

A Theology of Politics

By John Edmiston

1. God is the Creator of Heaven and Earth and the seas, and all that is in them and as such has authority over all people and nations and powers and principalities and institutions which are to be brought into conformity with His moral will and goodness and grace. (Genesis 1, Psalm 103:19, 104, Isaiah 40:9-16)
2. Mankind has fallen into sin which taints all persons, institutions, political processes and governments. (Romans 3:23, 11:32)
3. This present world order is largely governed by powers and principalities led by the Evil One, (Ephesians 2:1-4, 1 John 5:18, Luke 4:5,6) and these act through world leaders to keep people from Christ (Acts 4:26, 1 Corinthians 2:6-8, Revelation 16:14, 17:1,2) and to set up structures that reinforce the sin of mankind. Thus there is an intense spiritual battle in the heavenly realms that from time to time has political consequences. (Daniel 10, Ephesians 6:10-20)
4. God came in Christ to reconcile "all things" to Himself - including persons, powers and principalities. (2 Corinthians 5:18,19, Ephesians 1:11-14, Colossians 1:15-20)
5. The basic duties of government are justice and protection and the fundamental moral quality of leadership is incorruptible impartiality (Exodus 18:21, 23:1-8, Leviticus 19:15, Deuteronomy 10:17, 1 Timothy 5:21, James 3:17). The government's duty before God is to bring His justice to the relationships (personal, commercial etc) in the community and to protect the weak. (Ps. 72)
6. A Christian leader must also be competent to rule and should have wise policies. Wisdom (chokma - practical wisdom, savvy) is a spiritual attribute that is given by God and which is highly desirable in Kings and in all who lead. (1 Kings 3:1-28) The Christian politician must aim to become wise and astute and able to read people and courses of action. (see Proverbs, Ecclesiastes)
7. God is Sovereign over all mankind and both "brings low" the proud and "exalts" lowly people to office, in Daniel it is made plain that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He will, and sets up over it the lowest of men. (Dan 4:17, 25, 32, 5:21)
8. Politics is ultimately God's concern and He determines the succession of kingdoms (Daniel chapters 6-12) and their times and boundaries (Acts 17:26).
9. Thus intercession to God on the basis of His Word can change national destinies e.g. Jeremiah's prayer concerning the release from the Babylonian captivity. (Daniel 9)
10. Jesus commanded us in the Great Commission to bring the entire world into obedience to God, firstly through conversion and then through instruction in God's will. (Matt 28:18-20)
11. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth and convicts the world of sin, and righteousness and judgment (John 16:8) and this includes prophetic conviction in the political, economic and social arenas - which were often the concern of the Old Testament prophets. (Amos 5)
12. The center and standard of all Truth is Jesus Christ (John 14:6) and that Truth should be applied to every area of life, in all places and at all times - not only the Christian community.
13. The spiritual renewal of the mind and non-conformity to world systems (Romans 12:1,2) is essential if politics is to become godly.
14. True Christian politics is the expression of the nature of Christ through a system of government led by wise and Spirit-led leadership. (Acts 6:1-8)
15. Jesus is the King of Kings who will judge the kings and rulers of this world upon His return and Jesus will set up His government here on earth - and Christians will reign with Him. (see Matthew 24,25 and the books of Daniel & Revelation).
16. God will bring this world to a climax when the world systems, led by the Anti-Christ go to war against God and the saints. God and the saints will win and will bring history and politics to their proper conclusion. [2 Peter 3:13](#) But according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

