

## Should I obey my government?

The easy answer to this question is “yes, you should” because the government is unique within human society as being able to call on the coercive power of the State to ensure compliance if you decide for whatever reason to disobey it. However, such a pragmatic answer dodges the ethical question I am interested in probing in this article which might be stated, “when is it *right* to obey my government and when is it *wrong* to obey my government?”.

It is a time of the worldwide removal of the rights to assemble, worship and leave their houses – highlights of this week for me have included seeing police patrolling the residential streets I live on checking on people who happen to be outside; police pulling people over in cars; police patrolling the beaches checking no-one is sitting down enjoying the sun during their permitted “exercise time”; someone who refused to give their name and reason for being there to a police officer at a railway station was fined over £650. In the words of our health minister, “it was an instruction, not a request” to stay inside. We have seen 342 pages of unprecedented, repressive legislation rushed through our parliament with **no** debate, media spin attempting to make people fearful of others and guilty if they are outdoors, fake shortages of foodstuffs and household items. It was duplicity and coercion of people by their governments on the back of poor science (I have written about this polemically [here](#) and [here](#)).

Thus, the question I pose is a question that needs to be asked particularly when “obedience” or “submission” to the will of the government is being presented as a moral and civic duty – both personal and to protect others – and even a religious obligation before God according to Christian scripture for those of us who are Christians. As my perceived views on this subject have been challenged both publicly and privately by those I have great respect for and hold in high-honour, it is necessary for me to clarify and then defend my position if for no other reason than to raise the issues that I believe to have been ignored by my critics. The treatment here is not exhaustive and neither does it pretend to be, but it is intended to be non-trivial to explicate a particular point of view that I consider worthy of defence and legitimate to hold. I believe it will be as useful to the secular humanist as much as it will be to the Christian, but it is to the latter I address most of it as my most forceful and dismissive critics have been Christians.

*First, a personal note about me. One pointed criticism of myself in the last week has been that I have a lack of qualifications to speak against “professionals doing their jobs...how could I know better than health professional X, politician Y or professor Z, we must trust X,Y and Z to be acting in our best interests...”. Well, as one famous man said, “you have made me to boast as a fool but I do this that you might believe...a night and day I spent in the deep, thrice I was beaten with whips forty lashes each...” Well, the apostle Paul aces me there but in 1989 I did a BSc in Electrical and Electronic Engineering. In 1992 I did an MSc in Electronic Engineering which at that time was doing pioneering work on what we might call “Wi-Fi” today – there were many all-night research sessions where I was analysing data, designing and building computer models of transmitters and receivers. In 1994 I qualified as a Physics teacher to university level and taught for two years until my first wife got too ill and I then started a home-based business which ran until 2009. I then worked as a software engineer with a specialism in developing flow modelling software for a major engineering company until June 2019. I now work doing software development for a major international Christian ministry. Alongside I returned to study a BD in Theology, graduated in 2012 and then studied for a MA in Studies in Philosophy and Religion to which I graduated “with Distinction” in 2016. I received an unconditional offer to enter the PhD philosophy programme which I began a year later.*

*My point being I am an analytical, scientific, empirical person that believes in evidence as a basis of decisions and policy; I am also a person that is theologically literate and has a faith that believes we will stand before the throne of God to give an account for ourselves and how we chose to live. I believe in being politically and socially informed and in informing others. I believe in levelling intelligent and/or provocative criticism as a citizen concerned at what is going on both within my country and within the Church. That does **not** mean my conclusions are indubitably correct or I can lead the next prophetic wave if my church apostle just listened to me, but it certainly means I am informed enough to legitimately express my view against these “professionals” where I challenge scientific data or when I talk about Christian ethics. I am at least partially qualified to do so as one “who has studied to show myself approved”. Someone has to have the courage to cry “the Emperor has on no clothes!” as the famous parable of the young boy tells us as people were dazzled by the authority and prestige of the experts and the professionals, being prepared to do obeisance and be uncritically compliant, I am not one of those.*

