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ON CHURCH AND STATE

Wrightsville Beach Methodist Church
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CHURCH AND STATE

I. Relationship of Church and State

Religion and Politics

(a). Basic principal of democracy

Complete separation

1. Children still learn about indignities and persecutions that drove our forefathers from their native shores in search of religious liberties.
2. To this day, we read of persecutions that are endured by Protestants at the hands of other governments in various parts of the world.

(b). Thus you can see why I had some misgivings about accepting the invitation of my long-time friend to fill this pulpit.

(c). But, after some reflection, I was delighted to accept for I am convinced that our only hope of preserving both the church and the state lies in the participation in politics by responsible Christians.

(d). I do not believe that the church itself should be involved in partisan politics, nor do I think it should divide its

congregation by taking dogmatic positions on political issues on which men of good faith may reasonably differ.

(e). It should, however, encourage its members to find Christian answers to the problems that confront them from day to day.

(f). I believe that for the average American, the Christian faith is the real basis of life's meaning as well as the basis and the foundation of our government.

(basic documents)

(g). And our failure to relate our government to its actual spiritual foundation can eventually lead us to an oppressive state where the state manufactures its own spiritual values.

II. The question may then arise, if this is true, how may we as Christians relate our faith to the political processes of our country?

(a). First, we must recognize that the heart of our Lord was full of compassion - Two-thirds of all reported acts during his ministry were acts of healing.

Physical disease, disturbed minds and sorrowful hearts were all healed by the touch of the

master's hand because he cared.

You remember - The Leper, the paralyzed man;
the sick child of the nobleman; the blind
begger, Bartemeus; the servant of the Roman
Officer, the mentally disturbed man who
called himself "Legion, for we are many."

(b) Just as physical diseases, disturbed minds
and sorrowful hearts were of concern to Christ,
so are they with us as Christians and with our
government, the foundation of which is the
Christian faith.

(mental hospitals
mentally retarded
blind - deaf)

III. But there are other problems that we as a government,
and as citizens, are confronted with - obedience to
and respect for the law.

Christ taught respect for man's law as an
obligation of a Christian.

When he taught us to "render unto Ceasar
that which is Ceasar's and unto God that
which is God's."

We contribute to crime, lawlessness and disrespect for law when

1. We fail to teach our children the fundamental principles and laws upon which our system of government is based and whenever we fail to teach our children the moral ideals of society.

We contribute to disrespect for the law when we fail to report offenses, either because we feel they are private matters, or because we don't want to get involved.

We contribute to crime whenever we refuse to treat an ex-convict as an ordinary citizen after he has paid his debt to society for we then drive him to crime again.

It would seem only common sense that a man continuously treated as a criminal would tend to behave as one to a far greater extent than a man whom society has enable to discard fully his criminal identity and begin a new life.

And as believers and followers of His, I think we must relate our faith to problems of lawlessness and crime which plagues our nation today as never before in our history.