17. The concept of the separation of Church and State applies only to the formal institutions. Religion and politics have always been closely intertwined and as such are inseparable.
18. Politicians and political regimes are accountable to God but not necessarily to the clergy.
19. It is generally wisest to separate spiritual and temporal authority so that the "High Priest" and the "King" are different persons.
20. The Christian political objective is not merely to put Christians into power - but to bring the nation(s) into obedience to Christ. (Matthew 28:18-20, Romans 1:5, 15:18, 16:26)
21. Christianity is first spiritual then political (not the other way around). Ideally there should be an ongoing and active synergy between the spiritual and the political. Unless the spiritual values change then the politics will be "the same old thing" and unrenewed. All "revolutions" in Scripture such as the Exodus and the overthrow of Jezebel were firstly spiritual, dealing with the principalities and powers before dealing with the government.
22. The Ideal Person is Jesus Christ, the Ideal Kingdom is the Kingdom of God, the Ideal Religion is that of faith in Christ, the Ideal Law is that of the Holy Spirit, the Ideal City is the New Jerusalem.
23. Faith and personal belief is mainly formed in community (family, friends, church, school, university, military, tribe, nation, etc) and politics regulates the community that forms the value system. So we should pray for kings and those in authority so the Christian faith may progress (1 Timothy 2:1-4)
24. Christ is not the sole property of any one person or political party or system of government.
25. Christians are first citizens of Heaven (Ephesians 2:19, 3:20) and are pilgrims passing through this world (Hebrews 11:13, 1 Peter 2:11). Human politics is thus non-ultimate and earthly citizenship useful but secondary. Our ultimate destination is not an earthly city or a utopian system of government.
26. Bible characters just as Joseph, Daniel, Ezra, Mordecai, Esther and Nehemiah participated honorably in pagan governments while maintaining proper spiritual priorities. Also some of the early Christians such as Erastus (Romans 16:23) seem to have held high government positions.
27. Christians are generally to be non-violent as the disciples were - who did not fight even at the arrest of Jesus. [John 18:36 MKJV](#) Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would fight so that I might not be delivered to the Jews. But now My kingdom is not from here.
28. Right action takes precedence over right system. It is better to have a just monarchy than an unjust democracy (or vice-versa).
29. Christian politics is not about setting up ecclesiastical systems or planting churches but rather deals with the powers, principalities, laws, leadership and systems of government that provide the overarching context for faith, worship and community life.
30. In the event of a direct clash of loyalties between God and the State Christians are to obey God rather than the State. (Acts 4:19)
31. Christians are obligated to be ethical and act according to God's will in all situations, even in politics. Yet at the same time we are to pay great attention to how to wisely use the best means possible (within God's will) to achieve effective, Christ-centered social transformation in our communities.

The Community (The Ground Of Politics)

32. Politics forms and regulates community life.
33. Community life then forms and regulates the values of the persons in the community including their spiritual values.
34. If a person is to maintain spiritual values different from those of his community he has four choices:
 - A) be in conflict with his current community and perhaps try to change it.
 - B) become part of another community that has his new values
 - C) be a secret believer or a hermit dwelling alone.
 - D) start an entirely new group/community based around his spiritual values.
35. The decision about which choice to take will be, in part, a political process and be determined by political factors such as the laws and leadership of his community and the dynamics of the group.
36. There is an evolving realm of human thought and ideas that the Jesuit theologian Teilhard de Chardin termed the "noosphere" (like the biosphere, atmosphere, exosphere etc) from the Greek word "nous" for mind. For Teilhard this was the "group mind" of humanity where Christ was formed in society. (The Internet is an almost physical representation of the "noosphere".)
37. I am not as optimistic as Teilhard and do not see the "noosphere" leading inevitably to the formation of Christ in community. I believe it is possible that a corrupted noosphere can also lead to the formation of anti-Christ.
38. Thus politics, which regulates the processes that form the beliefs and values of the community, is a key to the formation of Christ in that community. When politicians burn bibles and ban churches and persecute Christians and form "closed countries" the gospel is hindered in that community and many perish spiritually (e.g. Albania). On the other hand when politicians open the community to missionaries, bless the church and let Christians live godly live in peace then the gospel prospers and many are saved (e.g. Philippines, Tonga) which is why Paul says:
[1 Timothy 2:1-4 MKJV](#) First of all, then, I exhort *that* supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men, (2) for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. (3) For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, (4) who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
39. A community can also have a relationship with God and reject or accept His messengers and His rule over them. Communities will be judged by God for their response to the gospel as Jesus mentioned in His discourse about Capernaum and the unbelieving cities of Galilee. (Matthew 11:20-24).
40. The Church is a community based in the Polis (city) yet distinct from the Kosmos (world). It is a source of an alternate value system that leads to faith in Christ and where Christ is formed in community. The word ekklesia means (among other things) "political assembly" e.g. that used in Athens. Thus the church is meant to have its own "polity" - political and intellectual life.
41. Christ is formed through the action of the Holy Spirit within the life of the community so that Christians are built up by speaking the truth in love and thus reach the fullness of maturity in Christ. (Ephesians chapters 3&4)
42. Ideally the ekklesia should transform the polis.
43. This will often involve political conflict with the prevailing value system and the Church needs to be equipped to handle this. Politically skillful ambassadors for Christ have opened many doors for redemption.