First, a point of definition. The government is the part of the State that makes policy and uses other organs of the State such as the civil service (bureaucratic, i.e. non-elected institutions), State-media, military and police to enable that will to be carried out. In most modern “nation” States, there is a local element to this government orchestrated to a greater or lesser degree by the “central” government. Governments claim their legitimacy to govern in all sorts of ways and this is normally expressed using words such as “monarchy”, “constitutional monarchy”, “republic” and “democracy”. It is generally taught within history and political science that the course of history has moved us away from concentration of power in a few, the “monarchical” (mono – arche, lit. one ruler), towards the many, the “democratic”. We in the West like to call ourselves “democratic” in the sense that the power (*kratos* in Greek) is said to lie with the people (*demos* in Greek). What that means is that the people express their wish (normally by casting a vote) and the political structures are to be responsive to the will of the people. If the people disagree with their leaders, they use that same vote to dismiss those leaders. Of course, this is a wonderfully idealised and simplified vision for politicians have perfected the Machiavellian art of saying one thing to get in power for a long period of time and then doing something completely different when in power and immune from their electorate but it captures *something* important – the individual citizen is a participant in the governmental process by means of their vote and this is meant to be a limit on the ability of the State to execute its arbitrary will by merit of its coercive power against the people because the government is a government of “we, the people”.

Of special note is the concept of a *republic* – in a republic supreme power is held within the elected representatives. Some modern States, e.g. the UK are not republics but constitutional monarchies. Technically, the monarch is the supreme authority and must approve all laws although it is rare that the monarch would challenge the authority of the elected houses by withholding consent, openly at least! They are republics in every other respect. A *republic* will differ from a “pure” democracy in that the voters will appoint *representatives* of the people to make decisions rather than just *delegates* that are instructed to carry out the will of the people. This was meant to guard both against populist politicians manipulating a fickle *polis* (the people) – a sort of middle ground between the philosopher kings of Plato who because of their superior intellect and breeding know what is best for us all and the unrestricted individualistic democracy envisaged by the 18<sup>th</sup> century Romantic Rousseau. The great Thomas Jefferson, the founder of American democracy captured the problem perfectly when he said (I paraphrase slightly) “democracy is a terrible form of government, but the alternatives are worse”. Thus, it was said that “*smart nations create republics rather than democracies*” - republics specialise institutions that whilst claiming existential legitimacy because their representatives are elected, will nevertheless operate semi-independently from the people.

The people “trust” those representatives to make decisions on the basis of information and intelligence that they may not be privy too, i.e. the politicians are “professionals” with a specialism that happens to be the practice of government.

However, the point being made is that the legitimacy of the government is based in the people’s *collective will* and this lends legitimacy to the State’s use of “coercive power” to ensure that this will – expressed in the civil law and within the framework of justice and due process – be legitimate and respected by the people. In other words, it is permissible for the State to curtail the liberty of individual citizens on occasions if it a matter of the “common good” and has been validated by sufficient empirical evidence. A crude but effective example would be a SWAT officer shooting dead a terrorist who was actively or imminently about to engage in a terrorist act. The police did not take a vote from the citizens to be endorsed for this course of action but are justified in both the legal and ethical sense to act because the forfeiture of the terrorist’s life had been previously established on the basis of a transparent judicial process, i.e. laws, rights and statutes that have been debated by our representatives.

So, we can see that:

- a. The government requires the general permission of the people;
- b. The government operates within a legal framework endorsed by the representatives of the people;
- c. The government requires substantive evidence for specific scenarios to act legitimately when exercising its coercive power.

In *such cases*, the citizen would appear to have a clear obligation to support and obey the government. The government is acting in a public and transparent way, we can be confident its exercise of authority is legitimate. I would hope at this point that such a positivistic conception is acceptable on a *prima facie* basis at least to both Christian and secular humanists.

However, for those of us in the West, this understanding of government, our ethical obligation to obey and our support for democracy is rooted (embarrassingly for the atheists and secularists of the last two centuries) in the Reformation Judeo-Christian social theory that emphasised the legitimacy of the pluralism of opinion (though bounded by biblical law) in the public square and the consensus amongst a priesthood of **all** believers. The Reformation was non-hierarchical in direct contrast to the Catholic view that had historically supported hierarchical and monarchical forms of government in line with the “*King’s and/or Pope’s divine right to rule*”, a reflection of its top-down approach to social organisation. It is a matter of historical truth that democracies evolved within and from the protestant nations and that nations where the Catholic church (or similar hierarchical religions) has remained in a dominant social position, have remained politically hierarchical with frequently despotic institutions and governments. This is mirrored in political philosophies like Marxism that favour strong State intervention to ensure “equality” – they lapse into despotic social orders and strip the citizens of their individual rights and liberties in the name of the “common good”.

