

## The Bible Birthed Liberty and Freedom for the American Church

*By Rev. Chris Meier*

America as we know it, her families, laws, communities and states was birthed uniquely here by Christians fleeing persecution. Even though federalism and governmental compacts existed in some form overseas, our unique federal system of compacts was influenced by who these people worshipped. As they came over on boats and settled, the church brought with her a governmental compact based on biblical covenant, which became non-sectarian or “old-school” secularized; which is not the same definition as it is today. Its premise was based on Scriptures of freedom and liberty. It was her church governmental documents which birthed her community and state-wide governmental documents.

For quite some time now, I’ve been hearing a misapplication of Romans 13 to the “stay-at-home orders” issued in the United States as reasoning why they should be obeyed. Let me explain why this is erroneous when talking about America. Our church teaches on what it means to be a Christian in our spiritual environment and the necessity to take that outside of the church into the public square. As soon as we teach on law, national defense, the courts, sin in our modern culture and security issues within our community, even in our homes, some people can start to get negative. It can go from “Let’s be loving and not get political” all the way to, “You must keep your opinions inside the church and not talk about things like religion and politics.”

Applying Romans 13:1-7 to this recent governmental intrusion into the church walls is due to several misconceived ideas which have invaded our country. The first is for the unbeliever and the other is for the believer. For the non-believer, I refer you to a book I have written, “70 Years of American Captivity.” In it you will review the history of this nation and an understanding of the Bill of Rights, along with the Constitutional understanding of covenant and its non-sectarian application by the Federal government. You will also review how it was, and **IS NOW the Federal government who was to be limited by the Bill of Rights.** It was the Federal government who is to be under the dynamics of a limited government in size,

money, and especially in **power**. As a result, it is government who is limited in the First Amendment, not the American citizen.

Said another way, the framing generation wrote what would be considered the outside limit of an institution or the demarcation line of exemplar, standard or even precedent. For example, we have limited government—branches of government which are not allowed to go over a certain line. Because government was the highest human authority, it is the government who is limited in the First Amendment. That means free speech, both religious and political or otherwise is permitted in government, on the job and in the public square. Why? Because government was the boundary line for the First Amendment— government itself and everything under the authority of human government— business, job, public square, etc., is where the people can exercise their First Amendment rights.

So agnostics or non-believers need to know what our governing documents say as well as the attitude the folks who wrote the documents had. Can you imagine trying to take guns out of the hands of the generation who wrote the Constitution? **THEY PROBABLY WOULD HAVE SHOT YOU!** And they would **not** have gone to jail for it, for a very good reason. **YOU BROKE** the law by trying to take their gun for no good reason! (By the way, that's called *stealing*.) **I am not condoning violence** and by the time you finish reading this, you will understand that.

Many faith-filled believers have a misconception as well when it comes to sharing Christ in the public square, serving in the military, personal self-defense, addressing politics and political government in our society today, as well as to what extent the American government can dictate what, where or how her citizens can live. I also refer them to the same book I referred agnostics or atheists to. (You can get a copy from this website, or at Amazon or any other national bookseller). For believers, or younger believers who may never have been taught these principles as I was from my first pastor and from Jesus, let's get started. Let's look at some basic foundational principles.

Let's look at the elephants in the room in our passage. Romans 13 refers to rulers, ministers and higher powers who are to be obeyed. In our text the words higher power are two different Greek words meaning someone who is superior with the power to control the choice of someone else, either mentally

or physically. In fact, the word used for power is *exousia*, and it is the same word used by Paul in Ephesians where he talks about demonic rulers. As we go on in our study here, you will see that early America refused such people. Aristocracy was nowhere to be found in our colonies. There is no provision made for such people in our government.

The next word is ruler. It is the same word Jesus uses for “princes” in Matthew 20:25-27: “But Jesus called them unto him, and said, ‘Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.’ ” The Puritans and early church folk in America never would have allowed for a prince-type of “ruler” to have existed in our laws. In fact, the evidence for this is so great that our first president, George Washington, made sure to exemplify the servant-type of leader as opposed to what was seen in Europe during that time.

Lastly, is the word minister. Paul was probably referring to ecumenical, but even if he was not, our early founders understood this ministry so well that we developed the phrase for “God and country.” It typified civil servanthood. This is why mayors, congressman and senators are called civil servants. The fact that some act and take money as if they were kings is not entirely their fault. We, the people have become ignorant of our laws and allowed an attitude of superiority to permeate their professions. If our students were taught the proper way to maintain and approach our unique government, the kind of opulent corruption we see in politicians today would have been stopped early on.

