***Civil Disobedience

GV3B***

This is segment number six in the series Christian Service and Human Government. In Galatians 5:1 we read, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty with which Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." In Galatians 5:13-14 we read, "For brethren, we have been called unto liberty. Only do not use liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

**Divine Institutions**

A recent statistic declared that of the 125 nations in the world today, only 20 of them could be classified as countries in which personal freedom exists for the citizens of those nations. That is an appalling statistic in view of the fact that the first divine institution is personal human freedom. It shows how far Satan has been successful in dominating his world with his viewpoint which, when transmitted to human beings, becomes human viewpoint in conflict with the Word of God and its divine viewpoint. A divine institution, as you know, is a law of God for the organization of human society. This law, as a divine institution, applies equally to saved and unsaved alike, within a society. The purpose of a divine institution is to prevent Satan who now dominates the earth from enslaving the human race in his evil program. A divine institution protects personal freedom which God has given, and it preserves the access to divine viewpoint knowledge which, we find in the Bible, exposes Satan and his ways.

**Human Government**

The Bible reveals to us that one of God's divine institutions is human government functioning within individual sovereign nations. The Bible reveals that God's purpose for human government is very simple and very clear. It is to maintain order within society to enable the citizens to fulfil the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28. That is the sole purpose of human government--to maintain a condition within a society that people can exercise freely in their natural abilities to fulfill the cultural mandate of subduing the earth and developing personal happiness through the possession of legitimately gained property. God has given government the authority therefore to punish those who break the laws of the nation and thus disturb the orderly conduct of life. The laws of human government must be guided by the higher law of God as found in Scripture. Citizens therefore are to be obedient to human governments unless that government violates the divine rules of Scripture. For this reason, people must know the difference between human viewpoint concepts and divine viewpoint concepts. Otherwise you don't know when the government has stepped out of line, and when the bottom line has been reached, at which point you are no longer subject to that authority.

We have seen that the Protestant Reformation reiterated the biblical principle that man and all his institutions were under the authority of God's laws of the Bible. Freedom was seen as a gift from God which could not be denied a citizen by governmental authorities. To deny personal freedom would violate divine institution number one about volition. Government was seen as needing the restraint of Scripture because the old sin nature in rulers would not by nature possess divine viewpoint principles in the laws that they made. So, you had to have the guiding rules of Scripture to keep human laws in line with reality. Government which is detached from the laws of Scripture becomes a tyranny of human viewpoint destroying personal freedom.

**Lex Rex**

So, we saw that in the 17th century, along came that great man Samuel Rutherford who wrote Lex Rex which enunciated the Biblical principle that God's law is above the king's law. Any law of the king contrary to the principles of Scripture was to be resisted. That, of course, was considered treason in his day. Government rulers, Rutherford pointed out, are ministers of God, and thus they are not above God's law in the Bible. The king, he stressed, has a sin nature and so is not to be trusted to govern by his own wisdom alone. Now this principle of God's law as king was the basis of the American Revolution. Freedom of personal conscience was violated by the British government. The authority of the king came from God, and King George III had abused that authority by transgressing the God-given rights and the freedom of the American colonists. He wanted, for example, to establish the Church of England as the National Church of the United States, and a variety of other impositions of regulations which are contrary to the Word of God and the freedom of colonists.

**The Constitution**

Now the king was, for that reason, guilty of arbitrary law and thus he broke his covenant with the American colonies as their ruler. That's what Rutherford pointed out in Lex Rex--that there is a covenant. There is a contract between the government and the people. Each is responsible to keep his part of the contract. When the government breaks the contract, then the people are free of loyalty to that government. During the forming of the United States government, after the revolution came John Witherspoon and John Locke, both of whom approached the principle of Samuel Rutherford from a spiritual and from a secular viewpoint, but they both came out to the same place, approaching Rutherford's first principle that God's law governs man's law. This was incorporated in the formation of the American government under the Constitution. For that reason, the Constitution declared that human government was a contract or a covenant between the people and the rulers. It was the principle of the Founding Fathers that all men were created equal by God since all have a sin nature. So they were all in an equal position, and one could not be declared as being superior to others. No ruler could say, "I know what is the best thing to do," because they all had sin natures and they needed divine guidance. If government broke the contract, the Constitution took the position that it forfeited the citizen's obedience and support, and it must be changed.

