

When Enemies Agree

Politics and/or religion, sometimes hard to separate, constitute a powder keg of debate. No one likes to be in error. We believe our politics are in accordance with whatever religious principles we hold. If our religion is wrong, then our politics will likely be in error as well. Politics are based upon principles to which we adhere. Politics is simply "the art or science concerned with guiding or influencing governmental policy" (Merriam-Webster). Policy is "prudence or wisdom in the management of affairs" (Ibid.). Most everyone believes their politics, as well as their religion, is righteous. Martin Luther put it this way, "every man was born with a Pope in his belly."

Those with a liberal view of religion usually have a liberal view in politics, and vice versa. There is no organization, religious or civil entity that doesn't deal with politics. I can recall a time when my sons were in Boy Scouts. The "politics" and games that people played in "guiding or influencing governmental policy" were amazing. In some cases, it was righteous: it was for the benefit of the program. In other cases, it was a power struggle between parents. The same is true within religion. The maxim is, "you don't discuss politics or religion." The fact is: politics and religion are at the center of our lives. They deal with the heart as well as the mind. The mingling of politics and religion was especially true during the time of Jesus.

The Pharisee had little or no interest in politics so long as he was permitted to worship as he desired" (Smith's Bible Dictionary). Though such was the case, the scriptures indicate that they used politics in an effort to undermine the teaching of Christ. The scriptures set forth a confrontation the Pharisees had with Jesus: "Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might ensnare him in *his* talk. And they send to him their disciples, with the Herodians. (The Herodians were in direct antagonism to the Pharisees, although they had a common cause against foreign rule, the two were united in opposition to the Lord) saying, Teacher, we know that thou are true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" (Matthew 22:15-17). These two parties, who cared not for one another, joined against what they perceived to be a common enemy and brought into the arena a political question, to which I will leave you to read for yourself how the Lord answered them.

So, what's the point? Neighbor, when you have two opposing religious parties join together in a like pursuit, you might want to ask yourself the question: Why? ret