The City (The Polis Of Politics)

The following are twelve points that I see in Scripture about the spiritual nature of cities, they are gleaned from the 1322 references to city, cities or citizens in the New King James Version..

44. The city is a multi-layered reality with a spiritual as well as a geographical component eg Tyre and the "Prince of Tyre", Jerusalem and Zion (the spiritual Jerusalem).

The city is portrayed as a geographical realm connected to and possibly ruled by an associated spiritual realm. Cities were ruled by kings and princes and corresponding to those were "principalities" in the spiritual realm. Jerusalem is a special example because it is the city of the Lord.

(Matthew 5:34-35 NKJV) "But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; {35} "nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

On the other hand Ephesus was the city of Artemis (Diana of the Ephesians) a demonic principality and pagan goddess. The people of the city saw their city as "belonging to" Artemis just as the Jews saw Jerusalem as belonging to YHWH. They held festivals in her honour and maintained a magnificent temple This dark being opposed the preaching of the gospel by Paul and seems to have worked through those associated with its cultus to create a riot and drive the apostle from the city.

(Acts 19:27-28 NKJV) " {27} "So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship." {28} Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

Such persecution of Christian workers by spirits associated with a city is not unknown today and some cities are deeply resistant to the gospel. A Biblical example of this is Pergamos (also known as Pergamum or Pergama) which was ruled by Satan himself and thus was vigorously hostile to the gospel. Apparently this even resulted in a "faithful witness" called Antipas being martyred.

(Revelation 2:12-13 NKJV) "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, 'These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: {13} "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

Thus we see that the church in the city stands in direct opposition to the spiritual powers and principalities that govern it thus creating a direct conflict and hostility. This can lead believers to feel besieged and helpless and unable to break through. To the believers in Ephesus - where the temple of Diana was, Paul wrote....

(Ephesians 6:10-12 NKJV) Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. {11} Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. {12} For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

45. The associated gods of the city were responsible for its prosperity including its defense from invasion. If one city or nation was able to invade the other it was assumed that its protecting deity was the more powerful.

(Isaiah 36:18-20 NKJV) Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us." Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? {19} "Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? {20} "Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"

46. Salvation can be corporate and the city can experience salvation ie a change of dominating spiritual reality. We see this with wicked idolatrous Jerusalem (before the exile) being changed to righteous Jerusalem after God had dealt with her.

(Isaiah 26:1-3 NKJV) In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: "We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks. {2} Open the gates, That the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in. {3} You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.

This salvation can involve having God dwell in its midst. (Zechariah 8:3 NKJV) "Thus says the LORD: I will return to Zion, And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the LORD of hosts, The Holy Mountain. The Holy Spirit seems to be able to indwell corporate entities (eg a church) as well as individuals. Scriptural examples include the Holy Spirit dwelling in the temple (Ezek 43:5-7), the city (Zec 12:10) and the nation (Ezek 39:29) and sanctifying them through conviction and purging (Isaiah 4:4) and the production of the fruits of the Spirit in the community as a whole (Isaiah 32:15-18, 61:3). The nation can grieve the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 63:10) which is "within them" (Isaiah 63:11) and gives them rest (Isaiah 63:14).. Ezekiel talks of a "new spirit" being given to the house of Israel (Ezekiel 11:19,20, 18:31, 36:26-28) that results in national prosperity.