**The Declaration of Independence**

This was particularly declared in the Declaration of Independence which made it very clear that there is a contract between government and people. When the government breaks the contract, then the people have a right to bring that government to a termination point, and to substitute, to replace it with a government which is acceptable to the people and in conformity to the principles of the Word of God. That was very clearly enunciated in the Declaration of Independence followed then in the Constitution. Government was to protect the constitutional rights of all citizens equally to ensure the freedom of those citizens to enjoy life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And by the words "pursuit of happiness," they meant the possession of private property. If citizens do not know Bible doctrine, they will not know when the government is violating its contract.

**The Legal System**

The American legal system which we have inherited from England was also based upon the concept of God's law above man's law. This was crystallized in the legal writings, the commentaries which all early lawyers use as their basic textbook, written by William Blackstone. His commentaries followed the principle of Rutherford that man's law is guided and restrained by God's law. It's quite an inspiration to read the opening paragraphs of William Blackstone's legal commentaries to this day because he begins with a very distinctive declaration that if men are to be ruled properly, they have to look first to God to know how to do that. The only way they can do that is to look into the Bible and find the principles of morality and the principles that enunciate the role of government which then declare what man can do and what man cannot do if he is to find happiness in a social unit. It's a great inspiration just to read the opening paragraphs of Blackstone's commentary. You know immediately that you're dealing with a man who is a believer and who was talking about law from God's frame of reference.

**Private Property**

The cultural mandate of Genesis was seen by Blackstone as the basis of all private property ownership. This of course is the basis of freedom. If one has private property, one has freedom. Both the American Declaration of Independence and the Constitution conform to the viewpoint of Blackstone's higher law principle.

**Law**

So law in American society is not just what a judge says it is, but what the Bible says is right. That's the point of all this. Law is not just what the Supreme Court says it is. That's what the Supreme Court says law is. That's wrong. Law is not just what the Supreme Court says it is. Law is what the Bible says is right. So, when the Supreme Court comes along and it violates a biblical principle and the decision, as it has frequently done such as in the abortion issue, then the Supreme Court is wrong, and the Supreme Court is out of line and must be brought into conformity with the Word of God. Justice today is not determined by Scripture but by the sociological majorities. Furthermore, a small elitist group of judges is now free to impose their preference upon the whole nation apart from anything that the Bible says or that the Constitution says, because the Supreme Court has said, "The Constitution is what we say it is." Americans did not rise up in indignation in anger and say, "No, it isn't." It's what the founding fathers who based it upon the Word of God intended it to mean. That's what it means.

**Pluralism**

Now you and I are under a centralized federal bureaucracy that does as it pleases in regulating the lives of Americans and promoting secular humanism as the state religion. The First Amendment to the Constitution, we have seen, was designed to preserve religious freedom for Judeo-Christianity. That's what the word "religion" meant to the fathers when they wrote it--preserving freedom for the practice of Judeo-Christianity. The idea of religious pluralism is being used today to suggest that all religious views are equally valid, and therefore Christianity is not to be a controlling deciding factor in the laws of this government. Pluralism has come to mean that all religions are equally valid. And that is not true.

