

GLOBAL LIFE CAMPAIGN™

Do We Need Government and Police? (Part 1)

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The United States is in a major crisis that has the potential of decimating the remaining good foundations of the nation, and perhaps our existence as a nation, or at least a unified nation. The latest call by those who are lawless among citizens and government is to “defund the police.” Do we really need civil government or police? Can’t we live our lives in peace and security without them? The founders of this nation understood these matters with more clarity than possibly any other nation in history. Anyone who thinks we don’t need civil government or police does not correctly understand human nature, or the purpose of civil government; or they have other sinister motives. In this month’s *Country Report* (GLC Series), I will focus on these matters related to the United States, but the same truths apply to any nation.

1. We were created for society and community. On 29 May 1776, a few weeks before the Founding Fathers voted to approve the Declaration of Independence, which formed the new nation of the United States, Rev. Samuel West (1729-1807), delivered a sermon to public officials in Massachusetts explaining that we were created for society and community.

“The Great Creator, having designed the human race for society, has made us dependent on one another for happiness. He has so constituted us that it becomes both our duty and interest to seek the public good.” [1]

What a great insight into human nature! When the Creator God made mankind, He didn’t just make men or women; He made them male and female, designed them for intimate relationship with each other, and brought them together in the covenant of marriage – the first and most foundational unit of society. From marriage and family, to tribe, to city, to state or province, to nation, it is clear that God “designed the human race for society.”

Even the lawless protestors who have taken over part of the city of Seattle – where I lived years ago – have quickly acted to begin forming their own society, with them making the rules and establishing their own security. But on what basis and by what authority do they decide what is “the public good” or what is evil? If they decide stealing, destruction of property, or even murder are acceptable, does that make such actions right? Of course not!

Thousands of years ago, when God delivered His people out of Egypt to form the nation of Israel, before He actually gave them the land, He gave them the Ten Commandments and the Law of God built upon those Commandments (Exodus 20). This gift enabled them to build a free and just society in which there was a fixed and unchanging standard of right and wrong, of good and evil – that also corresponded to their conscience – and which made clear their “duty and interest to seek the public good.” Indeed, every command and law of God are designed to teach us to love Him and love each other, mostly by prohibiting what is harmful to ourselves

and others (Matthew 22:37-40). Furthermore, there was one standard, one set of rules, for everyone. “There is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who sojourns with you” (Number 15:16). Having one law that applied equally to everyone enabled them to form a safe and just society, to live in peace and unity with each other. But laws are worthless if they don’t have some means of enforcement.

2. Do we need civil government and police? During that same sermon, Rev. West explained to the members of government why we need civil government.

“The necessity of forming ourselves into politic bodies, and granting to our rulers a power to enact laws for the public safety, and to enforce them by proper penalties, arises from our being in a fallen and degenerate state . . . (C)ivil government is absolutely necessary for the peace and safety of mankind; and, consequently, that all good magistrates [civil authorities, including police], while they faithfully discharge the trust reposed in them, ought to be religiously and conscientiously obeyed.”

Every person is created with a conscience, an inherent sense of right and wrong, and the capacity to choose to do right or wrong. But we are also by nature sinful human beings with a propensity toward wrong – “fallen and degenerate” – and therefore need civil government when we ignore, violate, or deaden our conscience. When King David ignored his conscience and committed adultery and murder, a trusted friend confronted him. David was completely undone, humbled himself and recognized his sinful nature (Psalm 51). By nature, we are sinful, selfish, prideful, unforgiving, rebellious, lawless, lustful human beings. But God has given us parents, clergy, teachers, faithful friends and other authorities to help shape our conscience and character. When we recognize our core sinful nature, if we confess our sins to the LORD, put our trust in Jesus and humble ourselves before Him, then the Spirit of God comes to dwell within us. It is He, with our submission to Him, who empowers us to do what is right and pleasing in His sight, and He gives us unlimited capacity for good, to love others selflessly, to do righteousness, and to obey those in authority. Yet for those who will not humble themselves and submit to Him, their fallen nature, inspired and inflamed by demonic influence, has the potential to propel them to unlimited rebellion, lawlessness, evil and destruction with little or no conscience. Therefore, civil government and police are absolutely necessary to restrain (with external force when necessary) those who are unwilling to be self-governing (internal) or self-controlled by the Spirit of God (internal). [To be continued next week . . .]

SDG and for the sanctity of human life,

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[1] Samuel West, A.M., pastor of a Church in Dartmouth, “A Sermon Preached before the Honorable Council, and the Honorable House of Representatives of the Colony of Massachusetts-Bay in New-England.” May 29th, 1776. Being the Anniversary for the Election of the Honorable COUNCIL for the Colony. Reprinted in the *Pulpit of the American Revolution*, pp. 320-321; full sermon: pp. 259-322.