However, the moral imperative in relation to government for the Christian is stronger than the positivistic one of the secularists or the egalitarian one of the Marxists. For the Christian, the verses that will be used to provide the “*two or three witnesses by which every matter shall be established*” (Deut 19:15; 2Co 13:1) will be the following passages:

**Romans 13:1-7** <sup>NET</sup>Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except by God's appointment, and the authorities that exist have been instituted by God. <sup>2</sup> So the person who resists such authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will incur

judgment <sup>3</sup> (for rulers cause no fear for good conduct but for bad). Do you desire not to fear authority? Do good and you will receive its commendation, <sup>4</sup> for it is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be in fear, for it does not bear the sword in vain. It is God's servant to administer retribution on the wrongdoer. <sup>5</sup> Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of the wrath of the authorities but also because of your conscience. <sup>6</sup> For this reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants devoted to governing. <sup>7</sup> Pay everyone what is owed: taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

**1 Peter 2:13-17** <sup>13</sup> ¶ Be subject to every human institution for the Lord's sake, whether to a king as supreme <sup>14</sup> or to governors as those he commissions to punish wrongdoers and praise those who do good. <sup>15</sup> For God wants you to silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good. <sup>16</sup> Live as free people, not using your freedom as a pretext for evil, but as God's slaves. <sup>17</sup> Honor all people, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the king.

For the biblically sophisticated, the following verse is also used though I have doubts about its applicability<sup>1</sup>:

**Hebrews 13:17** ¶ Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls and will give an account for their work. Let them do this with joy and not with complaints, for this would be no advantage for you.

Thus, in summary, it is easy to make a biblical case that unconditional obedience would be required by the Christian on the basis of these texts - disobey your government loudly or strongly enough and "*it does not bear the sword in vain*" - it will imprison or execute you; so stop your religious meetings and go and self-isolate as you were told by the institutions and honour those authorities that have been instituted by God! This seems to be the *de facto* position I am hearing today. However, this is naïve, historically and scripturally ignorant and few beyond a few literalists and poorly informed fundamentalists, could maintain that position. There is immediate biblical precedent within the Book of Acts for when the civic leaders of the Jewish community (who also happened to be religious factions) were disobeyed by the early believers:

**Acts 4:18-19** <sup>18</sup> And they called them in and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. <sup>19</sup> But Peter and John replied, "Whether it is right before God to obey you rather than God, you decide..."

Thus, a common qualification historically amongst many Christians involved in resistance would be that the government is to be obeyed unless it is asking me to do something that detracts from my witness as a Christian; or it is asking me to do something immoral and/or dishonest. But we do have the problem of another famous passage<sup>2</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> The context of this verse seems to make it immediately clear that it is referring to leaders within the Christian community rather than the political leaders of the nation. I include it because I have heard on at least two occasions this week this verse being applied to the political leaders of the nation and some would argue on a hermeneutical basis that it is a specific application of a general principle of submission to those in authority.

<sup>2</sup> This is of special interest to me because this is the passage used by my current employer regarding their position on obedience to the restrictions imposed by their national government. In my view, although their spiritual stand is strong against the virus promoting spiritual solutions, their deferential position in the public sphere neuters any political voice they might have had to address their leaders. Contrary to this interpretation, it has been explicitly argued that maintaining this place "*under authority*" allows one to "*speak to authority*" when required and being listened to (presumably because you are asked being so friendly and supportive to

**Matthew 22:15-21** <sup>15</sup> ¶ Then the Pharisees went out and planned together to entrap him with his own words. <sup>16</sup> They sent to him their disciples along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are truthful, and teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You do not court anyone's favor because you show no partiality. <sup>17</sup> Tell us then, what do you think? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" <sup>18</sup> But Jesus realized their evil intentions and said, "Hypocrites! Why are you testing me? <sup>19</sup> Show me the coin used for the tax." So they brought him a denarius. <sup>20</sup> Jesus said to them, "Whose image is this, and whose inscription?" <sup>21</sup> They replied, "Caesar's." He said to them, "Then give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

This is quite a subtle example and our previous qualification might trip us up. Here the Herodians and Pharisees were trying to get Jesus to disobey Roman civil law on the basis of deference to a (higher) religious principle. However, Jesus was smarter than that - in using the term "*give to Caesar*" he correctly identifies that the currency being used within the country did indeed *belong* to Caesar. Caesar had a right to it. The nation had joined the Pax Romana and in return for taxation "enjoyed" the protection and privileges of the Roman way of life and, for a while at least, avoided ethnic cleansing. **You only have the liberty of refusing to obey your government when the government is not your source of supply of the services you need**, and this trumps the religious principle objection **unless** you are operating independently of the government's services<sup>3</sup>.

