

Authority and Submission

1. When we are properly **submitted** to God
 - ✓ **we will be hard to abuse.**
 - ✓ **we will not abuse others.**
2. We don't demand authority; we **earn** it. True spiritual authority is detected by character and wisdom more than official position and coercion.

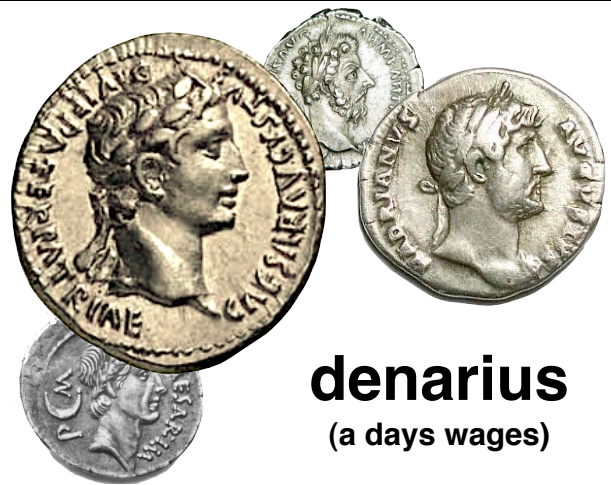
Church vs. State authority

Church and State

- ✓ Was America to be a Christian nation or a secular state?
- ✓ Can and should we legislate Christian morality?
- ✓ What is the meaning of separation of church and state?
- ✓ Should we pay taxes for things we find morally offensive?

Mark 12

"¹³ And they (**Priests, Scribes, Elders**) sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Him, in order to trap Him in a statement. ¹⁴ And they came and said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay a poll-tax to Caesar, or not? ¹⁵ Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?" But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said to them, "Why are you testing Me? Bring Me a denarius to look at." ¹⁶ And they brought one. And He said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" And they said to Him, "Caesar's." ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, "**Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.**" And they were amazed at Him."



denarius
(a days wages)

Background

- ✓ This had to do with a Roman poll-tax that gave rise to the Zealot movement and eventually the destruction of the temple in AD 70.
- ✓ If Jesus sides with the Zealots, he will be arrested as an agitator. If he sides with the Romans, he will lose popular support.
- ✓ The Pharisees and Herodians would have favored paying the tax and probably did not expect Jesus to agree with them.

Jesus' response

"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

- ✓ Jesus' core concern was a call to render to God what was due Him.
- ✓ Jesus (unlike the Zealots) did not feel that building God's kingdom demanded disrespect for or disengagement from the prevailing political structure.
- ✓ We owe God our soul (as we bear His image), we owe Caesar the tax (as the coin bears his image).

Analogy - British tax of colonies?

- ✓ Should the American colonies pay the British **tax** (on just about everything)?
- ✓ **Loyalists** argue it is a tax that funds British protection of the colonies from the French & Indians. The **Patriots** argued that the tax comes without representation in Parliament.
- ✓ **Jesus' hypothetic counsel to Christians:** "My interest is in God's kingdom not man's. Pay the tax to be at peace; show the world that your faith, hope, and love are in something bigger than political liberty. If you can gain freedom through peaceful means, do so."

Analogy - funding abortions?

- ✓ Should Christian's tax dollars go to Planned Parenthood?
- ✓ YES! Pay the tax and protest abortion issue on other grounds. NO! Don't let your tax dollars support positions that violate your conscience.
- ✓ If YES, you are discredited in the Christian community. If NO, you are marginalized in the broader community. Either way, you lose influence.
- ✓ Did the Roman tax support programs that were offensive to God's people?

U.S. Constitution (preamble)

"We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, **promote the general welfare**, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

The General Welfare

SECTARIAN DOCTRINE	GENERAL GOOD
Christianity	Humanism
Special revelation	General revelation
Uniquely Christian	Common to all
Being Christian	Being human
Restricted application	Universal application

The Declaration of Independence

"We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, & the **Pursuit of Happiness**: —That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the governed;"

The Pursuit of Happiness

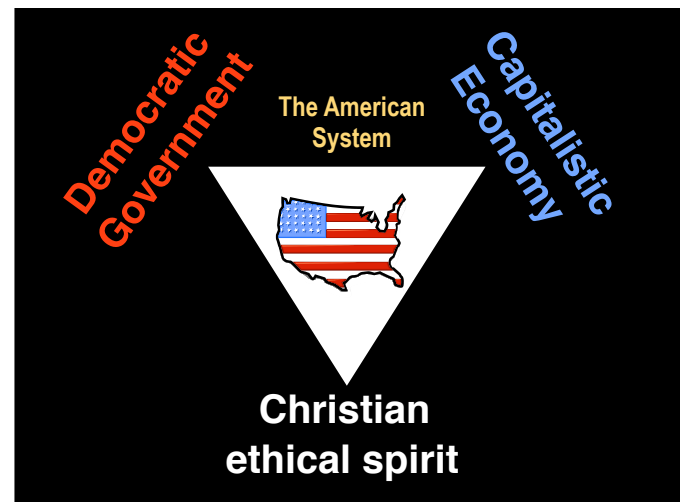
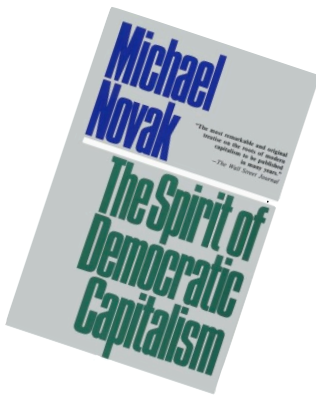
CLASSICAL HAPPINESS	MODERN HAPPINESS
Virtue	Pleasure
"to be good"	"to feel good"
Included suffering	Devoid of suffering
Being fully human	Being comfortable
Truth & Wisdom	Peace & Contentment

Promoting the general welfare

- ✓ The pursuit of happiness was viewed as the cultivation of **virtue**.
- ✓ “General religion” was viewed as an essential element in **cultivating** virtue.
- ✓ The Constitutional **leverage** that Christians have in ethical public policy is in an appeal to the service of the general welfare of humanity & classical virtue.

