

Voting and the Word of God

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1. Voting is not commanded nor forbidden by God's law.
2. Voting, therefore, is a matter determined by general moral considerations.
3. Such considerations are common in other moral decisions in life, decisions that are functionally the same as voting since voting is simply a moral decision in the realm of politics (Luke 14:28).
4. These general considerations include the same as within the church (and if the most restrictive and holy institution allows for general considerations, how much more less restrictive and holy institutions?).¹
5. These considerations include
 - a. "some circumstances...ordered by the light of nature, and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed." (WCF 1.6)
 - b. Things "contrary to the light of nature" (WCF 20.4)
 - c. LCQ 99 (see prior lessons)
 - d. What is being voted upon, the weight of the vote and the opportunity to do good.
6. Voting is but a means from among many means to establish a peaceful and just society (per Rom. 13, etc.)
7. Means should match the goals of life. Voting should match the goals of life:
 - a. To glorify God and enjoy Him forever
 - b. To Love God
 - c. To Love our Neighbor
 - d. Glorify and love are fulfilled by specific law-considerations (see earlier classes).
 - e. Love of secular-neighbor should not trump love of church-neighbor (Gal. 6:10).
 - f. For political considerations these include
 - i. Maximally: A society conducive to Christian obedience (preferably a Christian society)
 - ii. Minimally: A society of peace so that the church may worship and obey in peace.
8. Voting is a moral decision but not all voting is morally equal:
 - a. A small body of voters gives more weight to single votes (weight meaning significant impact on the outcome, to whom much is given, much is required, Luke 12:48).
 - b. Thus a King has the most moral authority and responsibility and accountability.
 - c. Individuals in a large democracy have less moral authority, etc. via voting. They are given "less".
 - d. Individuals in a large democracy must enact political pressure via groups that effectively become a single voting block to increase the weight of individual votes (hence, political parties).
 - e. Voting is often for indirect moral decisions that are weighted by possibilities more than certainties (see handout: How Should a Christian Vote?)
9. There is no command of God that *forbids* voting for non-Christians in the political realm.

¹ 1 Cor. 5: 9, 10: "I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly *did* not *mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world"

10. Is there a command of God that *requires* voting for Christians or someone relatively morally upright?
- a. Is it found in the qualifications of the Jewish Dispensation (e.g., Deut. 17:14)?
 - i. But why would not the kingship also be morally binding?
 - ii. But why would not Deut. 1:13 be just as binding with its looser qualifications?
 - iii. But such qualifications better fit the circumstances of a religiously homogeneous society.
 - iv. But to whom much is given, much is required and kings are given more power than today's political leaders.
 - v. But if commanded, not all commandments are to be done at all times (LCQ 99).
 - b. Is it found in the light of nature (sanctified common-sense)?
 - i. Yes, relatively morally uprightness is a qualification for office, lest you cannot trust them and they not administer peace and justice.
 - ii. No, insofar as the light of nature and Christian prudence acknowledge that there are exceptions: if choice A is the only way to preserve life, but choice A is a scoundrel and a philanderer but choice B is outwardly moral and upright but promises to kill babies, choice A is required.
 - iii. See point c. for more.
 - c. If the requirement of an officer is relatively moral uprightness, how relative is that?
 - i. Certainly that which is forbidden is never to be done.
 - ii. Moral choices sometimes involves weighing the relative importance of conflicting commands of God (e.g., We ought to obey God, rather than man).
 - iii. But voting for a sinner is not forbidden unless one's vote is such that evil is accomplished intentionally and directly (see How Should a Christian Vote?)
 - 1) *Formal* cooperation in evil is sharing the intent of the evildoer.
 - 2) "*Material* cooperation is when your act is some part of the chain of things which will probably result in an evil, and evil intended by the evildoer, but you do not share the intent."
 - 3) *Remote* cooperation is many degrees of participation removed.
 - 4) *Near* cooperation is much closer to the misdeed.
 - 5) "In cases where consequent evils are a significant possibility of an action, such as investment, we are morally bound to inquire as far as possible into the consequences of the activity to insure that we are not being complicit in evil..."
 - 6) "[Because of limited knowledge] we will sometimes unavoidably be found materially cooperant, in a remote way, in evils. We must simply work to minimize these occasions."
 - 7) "Would either choice be formal cooperation with evil? If so, that choice cannot be made. If not, would the material cooperation be near or far? If near, it would also be best not to support such a choice. But if the material cooperation is far, then you may."