Americans have lost sight of the fact that the Bible is an inerrant revelation from God which can be understood and therefore must also be obeyed. That is the problem. I don't know that we can ever turn this back. I think while we recognize what's happened, while we can trace our historical origins, while we can trace where the fractures have come, I don't really think we can change this until Americans once more look upon the Bible with holy awe. They look upon it with neutral indifference. It's just a religious book, but it is not binding. I don't know if we can ever bring the American mentality back to where the Bible is binding. I don't know whether we can bring it back to where it is binding upon the minds of our young people. Look at the evil things that our youth is willing to do that they clearly know is contrary to the Word of God. The bible forbids it, but they do it. Do they tremble in terror, realizing that they are violating something the Bible says? No. We've lost the awesome respect for the Word of God as being the truly revealed communication of God to us. Now until we can come back to looking at the Bible in that light, we're going to act contemptuously; we're going to act with evil; we're going to subject ourselves to Satan; we're going to become his slaves; and, we're going to lose the God-given freedom that we've had provided to us in this nation.

**The Supreme Court**

The Supreme Court has also assumed unauthorized power over the lives of the citizens by deliberately reversing the intention of the writers of the Constitution relative to the Bill of Rights, those first ten amendments that spell out our Bill of Rights. When those were written, we pointed out, they were a restraint upon the federal government. The United States Supreme Court has reversed that and said, "No, from now on, the Bill of Rights is a restraint against the states, not against the federal government. With one blow, the federal government has assumed enormous power over the lives of the citizens--the very thing that the Founding Fathers wanted to avoid. This came about with the passing of the 14th Amendment after the Civil War which restrained states specifically from denying personal liberty to anybody without due process of law. This is used as the justification for the federal government to say that they must protect the liberty of the individual citizens. Since the First Amendment talks about liberty being granted to the citizens, the First Amendment must be protected by the federal government. Therefore, the First Amendment is now viewed as a restriction upon the states--not upon the federal government. Since the First Amendment is part of a catalog of ten amendments known as the Bill of Rights, the whole Bill of Rights by implication is a restraint upon the states and not upon the federal government.

Now all of this can be read by anybody who wants to take the trouble to read legal proceedings. The Supreme Court was very clear. They outlined this logical procedure and they admittedly said, "We are reversing what has been the understanding of the application of the Bill of Rights in the past and what the founding fathers intended by it." So with one blow, the federal government can do anything it wishes, and our states are restricted no matter how they may howl. So, when the federal government, through the Supreme Court said, "We have now decided that the time has come to permit women to kill their unborn children under the concept of the right of privacy and the right of control of their own bodies," all of the 50 states shouted, "No, that is wrong. We have laws against that. That is a violation of our Christian heritage, and our knowledge of the Word of God will not have it." The Supreme Court said, "Yes you will have it, because we are an elite group and we understand what is good for this nation, and we have the authority now to impose this upon you because the Bill of Rights is a restriction on the states, not upon us the federal government. You are denying liberty to a woman, and we're going to protect her liberty, and you people in the states cannot do anything about it."

What did the lawyers do? They sat on their hands. What did the Christian preachers do? We sat on our mouths. What did the average citizen do? You sat on your comfortable incomes and your good life. But nobody rose up and said, "You can't do that, Supreme Court. You cannot twist that. You cannot reinterpret it that way. You cannot turn the Bill of Rights against the states. That puts the federal government into a position of enormous power. This Bill of Rights was designed to restrain the power of the federal government over the people. It has been arbitrarily used to justify interference by the federal government in the lives of the people."

Separation of church and state was meant to establish what the federal government may not do. Instead, now the First Amendment is used to tell the churches what they may not do. The federal government has detached itself from the influence and the guidelines of Judeo-Christianity, and it used biblical concepts as a threat to human freedom and to human needs instead of a protection of human needs and of human freedom.

**Civil Disobedience**

So now, you a Christian are faced with government tyranny. What is the bottom line? The New Testament Christians met tyranny, the tyranny of the Roman government, with civil disobedience. That was the bottom line. The New Testament Christians suffered the penalty of obeying God when they refused to obey the government which told them to worship the emperor. The Christians were faced with a law of the land that said. "You must worship the Emperor. Once a year you must get a certificate that you have performed the sacrifice of the Empire by worshiping the Emperor as Lord." The Christians said, "Wrong. The Bible tells us that there is only one Lord, which meant God--the word 'Lord' means deity--and that is the living God. The emperor is not God. We worship the living God. We will not worship the emperor." The government said, "If you don't worship the Emperor, you will be punished." A decision had to be made. Christians said, "We will obey God and not man and will take the punishment." And they stood in the arena at the Colosseum and they sang hymns of praise as the lions tore them to shreds and sent them into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Civil disobedience is being willing to take the consequences of a tyrannical government when it comes to disobeying God and refusal to do so.