Thus, another principle we see at work here, which is the appeal both Paul and Peter make in their "submission" passages, is that it is an issue of "conscience" that we obey such leaders if we have entered into a civil arrangement with them. So, it would seem that there is no scope for the Christian to indulge in civil disobedience, our ethical obligation is to be obedient – Paul could not be clearer, it is an "issue of conscience"<sup>4</sup>. However, such a *prima facie* answer has weaknesses which illustrate that it rests on an incomplete exegesis of these passages of Paul and Peter.

We can agree that "submission" is the general premise – we obey rulers because God requires it. Because God requires it, it is an "issue of conscience". Rulers are given the titles "ministers of God", perhaps better translated in the ablative sense, "ministers *from* God". Now that should arrest us, if obedience to the ministers is unconditional then it is **because** they are **ministers from God**. They are about **God's** business and implementing **His** programme. They are **not** following their own secular programme and ignoring God's Word. We obey **because** they are following God's agenda and so we can do that in **good conscience** because we can judge the government practice against the objective, public standard of scripture.

Now, applying the same logical formula, if a government is secular or in religious opposition to God, persecutes believer's, destroys Churches and imprisons believers (as is happening in various nations around the world), then it would seem reasonable that civil disobedience is permissible to defend the liberty and freedom of the Church. However, at the moment it is clear many Christians, particularly of the prophetically sophisticated variety (this is not meant as an insult but as an

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your leader). It is a nice idea but leaves you no option when they ignore you. You can be friendly and supportive but still stand your ground.

<sup>3</sup> This was why early Christian communities evolved as promoting self-sufficiency, pooling wealth, skills and resources as in Acts 4, vv32-36 and Acts 5, vv42 – Acts 6,6. They did not belong to Caesar; Caesar had no claim on them.

<sup>4</sup> There is thus a long history within the Christian church, both protestant and catholic, of many believers suffering without complaint at the hand of abusive civil authorities and frequently being martyred. Such a paradigm is celebrated as the "martyr's crown". However, it must immediately be pointed out that many more will be martyred for indulging in our exception of refusing to obey the civil authorities when instructed, say to deny Christ. Their martyr's crown is no less valuable.

observation) are not convinced by this argument and the more theological amongst us will normally appeal to God in some way using the leader to “discipline” a disobedient or reprobate church and/or “shaking the nations that He might be found”. Whilst there is plenty weight to the first part of this argument as a type by considering the covenant chapters at the end of Deuteronomy terminating in the breakdown, exile and scattering of the Jews amongst the nations, this is in the face of gross apostasy within the chosen people (the *church*) of the Jewish nation. If a people that are His ignore their God, then He gives *us* up to those who hate *us*, but that is a different logical sphere than the nations and political structures within them and our positions as citizens. I would be happy to grant that the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century churches suffered the intellectual equivalent of “being scattered amongst the nations” because they had absolutely nothing useful to say to culture being rather known for “revival” and “rapture”. We have struggled to rediscover our primitive dominion theology but that is a subject I have written about elsewhere at great length and I refer the interested to [here](#).

We might also rejoice at God “shaking the nations” but it is rather hard for the nations at the moment to find him on anything but the internet (and that can be switched off very easily). It is the preaching and *demonstration* of the gospel that saves men. I do not want to consider that this demonstration of the gospel can be “online” because Paul instructs Timothy to pray “*for governments and all that are in authority that we may live a peaceful and quiet life in all godliness and dignity*” for the specific purpose that “*all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*” (1 Tim 2:2-4). The original Greek of v2 is vivid and it speaks of **stable social conditions** that facilitate the free and unhindered propagation of the saving Word. Thus, there is no justification for unconditional surrender by the citizen of their rights and submission to their leaders when they become corrupt or unreasonable and create conditions that are the opposite of “peaceful and quiet”. There even needs to be qualifications to what happened to the Jewish nation – there are plenty of passages where God then announces judgment on the nations that “disciplined” His nation because of their cruelty and excess in their “ministry” on His behalf. **Where they acted beyond His Law, they ceased to be ministers on His behalf and entered into judgment.** So, it seems, the master principle is *submission to those who are ministering on behalf of God*.

