

This work will probably find some success as a textbook for classes in evangelical undergraduate and seminary courses dealing with alternative religions and as a "handbook" for conservative Protestant pastors and laypersons.

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Land, Richard D., and Louis A. Moore, eds. *Citizen Christians: The Rights and Responsibilities of Dual Citizenship*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994. 176 pp. \$12.99.

Citizen Christians is a collection of essays from the 25th Annual Seminar of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission held in Washington, DC, in March 1992. The purpose of the book is to help Christians understand what it means to be citizens of two realms—the earthly and the spiritual. According to the authors, the spiritual realm includes the Church and the Kingdom of God, while the earthly realm refers to the sociopolitical, economic, and cultural context of the United States of America. The essays are grouped into four sections that address issues such as: What does it mean for Christians to be citizens of both America and the Church? What does the term "separation of church and state" mean in contemporary American culture? What is the appropriate relationship between American culture and the Church? How can Christians, both as individuals and as a collective force, shape the moral fabric of culture and influence government?

This book is worth reading if you want to understand how fundamentalists and conservative evangelicals define the Church and its mission. There are three important issues that the authors bring to our attention. First, they emphasize that the moral fabric of American culture is disintegrating, and Christians have a responsibility to help make repairs. Second, they argue against the notion that Christians ought to remain silent on public issues due to the private nature of religious convictions. In fact, the authors, especially Richard Land and Carl F. H. Henry, contend that the mission of the Church makes it impossible for Christians to ignore public issues and government. For the mission of the Church is public as it struggles to usher in the Kingdom of God, whose border extends beyond the Church and includes all humanity. The third important issue that Beverly LaHaye, H. Robert Showers, Jr., and Jay Strack emphasize is the need for an increase in Christian involvement in local communities and the democratic process.

Despite the importance of these three issues, the authors make the general mistake of basing their understanding of the Church and its mission on three faulty presuppositions. All of these presuppositions fall under the general claim that America was and should be a Christian nation, at least in terms of its moral values and principles. The introduction claims that "we believe many of the guiding principles on which our nation was formed were derived from the Bible . . . the *Declaration of Independence* particularly reflects an understanding of God's principles found in the Bible" (2). The authors argue that secular

humanism has been allowed to permeate American culture, replacing the traditional Christian values and principles upon which our authors assume America was founded. The decay of American sociopolitical, economic, and cultural life is blamed on this loss (78-85). Though there may be some truth to this interpretation of American history, it should by no means be thought of as the best or only interpretation. For example, those Christians who take the Anabaptist tradition seriously might argue that the idea of a Christian nation of any sort distorts the nature of the Church. From the Anabaptist perspective there is a big difference between the Church's attempt to influence culture and the attempt to control or oversee culture. The Church must never mistake itself for a nation-state, government, or social club.

A second questionable presupposition is the idea that those who seek to engage public issues must agree to a universal set of values. Of course, this book assumes that traditional Christian values provide the best context for a public forum. If people agree to abide by these values, then it allows us to speak the same moral language and reach practical conclusions. The authors, however, do not discuss the fact that Christian values are not for everybody. Non-Christians cannot and should not subscribe to Christian values, because they do not have any commitment to follow Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the authors do not recognize that within the Christian community there are a number of different faithful positions on moral issues. In fact, the modern idea of a "Christian value" ought to be challenged. Christians do not find "values" in the Bible, but a way of life. The Christian life is one of discipleship maintained within a community of fellow believers—the Church.

A third questionable presupposition is the idea that the Bible underwrites a particular sociopolitical and economic theory. Since this book focuses on the Church in the American context, the authors tend to confuse the mission of the Church—the Kingdom of God—with Western democracy and free-market capitalism. As Carl F. H. Henry claims, "the evangelical mainstream defends a free market and private property in the context of biblical principles, including divine stewardship and the propriety of legitimate profit" (52). The careful student, however, knows that the Bible does not advocate the philosophies of free-market capitalism or democracy. Such notions are modern conceptions, completely foreign to the Bible. The authors seem to identify the Kingdom of God with American democracy too readily. They seem to forget that the Church is called to exist under any state or government. Therefore, in the American context the Church represents at best one community among many communities that struggle to be heard in the public square. If Western democracy fails, it does not signal the demise of the Kingdom of God, as our authors sometimes inadvertently suggest. The Church, under the power of the Spirit of God, will continue to pursue its mission to usher in the Kingdom of God under whatever sociopolitical or economic theory dominates in America or other parts of the world.