- **James Madison**, the fourth president, known as “The Father of Our Constitution” made the following statement: *“We have staked the whole of all our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self-government, upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God.”*
- **Patrick Henry**, a Founding Father said: *“It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded not by religionists but by Christians, not on religions but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”*
- **John Adams**, the second president: *“Our constitution was made only for a moral and a religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other.”*
- **Thomas Jefferson**, the third president: *“can the liberties of a nation be sure when we remove their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people, that these liberties are the gift of God.”*

The role of religion in America



Without a Biblically based ethical spirit:

1. **Capitalism** becomes the exploitation of the economically weak by the economically powerful.
2. **Democracy** becomes an endless litigation of rights and the marginalization of the minority by the majority.
3. **Pluralism** dignifies every kind of divergence as a form of creativity.

Government has a role in legislating general morality.

1. **Negatively** - Laws serve a moral order by discouraging evil, and specifically by punishing people who do evil things.
2. **Positively** – Laws (especially tax laws and social customs) can encourage the good.

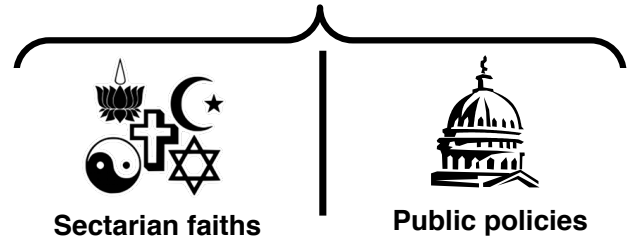
Competition without the cooperation and compassion of community is worldly and destructive.

First Amendment (religious clause)

“Congress shall make no law
respecting
an **establishment** of religion,
or prohibiting
the **free exercise** thereof.”

Separation of state from any one **religious sect** is not the same as separation from any notion of **transcendent spiritual authority**.

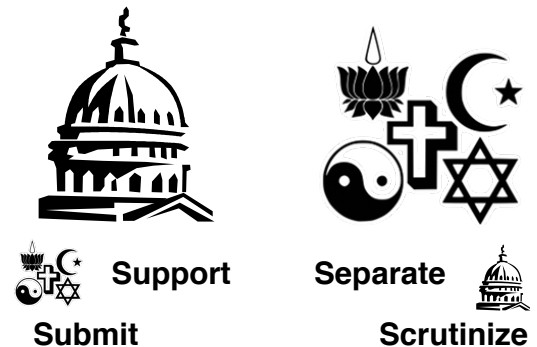
Sacred Canopy - a generic god



Jeremiah 29:7

“Seek the welfare of the
city where I have sent
you into exile, and pray
to the Lord on its behalf;
for in its welfare you will
have welfare.”

The things that are Caesar's



In what sense was America founded as a “Christian Nation?”

- ✓ Under a sacred canopy
- ✓ Ethics shaped by Biblical moral law
- ✓ Moral accountability to God
- ✓ Recognize divine calling and favor
- ✓ Respect for the dignity and depravity of humanity

The East entrance to The
Supreme Court Building
depicts Moses
as the supreme
law giver.





On the doors (both inner and outer) of the Supreme Court and above the Bench of the Chief Justice, are displays of the Ten Commandments!



On the chamber of the U.S. House of Representatives



On the floor of the National Archives

In what sense was America a secular state?"

- ✓ The Enlightenment set the rules of engagement with the world (reason over revelation).
- ✓ Pluralism was social, legal, & to a great extent ideological.
- ✓ Orthodox Christian founders were not in charge.
- ✓ Free Masonry was the best model for American civil religion.

The American model
(between England and France)



Union of one religious sect and state

Separation of all religion from public life

Political left & right

the Left	the Right
Believe the Founders were more like the French	Believe the Founders were more like the British
Call for radical separation of state from any religion or external authority.	Call for Biblical ethics to be tenured into the fabric of the republic's public life.



Freemasonry

Geometry (reason)
God (religion)
Gnosis (righteousness)

**The essence of
rational, moral, religion**

**virtue, courage, loyalty, prudence,
truthfulness, compassion, etc.**

American Civil Religion

with its recognition of the structure of ultimate reality, was, up until the 20th century, described as “Progressive Patriotic Protestantism.”

The General Welfare

may be defined in part by Biblical insights but must be argued from common revelation.

Christian doctrine and ethics

which are mandated in a specific church should not necessarily be policy in a pluralistic state.

Ethics for the State

are focused on the “general welfare” of all people, sects, etc. as defined by common sense.

Public Policy issues

should be argued from the context of American Civil Religion (common sense) rather than from any sectarian doctrine. When the Bible is used it should be in this context.

Tension

will inevitably exist between differing definitions of “general welfare” and the proper boundary between sect and state interests.

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***Theology file #807
Church and State***

***This will give you much more detailed
information on the subject.***

**Example
of Jesus being IN but not OF
the world.**

**Disciples promote the
general welfare by
supporting the state with
Biblical insights & common
sense arguments.**