We can perhaps see the problem more clearly with the naked unconditional submission argument when we consider some of the history within the nations and the moral imperative expressed by our master principle that was on the church to resist corrupt governments. Very close to our time now was the struggle of the South Africans against the apartheid policies. The white minority leaders frequently quoted Romans 13 to the black archbishops who were at the forefront of the struggle and the archbishops ignored them and continued to fight for emancipation. It was the Christian nobility of Mandela (who had been converted in prison) in arguing for truth and reconciliation and the positive moral influence of the Church that has been recognised as preventing vengeful bloodletting once the white minority were deposed. They had influence and authority within the coloured community because they had stood with them in the struggle against illegitimate oppression. Secondly, going back a few centuries, the American war of independence was given moral energy by a regiment of preachers who in Baldwin’s words “*preached politics, resisted tyranny, and founded a nation on the Bible*”<sup>5</sup>. A little bit further back, the struggle of tiny protestant Holland against the Catholic hegemony of Spain that represented the Papal war machine of the first EU that claimed the direct authority of God for their oppressive and murderous actions; thank God for the British Queen

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<sup>5</sup> Baldwin, A.M., Ed. McDurmon, J., *The New England Pulpit and the American Revolution* (Powder Springs, AVP: 2014)

Elisabeth I who sent them aid just as they were starving<sup>6</sup> that saved the baby of Protestantism in Europe. In the fourth century AD, the struggle of the African Donatists and other “heretics” against the mainstream Roman bishops who were persecuting them to death because they refused to throw incense into the fire to honour the Roman emperor. The “casting of incense” (acknowledging “Caesar as Lord”) was all that was required to be a legitimate religious minority tolerated and protected within the Roman Empire – I am sure they had Peter quoted to them again and again “*honour the Emperor*”. They refused to give the honour to the Emperor that belonged only to God and were martyred for it, aided and abetted by the religious establishment that had jumped into bed with the Roman politicians. They were willing to trade their Christian witness and to rework their theology in exchange for a quiet life and the protection and provisions of the Roman State - the similarity to today’s position of deferential leaders not raising a squeak in protest and defending tyranny is striking for me. Thus, although much more could be said on either side of this argument (and in a more academic version of this article I will say much more), I hope this is sufficient to establish that the passages of both Paul and Peter have the context that leaders must be ministers of God working for the good of the church for us to be submitting to them as a *matter of conscience* and we have every right, even a moral obligation, to resist tyranny.

So back to the present and why this answer matters to us today. In our current condition we have lost our liberty and civil rights to worship and assemble. Epidemiologists [have argued](#) that the autocratic actions of lockdowns and repressive new legislation<sup>7</sup> are excessive and ineffective responses to the pandemic. They are the actions reminiscent of Communist dictatorships that had no respect for the individual rights of people. The science that was used to provide a justification for these severe measures was and still is, faulty in a most basic and obvious way. The quiet acquiescence of British academics to the dubious justification presented by the chief scientific advisors to the UK government is finally breaking down with even the author of the initial report that locked us all up admitting there could be a “2/3rds overlap” between people who would have died anyway in the next 12 months and those who would now die of COVID-19. That is code for saying the “research” was not proper research at all and would have failed peer review – it was created for a political purpose only and that was to create a climate of fear that allowed the country’s population to be locked up, stripped of basic rights and religious liberty. A similar approach has been replicated throughout the world. The “lockdown” is a save face for the governments that have taken on an idolatrous salvific role for the citizens of their nations; for the British our enduring idol of the National Health Service and its equivalents throughout Europe are shown to be wanting in every respect. They have been asked by their politicians at the behest of citizens schooled in dependency, to do something they can never do but they will try their hardest to “fix” it for us by locking us up. Yet, no government agency has the resources, capacity or compassion to keep its citizens healthy and fit, that is the responsibility of the individual and the Church. Would it not have been preferable that each church was sufficiently established in the healing power of God that it would have kept its own congregations well and then had healing lines of the sick amongst our neighbours?

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<sup>6</sup> The Spanish armies at the command of the Pope blockaded the country and started destroying the dikes to drown the people (most of the Netherlands is reclaimed land). When the Spanish commander demanded their surrender as the floodwaters rose, the early Dutch replied, “*we would rather die eating rats than surrender to tyranny*”. The stubborn, independent, free spirit of the Dutch can be traced back to this period. Elisabeth I broke the blockade and sent them aid.

