

CITIZEN STEWARDSHIP

by Rev. Thomas Soltis, SELC Stewardship Director

PRO DEO ET PATRIA

The “Pro Deo et Patria” (For God and Country) Boy Scout award is one of the highest and most difficult to be achieved. Scouts have to perform a great amount of service projects in behalf of their church and community. The motto, “For God and Country” applies to all Christians. Christians are to be good caretakers of their Church and country.



OBEDIENCE

Christian citizen stewardship requires obedience to law and government. Civil obedience is necessary for an orderly society. When laws are not obeyed, society falls into chaos. Actually, anarchists are rebelling against God. St. Paul writes: “The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted.” (Rom. 13:1-2) Because people are sinful, they have a tendency not to get along with each other. A basic purpose of government is to punish those who do evil and reward those who do good. St. Peter writes: “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.” (1 Peter 2: 13-14) Civil disobedience is allowed only when a government commands something contrary to the will of God. The apostles disobeyed civil authority stating: “We must obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29)

RESPECT

Government officials should be respected. Regina Brett of the Cleveland Plain Dealer recently (10/2/09) wrote a commentary about how a “lack of civility” is increasing among Americans. Among examples, she cited an

insult publicly screamed at President Obama. In a democratic society, Christian citizens have the privilege to disagree, but never the right to insult the personhood of someone - be it a government official, neighbor, friend, family member, fellow worker - whoever. In Romans 13:6-7, St. Paul calls government officials “God’s Servants” who are to be respected. The emperor, Nero, an evil man, ruled at the time of Saints Peter and Paul. It was in the context of despotic, bad government that the apostles encouraged respect for rulers and government authority. St. Peter writes: “Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the King.” (1 Peter 2:17)

INVOLVEMENT

Some things you can do as a Christian citizen:

- * Vote
- * Obey the law
- * Pay taxes honestly
- * Campaign for a good candidate
- * Run for a public office yourself
- * Serve the community as a volunteer
- * Effect change by supporting good laws and opposing bad ones (ie. abortion, same sex marriage, human cloning, stem cell research, gambling, etc.)
- * Respectfully influence government leaders

PRAYER

If you don’t like a government official, the first thing to do is pray. St. Paul writes: “I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” (1 Tim. 2:1-2) Pray that those who govern may rule with moral integrity for the good of all according to God’s will. Pray that the citizens of our nation would live righteously. Proverbs 14:34 reminds us: “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

“Your Vote Counts!”

<http://selc.lcms.org/documents/stewardship/YourVoteCounts.pdf>