So the Bible teaches us that the bottom line is that at a certain point there is both the right and the duty for a Christian to disobey the state. The history of Christianity is replete with men who have resisted civil authorities who were not in compliance with the Bible. Those authorities may have not been in compliance knowingly or unknowingly. It didn't make any difference. This occurred when they were not in compliance with clear statements of Scripture, and I'm not talking about trivial things. I'm talking about clear statements of Scripture of major factors, and you know that the Declaration of Independence made a big point of that. They made a very big point of the fact that we have come to this point as the result of a long series of abuses against our God-given rights and freedoms. It is not some trivial matter. We're not just fighting because they're taxing our teeth.

**William Tyndale**

So the Bible teaches that at some point for legitimate proper reasons, you do resist, whether that government is ignorant or not relative to the laws it is imposing contrary to the Word of God. You think of William Tyndale. The government said, "You must not print the Bible in English. You must not give people the Bible to read in the English language." Tyndale said, "That is wrong because the Word of God teaches that people are to have free access to the Word of God so that they may know the laws of God, and so they may know the principles of the Gospel and the principles of Christianity." So what did William Tyndale do? He had to flee the country, but he got his bibles printed, and eventually he got executed for it.

**John Bunyan**

John Bunyan was told, "You must stop preaching Bible doctrine. What you are preaching is contrary to the established church and you must not say these things." Bunyan said, "It is indeed contrary to what the established church teaches. But what I preach is in conformity to what the Bible reveals, and I will not stop preaching." So they threw him into a rat-infested prison cell for 12 years, and even then he gained the victory by writing Pilgrim's Progress.

**The Duke of Saxony**

The Duke of Saxony protected Martin Luther against the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire which was out to kill Luther because he too was saying that the established Roman Catholic Church was teaching that which was false. So, the Duke of Saxony said, "This man is right, and as he is to be obedient and loyal to me, I as his ruler must be loyal to him and I must protect him. And he went to war in order to protect Luther. He used military force against the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire.

**John Knox**

We think of John Knox in Scotland resisting the Roman Catholic Church's efforts to silence his preaching from the Bible because he went around exposing the pagan beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church. He would go around and take these beliefs, these doctrines, of the Roman Catholic Church to all of England. He would proclaim the pagan origins of these doctrines. The Roman Catholic Church said, "You better knock it off, Knox. We will not have you disrupting Scotland with these preachings of yours that turn people against the mass, turn people against the authority of the pope, turn people against the concept of justification by human works, and all these things." John Knox said, "The Word of God is the truth--not the authorities of bishops and popes." So, he had to hide like a hunted animal, but he brought the truth and the enlightenment of Scripture to Scotland by disobeying the civil authorities.

**Samuel Rutherford**

Samuel Rutherford, as we've already seen, wrote Lex Rex against the divine right of kings concept that the king was above the law--what the King said was so no matter how it conflicted with Scripture. Rutherford was ordered to trial, and he certainly would have been executed had he not died before he came to trial.

Now these are Christians subject to the office of civil authority but not to the men in that office who rule contrary to the Bible. Look at the summary at the end of Hebrews 11--those heroes of faith and what they suffered because they resisted civil authorities who wanted them to act contrary to the Word of God.

**Non-Violence**

So we come to the point of civil disobedience. It's a very serious matter. The first thing to say about civil disobedience is that you don't equate it with violence. Civil disobedience and violence are mutually exclusive in the Christian's point of view. So let's set that up at front.