<sup>7</sup> I summarise these in <https://medium.com/@mmacneill123/coronavirus-duplicity-what-the-politicians-and-experts-are-doing-behind-your-back-465937458640>

Our oppression by our governments is a symptom of far deeper issues within our worldview. We have been so schooled and trained in socialism that we think it is correct and just “that modern States have a responsibility and interest in the general welfare of their citizens”. No, education and healthcare are not the business or responsibility of the State. The State of the Bible had two roles alone – to provide a ministry for major issues of justice to prevent arbitrary loss of life by vengeance (capital punishment was reserved for the State) and secure the borders of the nation. Thus, in a national crisis, the local authorities cooperated and were to raise an army to defend the people. Similarly, there was no restriction in principle to immigration but there were strict conditions on migrants that they had to submit to the civil laws of the nation and although there was no forced conversions, they could not subvert the spiritual life of the nation by making public displays of their pagan religions. Thus, the government was bottom up – communities were to govern themselves, there was not even a standing national government or a military; parents were to educate or at least organise the education for their children in line with their values, priests were to minister to the sick. The closest analogue in the modern world is the Swiss canton model deriving from Calvin’s time as the great social reformer and moral force of Geneva dealing with the refugees of religious persecution throughout Europe by the papal forces.

However, if **you** defer to the government for these services, you must accept prohibitive taxation and obey the government when it locks you up. This was the explicit warning that the prophet Samuel gave to the elders of Israel when they demanded “a King” (1 Sam 8) to fix all their problems for them. Samuel warned them a standing executive State would be established that would tax them and help itself to their sons and daughters when it had need of them, kill them in battles as required; it would become oppressive and demanding. Samuel, I believe, is here again warning us to have the courage to take personal responsibility before God for our own society, our own health and fitness; then the health service might be there if we ever missed it with God as an expression of his common mercy and grace.

So, let us remind ourselves of what the case is that I have tried to make as I draw to a close. In the introductory sections where I looked at how governments establish their legitimacy, I stated that as a minimum, the government is acting in a public and transparent way, and then we can be confident its exercise of authority is legitimate and we, as a matter of conscience, should submit to them. However, the actions of our politicians have failed this test, they have acted with duplicity, aided and abetted by bad science and a media content to generate enormous fear amongst those they are supposed to inform. This has demonstrated a total bankruptcy within our culture and our spiritual leaders should have been at the vanguard of a rebellion against it. The uncritical preaching of church leaders of “honouring” our leaders and submitting to such totalitarian and unscientific actions by our leaders should be a matter of reproach and repentance. That is not to say we must cease in our duty to pray for our leaders and honour the office they are in for 1 Tim 2 instructs us otherwise and it is God’s will we have stable social conditions that “all men may be saved”. But it is a fundamental antichrist attitude of our political leaders in prohibiting Christian congregations from gathering that demonstrates their total contempt for God; even if I was a base, profane agnostic, I would have given space “just in case” their God could help us, “wager, you must wager” as Pascal put it! You would have hoped our “prophets” would have had at least the discernment to resist the oppressors at our gates after missing the main event<sup>8</sup> because we are too busy prophesying about 2020 as the year of clear vision.

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<sup>8</sup> As far as I know, it was only Chuck Pierce who has explicitly, before the event, made any reference to it happening before the event, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDKmha9-dAE>. Interestingly, considering some of the criticisms I have received in drawing attention to the Chinese role in this pandemic, he

In previous generations, the spiritual leaders of the nation would have called us to prayer, we would have presented ourselves at church or been arrested and some of the smarter Christian leaders (especially in the US) are beginning to do exactly that and are being arrested for it. Someone somewhere needs to take a stand for liberty and freedom, it should have been us; we should be informed enough both politically and scientifically to argue for our freedom. The church at this time should have been a bold answer like Jesus amongst the contagious skin diseases of the leper colonies of His day, rather than doing our Sunday Zoom meetings, embracing our reset and hiding in the upper room in glorious self-isolation and social distancing. Have we forgotten what it means to be free and human? Technology allows every facet of our lives to be centrally managed and there are many aspects of this crisis that have allowed intrusion and justification of privacy destroying measures. If we *have* to pay by electronic means at a food market (like they already do in China and I know of another European country where the socialist government is pushing it very hard), the government switches us off and we starve or meekly comply. We cannot afford to be those who sell our souls for a loaf of bread but are confident in our God to meet all our needs according to **His** riches. We really need to be smarter and to understand where this global move is going, so have the courage to stand and to be happy to be labelled “rebellious” or “disobedient” to stand up for your rights when you need to be.

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explicitly talks about conflict with China will be seen in this year as they seek to exert economic influence. Additionally, there have been some particularly distasteful efforts at people “back-fixing” their previous prophetic words to validate their prophetic credentials and predictably lots of words from the prophets about our “breakthrough” now. Personally, I would rather just repent and get some insight into why we all missed it.