

4. Three possible responses: = PROMOTE vs. TOLERATE vs. RESIST

politics, government & nationhood - 3

Government and freedom

Romans 6:15-19

The good → promote (=Biblical Christianity)

Evil → resist OR tolerate

Why *tolerate* evil behaviour?

- it's a matter of the heart
- it may not be wise to resist it

= religious freedom NOT as a positive good...
but as a concession

= not moral right, but *legal*

Importance of tolerance

→ ask: will enforcing the restraint of this evil behaviour do more harm than good?

E.g....

While waiting to begin

1. Is freedom of religion a good thing?
2. What are its limits?
3. How do we decide?

Introduction

- **Acknowledgement / resources**

- David Thomas, Christ Church Romford
- James Baird, *King of Kings: a reformed guide to Christian government*

- **Recap**

Government is FROM God

Government is FOR the public good = Christianity

Today: what about freedom...

and especially *freedom of religion*?

1. The CHRISTIAN view of freedom

Q: Will you be able to sin in heaven?

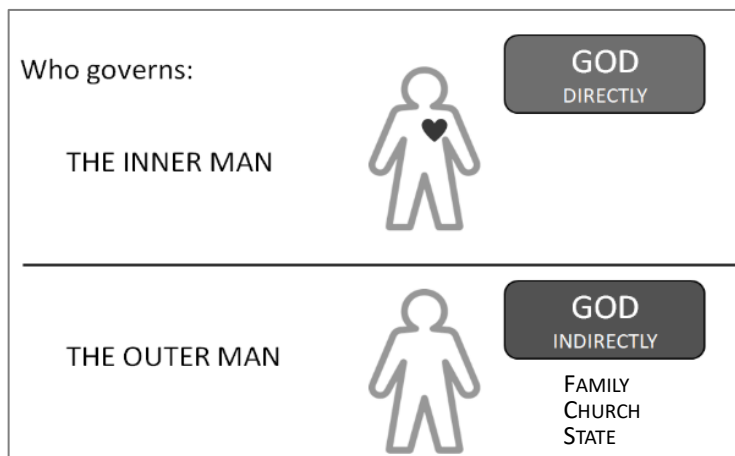
Freedom – Romans 6:15-19
= liberty to choose the good
... *not* the absence of limits

Therefore, more Christianity → more (true) freedom

2. God rules over the INNER man and the OUTER man in different ways

A human is an embodied soul...

ruled over by 3 God-given human authorities
= family, church and state...



Only God can directly govern the inner man / heart
Westminster Confession 20:2, “God alone is Lord of the conscience...”

But human authorities CAN compel the “outer” man:

- Fathers...
- Church elders...
- The magistrate...

→ *Therefore*, we affirm freedom of conscience
AND proper compulsion in external matters

3. Some religious practices are NOT for the common good

e.g. “Remember, remember the 5th of November...”

Who decides?
= God’s law... applied with Biblical wisdom