

# Calvary Protestant Evangelical Free Church

2801 Park Avenue, Baldwin, NY 11510

Pastor Charles Lucchesi 516-223-4070

E-mail: [calvarychurch@optonline.net](mailto:calvarychurch@optonline.net) Website: [www.cpcbaldwin.com](http://www.cpcbaldwin.com)



## CALVARY CHRONICLE

VOLUME 22, ISSUE 11

NOVEMBER 2020

### How To Recognize A Christian Citizen

**To try to improve society is not worldliness but love.  
To wash one's hands of society is not love but worldliness.**

**J. I. PACKER / POSTED APRIL 19, 1985**

It is a paradox of the Christian life that the more profoundly one is concerned about heaven, the more deeply one cares about God's will being done on Earth. The Christians who show most passion to serve others in this world are regularly those with the strongest hold on the other-worldly realities. This has always been true, whether we look at ministers, missionaries, statesmen, reformers, industrialists, physicians, men of wealth and power, or ordinary lay-folk.

Service to others, as an expression of love to them, is a Christian priority. But citizenship is a form of service, as most Christians have seen from the start. Despite the Marxist claim that religion anesthetizes one to the needs of Earth, we instead find that, other things being equal, those whose citizenship is in heaven (I echo Paul's phrase in Philippians 3:20) make the best citizens of any state, democratic or totalitarian, Christian or pagan, secular or even atheist.

#### **The Biblical Basis for Public Activism**

In the New Testament, civic obligation is emphatically commanded alongside - indeed, as part of - the obligation to serve God. When Jesus answered the question about taxpaying with the words, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17), this was not a clever evasion of the issue, but a clear acknowledgement that rendering what is due to the existing political regime is part of the Christian calling. When Peter in one breath says, "Fear God. Honor the Emperor" (1 Peter 2:17), he spotlights the same truth; as does Paul when, in the course of his overview of the life of gratitude for grace that is true Christianity, he

teaches the Roman Christians to "be subject to the governing authorities" (Romans 13:1), and tells them that "for the sake of conscience" they should "pay all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due" (vv. 6-7).

Paul speaks of each state official as "God's servant for your good" (v. 4). Note that it is pagan Roman officials, from the emperor down, that he has in view! And he further explains that God instituted the state as such to maintain law, order, justice, and "good." "Good" here evidently embraces protection and well-being, and is thus not far removed from the opportunity to pursue happiness, which the American Constitution enshrines.

Hence, although Christians are not to think of themselves as ever at home in this world but rather as sojourning aliens, travelers passing through a foreign land to the place where their treasures are stored awaiting their arrival (see 1 Peter 2:11; Matthew 6:19-20), Scripture forbids them to be indifferent to the benefits that flow from good government. Nor, therefore, should they hesitate to play their part in maximizing these benefits for others, as well as for themselves. The upholding of stable government by a law-abiding life, and helping it to fulfill its role by personal participation where this is possible, is as fitting for us today as it was for Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, Nehemiah, Mordecai, and Daniel (to look no further). We must see it as service of God and neighbor.

As one Christian member of the European Parliament, Sir Frederick Catherwood, trenchantly put it: "To try to improve society is not worldliness but love. To wash your hands of society is not love but worldliness."

(continued on next page)

## **Why We Support Democracy**

Representative democracy as we know it - in which the legislature, the judiciary, and the executive have separate status, the public information services (media) are not under government control, the elected administration always faces an elected opposition, and popular elections on a one-man, one-vote basis recur at regular intervals - is not the only form of government under which Christian citizens have lived and served God. However, there is no doubt that from a Christian standpoint it is a fitter and wiser form than any other.

The Christian recommendation of democracy rests on two insights.

The first is the awareness that government of the people, by the people, for the people, in an open community system that in principle allows anyone to qualify for any office, best expresses in political terms the God-given dignity and worth of each individual.

The second is the perception that, since in this fallen world, as Lord Acton put it, all power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, the separation of powers and the building of checks and balances into executive structures will limit the dangers of corruption, even if such procedures for restraint will never eliminate them entirely.

These Christian insights mesh with the worldly wisdom that sees that the more citizens can feel they have shared in making the decisions that now shape their lives, the more resolutely they will adhere to them. The pattern of government, therefore, that maximizes public consent will ordinarily be more stable than any other system.