When God's judgement comes the righteous cities will experience salvation while the unrighteous will be destroyed. Eg Jerusalem and Babylon which are contrasted in succeeding verses of Isaiah.

(Isaiah 46:12- 47:1 NKJV) "Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted, Who are far from righteousness: {13} I bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off; My salvation shall not linger. And I will place salvation in Zion, For Israel My glory. "Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; Sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no more be called Tender and delicate.

This judgment is like the judgments of individuals in that it seems to be based on how they have responded to God's revelation in Christ.

(Matthew 11:20-24 NKJV) Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: {21} "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. {22} "But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. {23} "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. {24} "But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

47. The city can make a corporate response of repentance and faith in God. This is generally through the leadership. Perhaps the best example of these "multi-individual" people movements is the repentance of Nineveh under the preaching of Jonah. Note that the people seem to be affected first, then the King hears and orders the whole city to adopt sackcloth and ashes and repent.

(Jonah 3:4-10 NRSV) Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" {5} And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth. {6} When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. {7} Then he had a proclamation made in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: No human being or animal, no herd or flock, shall taste anything. They shall not feed, nor shall they drink water. {8} Human beings and animals shall be covered with sackcloth, and they shall cry mightily to God. All shall turn from their evil ways and from the violence that is in their hands. {9} Who knows? God may relent and change his mind; he may turn from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish." {10} When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

They can also reject God as a corporate entity. (Luke 10:10-12 NRSV) But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, {11} 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.' {12} I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town. This happened to Antioch in Pisidia.....(Acts 13:50-51 NRSV) But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their region. {51} So they shook the dust off their feet in protest against them, and went to Iconium.

48. The city has spiritual qualities eg righteousness, holiness, faithfulness, truth, praise and glory. A city can experience the indwelling presence of God and be properly called righteous and holy. When it is unfaithful to God it can be called a harlot. In the final stages of ungodly rebellion the presence or glory of God can leave the city and the city as a whole can experience God's wrath.

(Isaiah 1:21 NKJV) How the faithful city has become a harlot! It was full of justice; Righteousness lodged in it, But now murderers.

(Isaiah 1:26-27 NKJV) I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counsellors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city." {27} Zion shall be redeemed with justice, And her penitents with righteousness.

(Ezekiel 11:23 NKJV) And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain, which is on the east side of the city.

(Daniel 9:24 NKJV) "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

(Zechariah 8:3 NKJV) "Thus says the LORD: I will return to Zion, And dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, The Mountain of the LORD of hosts, The Holy Mountain.

49. Cities have spiritual focal points e.g. temples, palaces and courts at which they transact business with their spiritual overlords through pacts, festivals and observances to the gods and the enacting of the laws handed down from those gods. These transactions reinforce their (the gods) control over the city. The customs of a city are thus not merely cultural and artistic but spiritual as well.

(1 Corinthians 10:19-22 NRSV) What do I imply then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? {20} No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. {21} You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. {22} Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

God's message to cities is often proclaimed during festivals and at the very "spiritual hot spots" of the city. When Paul spoke at the Areopagus (Mar's Hill) he was addressing the people in control of the religious customs of ancient Athens. When Jesus ministry reached its peak He "spoke daily in the temple". When Paul evangelised a new city he tended to start at the synagogue or local Jewish prayer meeting. Many of the prophetic messages to cities in Scripture were proclaimed during festivals in the temple or at the "high places" such as Bethel which were respected for great spiritual events having occurred there in the past. A message proclaimed in Westminster Abbey seems to carry more weight than if it is proclaimed from the small church I go to here in Townsville, Australia. If we want to take cities for God we must proclaim His message from the points that the city itself recognises and authenticates as being a part of its spiritual tradition and centre.

50. The city is often dominated by a certain spiritual associations or sets of meanings. Just as we would associate Zurich with money, Washington DC with power, Paris with fashion and romance, Rome with religion and culture, or Los Angeles with beautiful people. In the Bible Bethel with meeting God and dedication to Him, Jericho with spiritual warfare, Tyre with bartering for souls, Dan with idolatry, Babylon with organised proud rebellion or "hubris".

