occupy until Jesus comes. Resolve to do your part.

O LORD our Governor, whose glory is in all the world; We commend this nation to thy merciful care, that being guided by thy Providence, we may dwell secure in thy peace. Grant to THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, and to all in Authority, wisdom and strength to know and to do thy will. Fill them with the love of truth and righteousness; and make them ever mindful of their calling to serve this people in thy fear; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

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