### **Making Democracy Work**

Christian citizens, then, may be expected to show a firm commitment to the principles of democracy, and to see themselves as bound to do all they can to make democracy work. But that means conscientious commitment to the democratic process as the best way of decision making within the body politic.

In democracies that are philosophically and religiously pluralist, like those of the West, the democratic process that achieves consent out of conflict is vitally important. In this fallen world, conflict arising from limited vision and competing interests is an unavoidable part of the political scene. The intensity and integrity of the public struggle whereby a balance is struck between the contending parties then becomes an index of community health and morale.

The name given to the resolution of political conflict through debate is compromise. Whatever may be true in the field of ethics, compromise in politics means not the abandonment of principle, but realistic readiness to settle for what one thinks to be less than ideal when it is all that one can get at the moment. The principle that compromise expresses is that half a loaf is better than no bread.

Give-and-take is the heart of political compromise, as compromise is the heart of politics in a democracy. To see this is a sign of political maturity. By contrast, a doctrinaire rigidity that takes up an adversary position towards all who do not wholly endorse one's views and goals implies political immaturity.

Democratic decision making is as public a process as possible, and officials are expected to publish their reasons for action wherever this can be done without jeopardizing the future. But all major political decisions prove to be both complex in themselves and controversial in the community. This is inescapable for at least three reasons.

First, everyone's knowledge of the facts of every case is partial and selective.

Second, values, priorities, and opinions of the relative importance of long- and short-term results will vary. Think, for instance, of the debates that go on about conserving the environment.

Third, calculations of consequences, particularly unintended and undesired consequences, will vary too, and many actions that seem right to some will seem wrong to others because they predict different consequences. Because executive decisions regularly have unwelcome by-products, they become choices between evils - attempts, that is, to choose the least evil and avoid evils that are greater. Think, for example, of the debate about using large-scale nuclear devices in war.

The Christian citizen must accept that in politics no black-and-white answers are available, but God wills simply that all be led by the highest ideals and ripest wisdom that they can discover. The case of Solomon (1 Kings 3) shows that God's gift to rulers takes the form of wisdom to cope creatively with what comes, rather than ready-made solutions to all problems.

### **What Should the Christian Citizen Do?**

The New Testament does not speak about active political participation, for the very good reason that this was not an option for first-century believers.

(continued on next page)

The Roman Empire was not a democracy, and many if not most Christians were not Roman citizens. They were a small minority from the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum, and were viewed as eccentric deviants from the older eccentricity of Judaism. They had no political influence, nor any prospect of gaining any. (It took a longer period than the 200 years of American independence before Christians secured even political protection; prior to Constantine, their faith was illegal, and they lived everywhere under spasmodic persecution.)

So the only politically significant things they could do were pay their taxes (Matthew 17:24-27; 22:15-21; Romans 13:6-7), pray for their rulers (1 Timothy 2:1-4), and keep the peace (Romans 12:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:13-15).

Present-day representative democracy, however, opens the door to a wider range of political possibilities and thereby requires of us more in the way of responsible commitment than circumstances required in New Testament times.

#### **That commitment may be summarized:**

1. All should keep informed; otherwise we cannot judge well about issues, vote well for candidates, or pray well for rulers. Political ignorance is never a Christian virtue.

2. All should pray for those in power, as 1 Timothy 2:1-4 directs. The secret efficacy of prayer, as Scripture reveals it, is enormous.

3. All should vote in elections and referendums, whenever expressions of public opinion are called for. We should be led in our voting by issues rather than personalities, and not by single issues viewed in isolation, but by our vision of total community welfare. This is one way, real if small, in which we may exert influence as the world's salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16).

4. Some should seek political influence, by debating, writing, and working within the political party with which they are in nearest agreement. Clergy should not ordinarily do this, since it will be a barrier to the acceptance of their ministry by people who disagree with their politics. It is, however, very desirable that lay people with political interest should be encouraged to see the gaining and exerting of political influence as a field of Christian service, alongside the fields of church life, worship, and witness, with which they are likely at present to be more familiar.

5. Some should accept a political vocation. Who should do this? Those in whom interest, ability, and opportunity coincide, and on whom no rival career has a stronger claim; those with a vision for improving man's lot globally, advancing international peace, replacing unprincipled discrimination with justice, and

furthering public decency; those, finally, who are prepared to work hard, with patience, humility, tolerance, and integrity, fleeing fanaticism, riding rebuffs, and putting the public interest before their own. The Bible histories mentioned earlier show that God wants some of his servants as professional politicians, leading and shaping society well, and the discovery that one is fitted for the role is a prima facie summons from God to go ahead and embrace it.