**The Ballot and Legal Action**

There are certainly levels of resistance. The first level of resistance for a Christian is to resist the government's misuse of authority by protest. These protests are in the form of legal action, including the ballot. That's the first way you resist when the government has violated the Word of God. You protest in some legitimate legal way which our Constitution has provided, the peaceful assemblage for protest. You do that, and your most forceful legal procedure is of course the ballot. That's why this series is important. As Francis Schaeffer said in his book The Christian Manifesto, "A window has been opened upon freedom." With the election of 1980, all the forces of hell are determined to close that window, and that is the issue that this country faces. If that window closes, I doubt that it will ever open again. It will be the signal that the tribulation world, and the United States part in the tribulation world, has now been sealed and is rapidly approaching. The first level is to resist with the ballot or to take legal action against laws of the government that are not in conformity with Scripture.

**Flee From Tyranny**

The second level of resistance, if that doesn't work, is to flee. Flee the area of the tyrannical government's jurisdiction. That's what the Pilgrims did. They were such a minority that when they couldn't change the illegal actions of the government against them, they fled to America. That's not too easy a thing to do. In some degree, we can do that. You can live in some states that are terrible states to live in. They have oppressive laws of various kinds. Indeed you can get up and say, "That's it. I'm moving to another state, and I will not live in subjection to those unbiblical regulations."

**Forceful Defense**

Then the third is to resort to force to defend oneself. This is the force of non-compliance with tyranny. This is nonviolent resistance. This is just refusal to do what the government says to do. Supposing you were a doctor, and you were ordered by the government to perform an abortion. You were a Christian and you knew that was wrong, and the government ordered you to do it. At this point, you must use force against the government. The force that you would use would be to say, "I won't do it." When you refuse to do something, you are using force. It's not violence, but it is using force because you're pushing back against what you're being told to do. You're being shoved in the direction, and you're shoving back and saying, "I'm not going to be pushed in that direction."

**The American Civil Liberties Union**

Resisting the narrow bigotry of secular humanism is what we're called to do, and it is a narrow bigotry. One of the greatest bigots in our country is the American Civil Liberties Union. We can resist the narrow bigotry of the American Civil Liberties Union. What does it fight against? The American Civil Liberties Union is in the forefront of denying tax exemption to Christian schools in order to bring them under control, as well as resisting creation science teaching in public schools. This is the first line of resistance to tyranny, to violation of government, that the Christian is entitled to and should perform. And they're resisting. The ACLU resists the concept of refusing abortion on demand and they resist the concept of not using taxpayers' money for paying for those abortions. The ACLU objects to restrictions of teaching secular humanistic values in the public schools. They don't want Christianity taught, but the religion of secular humanism they do want taught. They want to permit Marxism in government in order to establish a welfare state. The ACLU fights any resistance of Marxism in government because that hinders the welfare state. The ACLU is in the forefront of seeking to prevent anybody from praying on public property, on tax supported property, such as public schools.

This is the kind of thing we're talking about where Christians have sat around without fighting back. You know, we have fought little pieces here and there. We don't like this, and we don't like that. We don't realize that this is an overall concept of principle. Once the United States Supreme Court turned the Bill of Rights against the states, the federal government assumed an enormous power, and this is the very thing that the Founding Fathers wanted to prevent. And we have paid for it, particularly in the last 40 years, as more and more people have forgotten that the Bible is the Word of God, and we have to obey it. So, now we are drifting with humanism which has no guidelines, and which is destructive to every human value, consequently.

Now, the Christian never takes the law into his own hands so that he becomes a law unto himself. In the American colonies, the time came when all else had failed, and the people had no recourse but to unite against Britain with force. Britain imposed the level of force to the point of violence. When it came to the point of violence imposed by the British government, there was no recourse for Christian America but to resist with violence as well. The colonists found themselves in a defensive posture where physical force was necessary to resist the tyranny. The colonists saw England in violation of God's higher law entitling them to freedom of volition in their own lives.

