



Christian Citizenship

“You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world” (Mt. 5:13-16). One way to be salty and let our light shine is by being good citizens on earth. Our vocation as citizens of both the secular kingdom and God’s kingdom gives us the responsibility to proclaim God’s Word and care for our neighbors. We are called to engage the “public square” with our message of Christ’s mercy for all. Please pray for God’s will to be done... in Jesus’ name.

Government and Religion Through the Eyes of a Journalist

Marvin Olasky was born into a Russian-Jewish family. In childhood, he was an atheist. In college, he became a Marxist. Today, as a Christian, Olasky boldly addressed matters of human life, marriage and family, society, and government as a professor, author, and Editor of *WORLD* magazine. In reflecting on his writings over the past 20 years, Olasky sees the following as the basics of what he’s been trying to teach:

Concerning government: “[It] seems to me we should aspire to be post-resurrection Peters regarding faith in Christ but doubting Thomases regarding faith in man’s institutions—which means poking fingers in the sides of both liberals and conservatives.

“Since men aren’t angels, we need government. Since governors aren’t angels, we need tight controls over government. Fiscal conservatism does not work without Biblical moorings. Actually, nothing works without Biblical moorings. Material insecurity correlates with leftward leanings: The left wants the government to make us feel secure. But security by itself creates problems: Tenured professors often have contempt for those who pay the bills.

“Social fabric depends more on individual tailors and seamstresses in their families than on any decrees emerging from D.C. We keep government small only when most people honor their fathers and mothers while refraining from murder, adultery, theft, and false witness. When children are born out of wedlock or marriages break apart,

or when affluent people don’t love their poor neighbors, government grows.”

Concerning religion: “Most religions teach us how to ascend to God: That’s a recipe for failure. Since we cannot climb high enough, Christianity rightly teaches that God mercifully descended to us. People long knew about the importance of power and money, two points on the line of success, but Jesus turned it into a triangle, with compassion at the top. And yet, Christianity is not a nice religion: As priests once used hyssop to spray on people the blood of sacrifices, so Christ had to shed His blood, not just preach, to free us from sin.”

As a journalist, Olasky has endeavored to drum these things into young reporters: Be salt, not sugar. Report sensational facts with understated prose. Don’t suck your thumb: Pound the pavement. Strive for factual accuracy and Biblical objectivity. The heavens declare the glory of God, but the streets declare the sinfulness of man. Believe in a God who tells the truth and wants us to do the same. Don’t scream that the sky is falling: Remember that God holds up the sky. And, for all of us ... here’s the crucial question: Whose applause do I want, man’s or God’s? (Excerpted from “Lessons Learned” by Marvin Olasky, *WORLD* Magazine, November 25, 2017.)

What can we do? Keep yourself informed, not by listening to opinions broadcast via 24/7 news programs, but by reading *Luther’s Small and Large Catechism* (especially The Table of Duties), *A Summary of Christian Doctrine* by Edward W.A. Koehler, *God at Work* by Gene Edward Veith, *How Christianity Changed the World* by Alvin Schmidt, *When A Nation Forgets God* by Edwin Lutzer, and *World View: Seeking Grace and Truth in our Common Life* by Marvin Olasky.

Please pray for husbands and wives, parents and children, pastors and teachers, government leaders, and people in all vocations, that they will fear, love, and trust God... in Jesus’ name.

Pastor: My Highest Allegiance to Christ

Campbell Markham is a Presbyterian pastor in Australia. On the day that the Governor General signed into law the redefinition of the institution of marriage in the Commonwealth Marriage Act, Rev. Markham resigned his status as a Minister of Religion registered under the Act, and relinquished his Celebrant's Number, T2816. Rev. Markham explained his action in a letter to the Attorney General excerpted here—

"I resign for three reasons: 1) The "Commonwealth Marriage Act" is from today no longer concerned with marriage: with the exclusive, lifelong union of one man and one woman, freely entered into. Although the novel Act retains the word 'marriage,' it now uses this word to refer to something very different to marriage, to something in fact repugnant to the nature and purposes of marriage . . . [M]arriage binds together and protects a man and a woman in sexual relationship, and the children that are very often born out of such a relationship. The novel Act does not do this. On the contrary, it legitimizes the removal of children from their natural parents.

2) The Sacred Scriptures clearly delineate what sexual activity God has determined to be right and wrong. Sexual intercourse was given by the Creator to one man and one woman joined in marriage. Fornication, adultery, prostitution, incest, and homosexual practice is forbidden as a misuse of our reproductive organs and sexual desires. The novel Act, by contrast, places homosexual acts, forbidden by God, on a moral level with male-female married sexual intercourse.

3) The novel Act will be a root and tool of injustice . . . [against] children...."

Rev. Markham continues, "My position is now this: I am sworn as a citizen and a Christian to obey the governing authorities of Australia. My highest allegiance, however, belongs to Jesus Christ, whom God has made King of kings and Lord of lords by virtue of His public resurrection from the dead, attested by scores of eye-witnesses. Where the laws of Australia contradict the laws of King Jesus then I must choose to obey Him. These therefore are my intentions: Though same-sex

couples will now 'marry' under the novel Act, I will only recognize male-female unions.

. . . I will support those male-female couples who, for whatever reason, do not want to register their marriage under the novel 'Marriage Act.' I will be ready to marry them in the sight of God and according to His laws, and will submit to whatever civil penalty may be attached to such action.

"Love for my nation compels me to fight for the recovery of marriage: for the recovery of our understanding of what marriage is, for the sacred exclusivity of the marriage bond, for the permanency of marriage, and for the recovery of our responsibilities as husbands and wives for each other and the children that we may bear.

"And love for my nation compels me to help ameliorate the damage that the novel Act must cause. Men and women who have forsaken their children will need to be called to repentance and healing, and will need to recover, if at all possible, their responsibilities to know, love, protect, and provide for their children . . . Those who have given themselves to sexual acts that God has forbidden will also need to find His forgiveness and healing.

"I will point all to Christ. He can heal those who have been hurt and broken by the dissolution of marriage. He loves us, and died to set us free from all the painful and destructive effects of sin . . . Today the bright star of marriage sets behind the dank horizon of blind and selfish populism. It is a day to weep. But it is not a day to despair. For marriage is obscured, not destroyed." (Source: Mercatornet.net December 4, 2017)

What can we do? We should not be naïve. Those who oppose God and His institution of marriage and family will continue to press against the Church here in the U.S., too. The LGBTQ community was quick to make an example out of Jack Phillips after he declined a request to create one of his "masterpiece" (Eph. 2:10) cakes that would publicly celebrate the "marriage" of two men. Jack's case was argued before the U.S. Supreme Court earlier this month.

Please pray that marriage be honored for the sake of children and society... in Jesus' name.