Let none, however, be starry-eyed at this point: The choice is costly. The political path is rough traveling. The goldfish bowl of public life exposes one constantly to pitiless criticism, and to live there requires resilience and involves major self-sacrifice. As Robert D. Linder and Richard V. Pierard have written: "The work is often thankless and discouraging, and it sometimes means psychological strain and heartbreak for those involved in it. The problems are difficult, and, no matter what a politician does, invariably someone will be dissatisfied and complain about it. Every person in the community has the right to criticize the acts of any public official, and the critics have the advantage of hindsight, a privilege denied the decision-maker.... From a personal standpoint, political endeavor places heavy demand upon one's time, family, and financial resources. Many friends will automatically assume that an individual is in politics for some ulterior motive, and they will reveal this by the knowing look or sly remark ..." Politics is a power game, and the envy, hatred, malice, and self-seeking duplicity, which the power game regularly draws out of the sinful human heart, is too familiar to need comment here. No politician of principle can expect an easy passage, certainly not the Christian.

But who ever thought that the fulfilling of any aspect of Christian vocation would be easy? The words with which Sir Frederick Catherwood ends his book *The Christian Citizen* are worth frequent pondering:

*"We must be humble and not opinionated. We must be prepared to find that we are sometimes quite wrong and be able to admit it. We serve our fellow-men because of our love for a Lord who gave his life for us, a debt which, however well we serve, we can never repay. So whatever we do, we do it from a sense of duty and because it is right. We do not, like the cults, claim instant satisfaction. We do not, like the salesmen, guarantee success. The Christian's time-span is not mortal. One sows and another reaps. One labors and another enters into his labors. One day with God is like a thousand years and a thousand years like one day. The Christian knows the meaning of patience and endurance. But he also knows the meaning of action. This is the right formula for Christian politics, just because it is the right formula for every single part of the Christian life."*

# **Church Updates**

In many areas across the United States, numbers of positive cases from the pandemic have risen. The church continues to follow the guidelines to keep everyone's safety in mind.

Two worship services take place each Sunday:

**9:30 a.m. service is held downstairs in the Family Fellowship Room**

**11:00 a.m. service is held upstairs in the sanctuary**

Please be sure to wear a face mask before entering the building and during the service, hand sanitizing stations are available by the entrances, and physically distance yourselves from one another. Sunday School, Nursery, and Meet & Greet are still on hold.

Children's Church continues meeting on-line on Sunday mornings, the Wednesday Night Bible Study meets at the church at 7:00 p.m., and the Thursday Night Ladies Bible Study meets via Zoom the 1st and 3rd Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.

There are many options in giving of donations and tithing to the church. When attending a service, there is an offering plate in the back of the room; donations can be mailed directly to the church or even dropped off in the church mailbox; or you can donate on-line through the church website using PayPal.

For those who cannot attend the Sunday service, the worship service is still being recorded and will be posted on the church website ([www.cpcbaldwin.com](http://www.cpcbaldwin.com) - click on "YouTube") and streamed on YouTube at [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) (search for Calvary Church, Baldwin, NY).

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

*"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."*

Romans 8:28 (ESV)

## **RESULTS FROM THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

The Annual Congregational Meeting (which is the business meeting for the church) is usually held in June each year. During this unusual time, the meeting was held in October.

The following are important decisions that were made by Church Members:

- ♦ The Proposed Budget was approved for this fiscal year (June 1, '20 to May 31, '21).
- ♦ Tom Corcoran will serve another term as Elder; and Charlie Hetzel, Ralph Rose, and Patti Senita will serve another term as Church Board Trustee.
- ♦ Members voted to proceed with looking into re-evaluating the Church Constitution to make it more pleasing to God by applying Scripture in how the church is governed.

An update was given by the Maintenance Committee regarding the repair of the bell tower and restoration of the stained glass window. These projects are very costly and not the time of year to proceed with any actual work. The Committee will continue to look at options over the winter months.

