

# Can A Christian Serve?

*By Paul O. Nichols*

Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world...” (John 18:36). This is something all Christians should understand. Why is it so difficult for Christians to realize that we are in the world, but we are not of the world? Listen to Jesus shortly before He went to Calvary. He prayed to the Father in heaven, “I have given them (*the apostles*) thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:14-16).

The apostle Paul shows us in Romans chapter 13 that civil authority is according to God’s divine arrangement. It is given to govern the affairs of the world. It has neither part nor lot in the affairs of the church; it is carnal. Neither has the church any business meddling in the civil affairs of the world, for it is spiritual. The apostle Paul says, “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?”

Civil government has the responsibility of making laws, and of enforcing law and order. And if person is in violation of the laws of the land, the government has the responsibility of punishing the evil doer. “If thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath

upon him that doeth evil” (Rom. 13:4). That is the job of civil government.

The church is the body of Christ, made up of people who are “sanctified, and called to be saints” (1 Cor. 1:2). Our responsibilities are spiritual, for we are now “servants of righteousness” (Rom. 6:18). When members of the church, citizens of the kingdom of Christ, violate the divine laws of God which apply to Christians only, the church is required to deal with such matters. But if they are guilty of civil disobedience, they are subject to punishment by civil authority. “He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons” (Col. 3:25).

In this day and time many Christians are receiving calls to sit on juries on cases which have nothing to do with spiritual matters.

They are being asked to judge their fellow men and women in matters which have nothing to do with the church and things which are spiritual. Yes, juries are asked to judge a person guilty or not guilty. They may not be asked to pass the sentence, but they still do judge and cast their vote for either guilty or innocent. In 1 Corinthians chapter 5 the apostle Paul instructs the church to deal with a member who was guilty of sin, and assured them that he would be with them in spirit. And he pointed out to them and to us that we judge and deal with those who are in the church, but God judges them who are without.

We have no business judging and disciplining non-members. Such is not the business of the church. Those who are guilty of violating civil law are to be judged by civil authority, not by Christians.

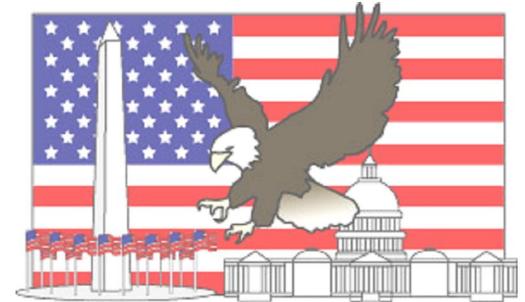
Members of the Lord's church should be some of the finest citizens in any country. The word of God teaches us to be subject to the higher powers. For they are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1). And we are told, "Submitting yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." (1 Pet. 2:13) However, there is an exception to this rule. As Peter and the other apostles told the members of the Sanhedrin court of the Jews, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). When the laws of men conflict with the laws of God, we must choose to obey God, regardless of the consequences.



Paul O. Nichols has served the Church of Christ faithfully for over sixty years.

*Reprinted and supplied by friends of Paul O. Nichols:*

# CAN A CHRISTIAN SERVE?



*By Paul O. Nichols*