As you can see, our form of government would allow for no such thing as rulers or “higher powers” which could tell you what to do and where to go and how to conduct church services. They were to be servants or ministers, administering the affairs of a community with humility and integrity. It’s time we were taught the treasure our form of government really is. Now for a quick lesson in the intensity of why this whole “lock down” is illegal.

America was founded by a compact form of government. While compacts existed elsewhere, our unique compact was bolstered by church governmental documents and then morphed into the government model used

by thirteen colonies, which became the first thirteen states.<sup>1</sup> As a general rule, compacts are agreements made by either/or diverse people groups in one land or people from different lands to join a land mass and/or join different governing documents, making them part of a whole or making them one people and/or one land and one continuing binding document, thus compacting the above under one idea. In our case it's an idea based on doing unto others as you would have them do for you, because of the freedom and liberty exercised by the original group.

“In 1646, the Massachusetts General Court convened an electoral body consisting of clerical as well as lay delegates elected from the different churches throughout New England to develop a platform of church discipline. After two years and three meetings later, in 1649 they published ‘The Cambridge Platform.’ It was then called upon individual churches to either vote to ratify the document as the true form of church government established from the word of God or not. Over several decades ministers would read the Platform to their younger congregations as their “constitution” and used that term to describe it. Only seven copies are known to have survived. The church government it described and the way it was ratified among individual churches is a federal system seen later between the states in the United States Constitution.”<sup>2</sup>

So church governments used constitutions and bills of liberties and they were compacted together with the church's founding document; in other words, why the church was formed. Early England employed compacts, but they were not the all-encompassing affair the colonies made them. That's because England had government up and running. Her people had no need of such a thing, what with her monarchy and parliament calling the shots. So the compacts formed here were those which could handle the wilderness conditions and early forms of governments used in early America. So in the first colonies where church morphed into state, the methods of government documentation remained the same as they used for their original colonial-church type region. The reason why other states chose to use them similarly

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<sup>1</sup> Meier, Chris. 2016. “70 Years of American Captivity: The Polity of God, The Birth of a Nation and The Betrayal of Government.” TellWell, Victoria, BC, Canada. Chapter 8. In this chapter are references to many church documents. Almost all are in the hands of universities.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., page 196.

is because they proved quite capable in their ability to bring different peoples together.

I am getting a bit ahead of myself. Let's start with the colonies. From England the colonies had founding documents called charters; almost all of them were based on their relationship with the king of England at the specific time the territory was formed. Quite often it was economically contrived with the person, company or official who entered into the charter and bound with religious oaths or motivations as well as economic desires which held all parties within the charter. Church and state were one; there was absolutely no separation. In most cases, the king gave the colonists latitude in developing governing documents once they arrived. History and events within the time periods of formation changed how the Crown viewed those governing documents, but the decades proved it could do very little to change the documents themselves, though the Crown did try.

Unbeknownst to the king was how many of the colonists were puritans, and puritans who did not agree with the Church of England. They would use these charters as founding documents to enact a very religious and religiously friendly form of government (for the full treatment of this see the footnotes). When you study the history, you find early states using their charters as founding documents and compacting them with bills of liberties, which eventually became known as bills of rights; along with fundamentals, which eventually became known as constitutions. Constitutions were institutional governing documents. Almost all states were closely associated with the church. In a few cases they were even theocracies. What we need to understand is that these very religiously minded people were basing their laws on a compact they read daily: the Bible. For those of you who may not understand the Bible that way, let's look at it as a book explaining how the described people groups lived and governed themselves.

Initially we see a founding document (Genesis) or how they came to be. Then we see The Law, as in Mosaic and then we see the rights and how they are or are not obeyed as a covenant: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Old Testament: Leviticus 19:18). Next, we see a new people group developed from the first people group (New Testament). We see how they are formed, and the various institutions or rules laid down and how these are lived out in liberty: "Who the Son sets free is free indeed" (John 8:36). Later

on in the book, we learn these people groups are to live together (Ephesians and Revelation). So this book is, essentially, a governing document teaching two different people groups how to live together with different laws and in different lands. It's easy to see that early states came to regard the Bible as a covenant containing a book of law, compacting the agreements.