Pray for Calvary and the church body during this difficult time of COVID - that we may put our faith and trust in God knowing that He is in control; pray for safe and spirit-filled worship services; pray for protection for the church family as cases of the virus are rising and the winter season approaches; pray for God's guidance and direction moving forward; and that we may all live in harmony and renew our hearts and minds in Christ.

# Thanksgiving Meal For Our Seniors

Due to the pandemic, so many events and programs at the church had to be cancelled. We are sad to say that there will not even be a Thanksgiving Dinner gathering this year.

The December Seniors Luncheon will not be able to be held at this time either. We miss our gatherings for seniors here at the church, and know they miss the get-togethers too.

To keep in touch with our seniors, the church is offering a special "Thanksgiving Meal to Go." Our Chef Ralph will prepare the meal, and volunteers will help package the food in ready-to-go containers.

If you would like a prepared dinner, give the church a call (516-223-4070) and speak directly to Sharon or Pastor Charlie.

We need to hear  
from you by  
Wednesday,  
November 18th.



For those who are able to get out and about, you can stop by the church for a few moments and grab your meal and go; OR, for those who cannot get around, we can make arrangements for someone to deliver the meal to your door.

Once you contact the church, let us know your preference of pickup or delivery. We will then give you detailed information.

Either way, we want to say hello, find out how you are doing, and see if there is anything the church can do for you at this time.



Photos of children participating in Children's Church Zoom sessions on Sunday mornings. We want to thank Melissa and Magalie for teaching and keeping the kids in the church family connected.

## **M** Niamey College Reopens After Flooding

**I  
S  
S  
I  
O  
N  
S  
C  
O  
R  
N  
E  
R**

John and Nancy DeValve are missionaries from Calvary Church who are serving with SIM in Niger, Africa. Due to the prolonged, intensive rainy season in their region, the Niger River swelled and broke through the dike. Water flowed through the streets of Niamey (the capital) and inundated the Sahel Academy and Bible school campus where John has been teaching and Nancy working in different capacities.

In some areas water rose to six feet inside the buildings destroying furniture, personal property, school supplies and books, and expensive equipment (such as computers). The administrator of the school and students lost almost all of their worldly possessions. The water has since receded and extensive clean up has taken place.

In the aftermath the school director had to search for a new place for the school to meet with enough space to include at least three classrooms, a library, an office, and housing for around 20 students (many of them married and with children). Space was finally secured and classes were ready to begin by late October.

Pray for John and Nancy, the administrators and teachers, and the students as they adjust to their new surroundings and homes, the recovery from the destruction of the flooding, for the financial impact this has had on the school and the people living in Niamey, and for John and Nancy's church which was being held on the campus compound.

# Calvary Chronicle

Calvary Protestant Church  
2801 Park Avenue  
Baldwin, NY 11510

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Baldwin, NY  
11510-4100  
Permit No. 192

## BIRTHDAYS

### NOVEMBER

2nd Charlie Hetzel (Jr.)  
3rd Courtney Gross  
3rd Lou Kelting  
4th Ronnie Roddy (Jr.)  
7th Sherry Valentine  
8th Bridget Dowling  
8th Paul Nembhard  
9th Zavier Foster  
9th Paula Kulla  
12th Kirk Nehring  
18th Roy Seymour  
19th Shannon and Shelby  
Verity  
20th Florence Emeigh  
20th Nadeline Sandoval-  
Vallejos  
22nd Barry Senita  
27th Nicole Alcindor  
28th Joe Waldvogel

### DECEMBER

1st Lauren Nicolich  
6th Trevor Watts  
10th Noelle Nehring  
11th Daishaun Elliott  
15th Anthony Alex Ramos  
20th Stephanie Verity  
21st Diane Benedetto  
24th Wren Waldvogel  
25th Sean Deedy  
27th David Manuel  
31st Dylan Rose

**Happy  
Birthday!**

## ANNIVERSARIES

### NOVEMBER

5th Lou & Ree Kelting  
13th Fred & Sherry Valentine  
19th Bob & Diane Benedetto

### DECEMBER

26th Carmine & Mary Jo Dapice  
31st Jim & Terry Tucci

## A Thankful People

Thankfulness is a quality of character without which we miss life's central melody. The hardest sin to excuse is ingratitude and it comes from thoughtlessness. A thinking people is a thankful people. Many personal woes would be eliminated if more time were spent on thinking of our blessings and expressing our gratitude to God and to the many who contribute to our happiness.

*Sunshine Magazine*