51. The people in the city are affected by this atmosphere and their salvation and the cities salvation are intertwined. That is not to say that an inhabitant of Babylon or Tyre is beyond salvation but that it is harder to be saved there than say in the restored Jerusalem. The classic case of this is Lot and his family in Sodom and Gomorrah.. Lot's family had spent so long in Sodom that many members of it had absorbed its values. (Genesis 19:12-26) While the New Testament tells us that Lot's soul was tormented day and night by what he saw (2 Peter 2:7,8) it is clear that this did not rub off on his family. His wife ended up as a pillar of salt and a memorial to the consequences of loving this present world. His two daughters were on the brink of marrying unbelievers who scoffed at angels and perished in the destruction. These daughters had spent so long in Sodom and been so eroded morally by its values that they later got Lot drunk and committed incest with him. (Genesis 19:30-38). The descendants of this union became the Ammonites and Moabites, perpetual enemies of Israel. What may have originally been a godly (but possibly weak) family was shattered into fragments because it had been deeply affected by the ungodly value systems that dominated the cities where they lived. With respect to their salvation they were "saved as through fire" (1 Corinthians 3:15) escaping with their lives and nothing more when the cities were destroyed.

52. Cities are not immutable. They can, and do, change character after a trauma. They can be purified by judgment or sink into idolatry. Jerusalem was a godly city under David and Solomon then gradually fell into idolatry until it could only be described as a "harlot". God punished Jerusalem with war and famine and exile and after the exile in Babylon it again became a God-fearing city. Nineveh (above) changed drastically for a while under the preaching of Jonah.

53 . God has destinies for cities as well as for individuals.

There are many prophecies concerning cities in the Bible eg Jericho, Tyre, Sidon, Jerusalem, Babylon, Ekron, Gath all have destinies mapped out for them in Scripture. The prophecies for Tyre for instance have been fulfilled in exact detail though given hundreds of years before the events occurred. Sometimes the fulfilling of these destinies involves the active prayerful cooperation of God's people.

(Isaiah 62:6-7 NRSV) Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have posted sentinels; all day and all night they shall never be silent. You who remind the LORD, take no rest, {7} and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem and makes it renowned throughout the earth.

54. Cities can suffer as a whole unit and experience desolation. Isaiah vividly describes the abandoned Jerusalem as (Isaiah 54:11 NRSV) O afflicted one, storm-tossed, and not comforted, I am about to set your stones in antimony, and lay your foundations with sapphires. The distress of the city is abandonment, desertion, lack of people and an absence of glory in its midst. Proverbs describes the ruination of a prince and his city (Proverbs 14:28 NRSV) The glory of a king is a multitude of people; without people a prince is ruined. It is the people, not the structures, of a city that are its glory. When they leave or are decimated by famine, war or plague then the city suffers as a whole. We see a reflection of this today when a major employer in a city lays off thousands of staff and the whole economy of the city is affected as they move to other areas. The city is so inter-related that when one part suffers it tends to affect the rest. The biblical images of suffering cities are not just metaphors for individual suffering (which is described elsewhere eg Lamentations) but a real description of the anguish of the corporate entity.

55. Glory is a central concept to the identity of a city. The city seems to reach its fullest meaning, its zenith, when it is described as "full of glory". This reaches its zenith in the new Jerusalem.

(Isaiah 66:10-11 NKJV) "Rejoice with Jerusalem, And be glad with her, all you who love her; Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her; {11} That you may feed and be satisfied With the consolation of her bosom, That you may drink deeply and be delighted With the abundance of her glory."

(Revelation 21:23 NKJV) The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.

The glory of a city is its ability to be honored and to bless all who dwell there. It is a combination of total prosperity and absolute holiness.

(Isaiah 54:12-13 NRSV) I will make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of jewels, and all your wall of precious stones. {13} All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the prosperity of your children.

