

- Rev. Grant Mangold, www.RiversideChurchIowa.com

SELF-Government ?

Twelve days and counting. Election 2016 will be over. But will it? What will have been decided? An election captures a snapshot in the timeline of a nation. It reveals our current reality on the continuum between tyranny and freedom. Aside from sad similarities with past elections, this time, each day reveals new evidence of ramped up corruption and government for sale. How can we stop tyranny in its tracks?

"This is the issue of this election: whether we believe in our capacity for self-government or whether we abandon the American Revolution and confess that a little intellectual elite in a far-distant capitol can plan our lives for us better than we can plan them ourselves." Ronald Reagan's decades-old, yet timeless, analysis hammers the anvil of today's discussion for more freedom vs more tyranny by government.

Whether you're enamored of a candidate for president, the issues are certainly plain enough. Which proposed leader clearly calls for bigger government, more regulation, more control over individual lives? Which one seeks to turn the tide, releasing our nation to live out founding values of liberty and freedom? These categories go back before the beginning of America as a nation, to the genesis of human society. As summarized by the World History Institute and other historians, consider:

1- Individual Self-Government: Each person is accountable to the Creator. He created man and woman in His own image to represent Him on earth, to steward and develop His creation (Gen 1). Born-again through redemption in Jesus Christ (John 3), our renewed relationship with God sets us free to live according to timeless principles of the Bible (Gal 5). God supernaturally gives believers a new heart and His own Spirit, who empowers us to love God with all our being, and our neighbor as ourself (Eze 11 & 36). This "self-government" of redeemed individuals provides the starting point for building a free, prosperous self-governing republic - without the tyranny of big government welfare or police state force.

2- Family Government: Scripture presents the family as the "driving engine in a self-governing republic." Husband and wife become one flesh (Gen 1) who know God and love Him with all the heart, mind, and will. We are to teach our children to do likewise, daily instructing them in God's truth. Education is foremost a family duty, not a government mandate. God's Word is the ruler by which all human rhetoric and knowledge must be measured (Deut 6-7). When God-fearing men lead their families so that people live according to God's principles, their lives, homes and enterprises, they will yield divine blessing.

3- Church Government: God's Word shows how like-minded godly people organize into communities that worship and serve Him together, with gifted servant-leaders delegated to lead and serve. The church is God's "called-out people" who live and teach His Word so that others embrace Christ as Savior and Lord. Christ-followers are commissioned by God to be "salt and light," make disciples, and care for one another's needs. History shows godly individuals, churches and charitable organizations took initiative to assist the poor, orphans and widows. But the church has allowed bloated bureaucracies to usurp God's blueprint. The state has superceded the church, and people rely on taxes instead of tithes to care for the needy. The church has become enslaved to a federal government which keeps people subservient. And human government increasingly encroaches and removes God-given inalienable rights and freedoms.

4- Civil Government: God's Word sets boundaries of limited jurisdiction for family, church and civil government. God instituted limited civil government (Gen 9) for specific responsibilities and to follow God's precepts. He tasked civil magistrates to "protect the righteous, approve good deeds, punish evildoers." Likewise, civil servants are to carry out God's principles through their limited sphere of authority (Rom 13, Deut 16, 1 Sam 12). While every person is accountable to God, so does God hold the people accountable for the welfare of their nation (1 Chron 7:14). Whither America? As John Adams said, "*Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.*"

What about YOU? Will you make a difference? God changes the world one person at a time, one family, one church at a time. As we consider the future of our national government, it all comes back to YOU and your self-government. Every organization of human society is under God's sovereign governance. We are accountable to Him in all things. No less so in how you participate in civil government, and how you vote.

Will YOU help turn the tide of tyranny that threatens to swamp your life and nation? Will you vote on November 8 against human tyrants and for divine freedom? Repent. Pray. Choose wisely.