Church governmental documents were viewed as a covenant. The colonies had the same understanding within their governmental documents: so did the states, and so did the federal government. In fact, it is so much of a theme that they used the word federal for a reason. The word *federal* comes from a Latin word *foedus*, which originally meant covenant. Here is the etymology of the word: “1640s as a theological term from Fr. federal, from Latin foedus [gen. foederis] ‘covenant, league, treaty, alliance,’ related to fides ‘faith.’ Meaning ‘pertaining to a treaty’ [1650s] led to political sense of ‘state formed by agreement among independent states’ [1707], from phrases like federal union ‘union based on a treaty,’ popularized by formation of U.S.A. 1776-1787.”<sup>3</sup>

So the colonies kept the same basic structure and morphed it to work from a church governmental document to a colonial document, to a state and finally, on a federal level. Even after the federal government is formed, the states kept their constitutions and maintained the same ideas as overriding boundaries: “Love your neighbor as you love yourself” as well as various ideas of liberty: “Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Corinthians 3:17). “But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:25).

The federal government is to be an overseer between the states and individuals to make sure that none suffers injury by the other or from the federal government itself. It was to have a non-denominational or what I call a “colorblind” viewpoint; holding firm to the idea of a governmental covenant within a representative form of compact government: not a contract. A contract is cold, based on the use of money. A covenant is based on something more familial: do unto others as you would have them do unto

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<sup>3</sup> <[http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed\\_in\\_frame=0&search=federal](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=federal)> Online Etymology Dictionary © 2001-2016 Douglas Harper. Accessed 1/22/16.

you. That's because they were seen as patriot brothers. They got that idea because Christians are brothers and sisters. We view Jews as brethren because we worship the same God.

I have seen an argument by many which tries to make an attempt to say religion or covenant or how the national government treats people must be seen differently pre-Constitution than it is today. Before the Constitution was ratified and even while the Articles of Confederation were still active, the government was viewed as a federal (*foedus-covenant*) government. We see a dialog within the Virginian ratification process which takes place on June 7, 1788. It is an argument to counter Patrick Henry, who was against ratification. Francis Corbin, one of the delegates to Virginia's Ratifying Convention has heard the arguments around calling the new government "federal" or consolidated and counters by saying it is "a representative federal republic."

Why is this statement important? It proves, not only arguments for and against ratification, but what had been desirous in the pre-Constitutional government would be desirous in the nature of the post-Constitutional government. In other words, the people needed to be in charge and in covenant. Corbin may not have been exuberant in his desire for the Constitution, but after reading his arguments, it seems obvious he agreed it was necessary. Not only is our Federal government, by definition of the word *federal*, a covenant, it is a representative republic! How's that for redundancy? It seems Madison acknowledged the legitimacy of the argument.<sup>4</sup>

We come from a long line of independent communities organizing in a covenant way by federation [*foedus* (federal) meaning to covenant]. This was not something which just "happened" or "appeared" in 1776 and 1787, but came from a long history of document-making based on a religious history of government according to covenant design. Compacts happened to do well in bringing together these documents of origin, institution and bills of rights. Speaking of which, The Bill of Rights was influenced heavily by covenant theory, Reformation theology, and to a great extent as a response within

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<sup>4</sup> <<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/ratification/elliott/vol3/june7>> site © 2006-2015 Asbrook Center; accessed 3/1/16.

English common law, which had Greek/Roman influencers as well. Many feel our Bill of Rights is descended from England's 1689 Bill of Rights. This is not true. We had bills of rights or liberties up and running early in the 1600s, decades before the British, and primarily seen first in church governmental documents and then seen in civil ones.

In addition, our Constitution would never have been ratified had it not been for the addition of a Bill of Rights. It was the very nature of covenant theory a Bill of Rights embodied, coupled with the various and countless ways previous bills of rights or liberties had functioned within community and state governments. The framing generation and the specific framers at the Convention sessions knew bills of rights had a history of working and functioning within various governments already settled on our continent. This made many of them feel comfortable enough to sign on to this new constitution. While the Declaration of Independence certainly mentions specific rights; a document titled such and spelling out exactly which rights must be adhered to, specifically by attachment to a constitution within compact design, could certainly (in their minds) put the brakes on what had the possibility to become a tyrannical federal government.

Lastly, many feel we should not defend ourselves as Christians. Let's look at this misunderstanding and its connection to protestors against this lock-down. (1 Peter 4: See the NetBible translation.) Quite frequently, the translation in the KJV gives a false impression that we are to suffer just because we are Christians, or we are to be so nice to everyone simply because we are to be living-and-breathing door mats. These misconceptions are from a poor translation of this and other portions of Scripture. If we were to always be door mats, we here in America should never have gone to war for the freedom of our country from an oppressive British monarchy. When you make that point to those of the 'door-mat' impression, they really have no answer.