**Poland Today**

This is the position which the people of Poland are in today. It will be interesting to see what happens. The people of Poland today are in exactly this position. They have now come to the confrontation where the government has made it very clear that they intend to deny them the freedom of certain rights--the freedom of the expression of their volition as to how they will organize themselves as workers in whatever unions they may choose. Now what should the people of Poland do? The first line would be to appeal to the government; seek redress; and resist at the ballot box (they can't resist that way). They made the appeal, and the government backed down and they permitted the union, the Solidarity Union, to be formed. Then they cut it off. Now they're going to have to say, "No, we won't do this."

The government is going to increase the level of violence. Finally, Russia will come in and put violence at its maximum level. At that point, unless the Polish people are able to respond with violence, and to destroy every communist ruler, to destroy every state policemen, to destroy every agency that is resisting the laws of God and imposing tyranny upon them, they will be doomed. The problem is they don't have the weapons. The problem is that their prison guards are very carefully restricting them from any means of defense. Therefore, it very unlikely that the people of Poland can do anything but go down and suffer the consequences of tyranny.

Now, the sad part about that is that the Poles once knew the kind of freedoms we knew. They did not realize along the line that when they got into socialism, they were stepping into a non-biblical concept. They permitted the government to assume the authority over their lives that made the government God. The government became God, in effect. That government is conducted by rulers who have a sin nature, the very thing that Rutherford said. They all have the sin nature including the king. Therefore the king cannot be above the law. He must be restrained by the principles of God's law or he will become a tyrant. Now the Polish people look back and they realize what they have done to themselves but they can't change it. Their freedom is probably permanently gone.

**A Theocracy**

Now the matter of civil resistance, civil disobedience, is of course a very serious matter. There are some points that we ought to observe about that. First of all, when we talk about civil resistance, we are not trying to establish a United States theocracy. A theocracy is forbidden by the First Amendment. We are not trying to establish a national church that is ruled by God that everybody must subscribe to. Now, the Jews of the Old Testament had just that kind of a government. They had a theocracy. God was their ruler, and He directed them by direct government orders through their priests and through their prophets. In the Christian age, there is no biblical ground for linking the church and the state into a theocracy. The next theocracy on the horizon of human history will occur when Jesus Christ returns at the Second Coming and establishes the millennial kingdom here on Earth. Then we will have a theocracy. Then we will have God ruling the government directly. Until then, during the church age, there is no such thing as a legitimate theocracy.

Now, of course in the fourth century when the Emperor Constantine decided to favor Christianity, he came up with the idea that we should have a theocracy. He established the church as the Department of Religion, and he established Christianity as the state religion. Rome was now viewed as a theocracy. He was wrong, but his idea has come down. He confused the kingdom of God with the nation. That caused an undermining of freedom. Anytime you try a theocracy in the church age, you're going to undermine freedom.

Now the United States was clearly founded upon a Christian consensus of Judeo-Christianity principles. The idea was that these should guide the nation. That was the idea. But today the two are separate entities. They should not be a theocracy. The Kingdom of God is not to be confused with the nation. The two are separate. So that's the first thing. When you talk about civil disobedience, we are not trying to establish a theocracy where other religious viewpoints will not be free to be practiced. Christians who are in communist countries face government tyranny now--daily, as the Poles do. The American Christians have freedom from physical oppression so that we can object. But Christians in communist countries are physically abused if they object to what the government does.

In the early New Testament the Christians refused to obey the government's edict to worship Caesar and they were physically brutalized. The Christians in the Roman Empire were too few in number, as are the Christians in communist countries today, to be able to change the system. Therefore, they were victimized by it. So, the Christians under communism today can only refuse to obey the civil authorities and place their fate in the hand of God. They're exactly right back to where New Testament Christians were. Aren't you glad that by the grace of God you're not there? You and I can resist government incursions upon our freedoms without being physically brutalized for it. The Poles cannot do that. The people in communist countries cannot do that. When those people are faced as Christians with the edicts of governments such as they must not teach their children about God, or such as the edict of the Communist governments that they must not teach their children Bible doctrine truths, then you must say, "The government is wrong. I will teach my children. The Bible calls upon me to raise them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and I will inform them." But when you do that in a communist country, you must be prepared to pay for it in a slave labor camp in Siberia building a pipeline for Western Europe. Don't forget that.