Authority Spiritual And Temporal (The Power of Politics)

56. Authority is always a gift from a superior. (Matthew 9:5-8, 28:18-20, John 17:2, Luke 9:1,2 etc)
57. Authority operates over a specified sphere of influence such as **authority to do** a certain thing e.g. authority to heal, to cast out demons etc. (Luke 9:1,2) or **authority over** a certain group of people (1 Samuel 9:17)
58. The Father has given Jesus authority over all flesh. (John 17:2, Matthew 28:18)
59. The authority given by the Father to Jesus during His earthly ministry included authority to forgive sins and heal the sick (Matthew 9:5-8), and to give life and execute judgment (John 5:26,27).
60. It also included the authority to give eternal life to those who believe and to grant them status in Heaven as children of God. (John 1:12; 5:26,27; 17:1-3)
61. Jesus delegated that authority to those undertaking ministry for Him and empowered them to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons, and preach the Kingdom of God. (Luke 9:1, 10:1-3,)
62. Authority is also granted because of the position a person holds in life. Spiritual authority is given to Christians because they have ascended with Christ and are seated with Him in the heavenly realms as full citizens of Heaven. (Ephesians 1:20, 2:6,7)
63. Spiritual authority is spiritually transmitted. One of the means of transmission is through the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8) just as it was also given to Jesus when He was baptized with the Spirit. (Matthew 3:13-17, 4:23). Another spiritual means of transmission is the "laying on of hands" (Acts 8:17-19, 13:1-3, 1 Timothy 4:14, 2 Timothy 1:6, Hebrews 6:2) in the Old Testament anointing with oil was used in this way.(Leviticus 8:10-12)
64. Jesus is now at the right hand of the Father with universal authority over all things in Heaven and on earth and exercises this vast authority on behalf of those who engage in the Great Commission. (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:34,35; 5:31)
65. In the process Jesus gives authority to people like Paul for the building up of the Church. (2 Corinthians 10:8, 13;10) One use of this authority is to "tear down" the Satanic resistance to the progress of the gospel so that people may come to faith. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)
66. Jesus' authority over Heaven is no longer contested (Revelation 5) but His authority over earth is bitterly contested by Satan (Revelation 11-20) and by the "kings of the earth" who abrogate this authority to themselves.
67. Eventually Jesus authority will be total and He will "rule the nations with a rod of iron" (Revelation 2:26,27) and all kingdoms will be replaced by the kingdom of God (Daniel 2).
68. God has the power to conform all things in accordance with His will. (Ephesians 1:11)
69. This includes the political sphere and human authority. (Colossians 2:15-20)
70. God may delegate to certain people spiritual authority over the nations: [Jeremiah 1:9-10 ASV](#) Then Jehovah put forth his hand, and touched my mouth; and Jehovah said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth: (10) see, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.
71. The three ways in which Christians exercise political authority are as prophets, priests or kings.
72. Prophets - stand outside the system and speak the word of God to the system on the issues of the day e.g. Jeremiah, Elijah etc.
73. Priests - pastorally care for those within the system, but are not actively involved in administration themselves e.g. Abiathar the High Priest and his care for David.
74. Kings - take an administrative post within the system and operate as God's people to affect the outcome of major decisions e.g. Joseph, Daniel, Nehemiah, Esther, Mordecai.
75. Authority is maintained by faithful stewardship. (Luke 12:42-48) Stewardship involves diligent, profitable use of the delegated authority and resources. (parable of the talents). Where a Christian has been unfaithful to his stewardship another may be selected to take his place in that role or ministry. (Acts 1:15-26) Christians need to use their spiritual and temporal authority to advance the kingdom of God - not to pursue their own interests. (Philippians 2:21)

Conclusion

The gospel is necessary if politics is to be redeemed and politics is necessary if the gospel is to effectively capture the culture. Where the missionary has taken note of and appealed to political leadership first of all massive people movements have often been the result. Where the missionary has avoided them and concentrated only on the marginalized the gospel has often been stigmatized as belonging to the politically unacceptable. Where the worker has been brash or politically naïve then the gospel has sometimes been rejected or persecuted. The gospel can be assisted in its spread by Christians with political skills and the gospel can only fully reform a culture if it reforms the power structures in that culture and that will inevitably involve tackling some thorny and potentially divisive political issues.