When 1 Peter 4 is properly translated, it becomes quite clear that we are to suffer humiliation, even death as our Lord did, when we are preaching the Gospel. Yet, when we are living at peace and someone just comes along trying to steal, kill or destroy that peace through false pretenses or other practices, we must fight and defend our lives, loved ones and properties. Christian persecution is at record highs in Muslim countries. Are we to allow

this kind of persecution in America? Progressive-democrats, or socialists as they are called in other countries, routinely create bureaucracies to inflict the most damage to freedom of religion laws. Are we to allow this kind of persecution in America? Of course, the answer is no. In order for the Gospel to go forward and allow Christians the freedom to preach, we need the laws and environment conducive for success. This is what America was built on. As originally intended, this is what our laws were created to accomplish as well as protect. I believe atheists would agree in their need for protection as well.

1 Peter 4:15, makes this statement: “But let none of you suffer as a murderer or thief or criminal or as a troublemaker” (NET Bible®). It is obvious from this and other passages, that there are three distinctions to be made between preaching the Gospel; when we are living at peace; and if we, ourselves, are criminals. Socialists are quick to use that passage to say we are being “troublemakers.” But remember, they are the ones who have subverted and then changed the laws.

For example, here in America, we allow for those who disagree with abortion to opt out of performing them or being involved in performing them. The socialists have done their best to trap everyone by changing the state laws, even conscripting state law so that the states are no longer free to give freedom of conscience to those who disagree. The same is happening with the performance of marriages. The foundational principles under which our laws in America were made have been overwritten by socialist propaganda and then changed in our courts to overwhelm our principles based on biblical law. That basic premise was covenantal.

Covenant says, in essence, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Frankly, this sentence shortcuts an involved biblical teaching. While the meaning may not change by shortening it, we do miss quite a bit of the minutiae. I don’t have the space to review that minutiae. Quite often, we quote Leviticus 19:18 as “love your neighbor as yourself,” and that is correct. But the verses before it translates from the Hebrew like this: “You must not deal unjustly in judgment: you must neither show partiality to the poor nor honor the rich. You must judge your fellow citizen fairly. You must not go about as a slanderer among your people. You must not stand idly by when your neighbor’s life is at stake. I am the Lord. You must not hate your brother

in your heart. You must surely reprove your fellow citizen so that you do not incur sin on account of him. You must not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the children of your people, but you must love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord. You must keep my statutes. You must not allow two different kinds of your animals to breed, you must not sow your field with two different kinds of seed and you must not wear a garment made of two different kinds of fabric” (Leviticus 19: 15-19, NET Bible).

In other words, if you don't tell your fellow citizen when their life is at stake, you actually hate your brother. Do we really think the Lord was worried about clothes made of wool and cotton? While there was a need in the Old Testament for these laws, the New Testament makes it clear there are spiritual reasons involved. The Lord was referring to our duplicities. We will keep quiet about the potential for their death when they involve themselves in potentially unhealthy behavior, but we won't say anything because we don't want to offend them. Or worse, we may have a vengeance against them, so it's okay to ignore their sinful behavior and let them rot in it. Because the immutable laws of covenant are at work in our country, it is obvious from this passage when we refuse to warn about the danger of others' actions, we all suffer: “You must surely reprove your fellow citizen so that you do not incur sin on account of them.” In other words, there are physical ramifications to spiritual actions. We all experience *something* in the spiritual realm when covenant is broken. If we warn our fellow citizen, then it would seem from this and other portions, we are relieved (see Ezekiel 3:17-21; 33:1-20; Luke 6:31; Matthew 7: 1-5, 12; 1 Corinthians 5:1-19; Galatians 6:1-2; James 5:19).

I realize I've taken quite a bit of time explaining why Romans 13 does not apply to American Christians concerning the takeover by socialists of our country or the Chinese virus lock-down. This article will be in the archive for those of you who may need it later. There is a similar article with other questions of self-defense on the drop-down tabs on the home-page. Our government has developed a socialistic bureaucracy where corruption is tolerated. The Lord has given us a president who is attempting to correct the ship. He needs our help and prayers. There is so much going on with this virus that involves our government that we are not being told.<sup>5</sup> Our Christian and Jewish brethren sacrificed and died to give us a country where we can

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.foxnews.com/us/harvard-university-professor-arrested>

preach the gospel freely while practicing religion without repercussions. It's high time we got outside the church walls preaching it while we teach and disciple others in the way of biblical life. The Bible makes it clear we will see signs and wonders to accompany the preaching of this gospel. But it's also high time we learned what our founders did in giving us a compact we can be proud of. Christians the world over marvel at our freedoms. I pray American Christians learn to cherish them as well.

If you don't know Jesus, you can ask Him to come into your heart. Romans 10:9-10 says this: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."