Now somebody may be smart enough to say, "I don't think we ought to let it go that far. I don't think we should put ourselves in that kind of an impossible situation where to resist tyranny and be true to the Word of God is going to cause physical brutalization. Somebody in Poland should have thought about that a long time ago. But they didn't see where it was going. For the rest of us who still have freedom, it's very clear to us where it can go and where it will go, and therefore what we should do about it now. The people in communist countries are right back where the New Testament Christians were. The people of Poland are being driven to violent action by the government because of the government's extreme violation of God's higher law. Christians under communist tyranny are obliged to try to influence their culture, nevertheless, even at great expense to themselves. Any government which commands that which contradicts God's law has broken its divine contract, it has abrogated its divine authority. Christians have not only the right but the duty to disobey it.

**Anarchy**

There is another point. Civil disobedience is used by Marxists and terrorists in non-communist countries to produce anarchy. That's the problem when you talk about civil disobedience. Marxists and anarchists in non-communist countries use this to produce a condition of disorder. This is the condition which is known as liberation theology in South America which is so promoted by Roman Catholic clergy. Liberation theology assumes that man is basically good, that man is not sinful, and that he needs only to be released from the economic slavery of the property owners. The Roman Catholic clergy have backed liberation theology. Here you have people who come along with a belief that they think is based upon the Word of God. It's a misinterpretation. But they're arguing for civil disobedience on what seems the very thing that we're arguing for, that the government has broken its contract. But liberation theology is wrong because man's problem is not merely social economic and political change. Man's problem is a fallen sinful nature which enslaves him to Satan's viewpoint. The idea of the perfectibility of man, if his environment is acceptable, is false. This has been used to justify civil disobedience. When it is used in that way, it always leads to tragedy. It leads to political change and it leads to loss of freedom.

For example, the enlightenment of the French Revolution was based upon this idea of the perfectibility of man, that man is not evil by nature, and that he can come to a high point if he just has the proper economic surroundings. They found that it turned loose the reign of terror. Communist revolution is based upon that same concept, that man can be perfected if he has the proper economic surroundings, because man is not basically evil, and that is false. Man is not by nature unselfish. He is not merely corrupted by outward circumstances. The Kingdom of God is not to be confused with a socialist state program. A Christian has a duty of resisting it. That's liberation theology. This is not to say that the Christian does not have the duty of using his possessions in a compassionate way for the genuinely needy.

**Violence**

One more point. There are always irresponsible unstable people who can use the concept of civil disobedience in a non-Biblical way to foment violence. There are crazies out there by the carload and they are going to use this very biblical principle to create violent disorder for Satan's cause. Mindless violence and anarchy are never justified. The men of the Reformation and the founding fathers of the United States knew that there was a point when the state must be resisted if it was not to become all powerful and usurp the role of divine authority. Christians today have to be clear on the fact that civil disobedience is a divine right if we are to have freedom of thought and action.

It was the divine viewpoint of the American colonists which drove them to resist British tyranny, not some mindless crazy action. They expected divine aid and blessing because they were basing this on biblical principles. So, the 13 colonies reached the point of having to resist the government of England and the result was the war in which many patriots died. But out of that Revolutionary War and out of their deaths came the United States, structured as God's current client nation for propagating the word of truth to the whole world. Had the colonial Americans not realized that there was a point at which they must resist government tyranny, there would be no United States of America today, and we would not have had the privilege and the blessing and the honor of being God's client nation as Israel once was. If there is no final point at which civil disobedience comes in, then the government is made autonomous, and it has been put in the place of God. Then we must obey whatever evil the government seeks to promote and impose upon us.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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