

INSTITUTE
for
PRINCIPLE
STUDIES

**BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF
GOVERNMENT COURSE**

– CHURCH PACKET –

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What is the Biblical Principles of Government Course?

Biblical Principles of Government is a 10 week course (20 hours of instruction) designed for adults and teenage students. It is usually taught as a weekly class that meets for two hours each week.

Mike Winther, the President of the Institute for Principle Studies (IPS), has been teaching this class in different parts of Northern California for well over a decade. The course has proven to be very popular—it is not unusual for people to drive 60 or even 90 miles each week to attend the course. The class is difficult to describe because it deals with a broad variety of topics relating to family, church, and civil government. It includes teaching on history, evolution, economics, charity, education, and basic civics.

Most of the concepts covered in Biblical Principles of Government have not been taught in American schools since before the Civil War. We get lots of, “Wow, I never knew that before!” comments from students.

This is a fun class, but also one that will challenge students and make them think. IPS encourages families to take the class together because it generates lots of great family discussion. Although it is an adult class, the material is understandable to most students age 12 or over (perhaps younger in some cases).

Because of the broad scope of the course material, there are benefits to the body of Christ that often surprise people. Here are a few examples:

Evangelism. Although the primary purpose of the course is to disciple the saints, we find that the subject does draw some unbelievers. We have had several students give their lives to Christ as the result of some of the apologetic material presented in the class.

Strengthening families. Although the Institute for Principle Studies is not explicitly a family support ministry, we promote some very specific family activities as part of the strategy to compete in the culture wars. Many of our participants become motivated to read both their Bibles and important Christian works together as a family. Additionally, our teaching on authority and power presents Biblical standards that apply to both government and family life. This provides considerable philosophical support to our efforts to help students fulfill the fifth commandment. Because many parents take the class with their teenage students, we find that these concepts are plugged into the family from both directions: parent and child.

Strengthening the church. The Biblical Principles of Government course includes information on church history and the importance of building our churches to meet the needs of our communities.

...And the obvious. Of course, students will learn about good government, competing economic systems, and much more.

Biblical Principles of Government Course

A Neglected Study

As parents, we take seriously our responsibility to prepare our children for the obstacles they will face in life. It is for this reason that we teach them basic skills such as reading, writing, spelling, and math. As Christian parents, we go to even greater lengths to give our children a strong foundation in the biblical principles of salvation and moral behavior. We also attempt to equip them with the necessary skills and tools to protect them from the unscrupulous. When they are little, we tell them not to talk to strangers; as they grow, we warn them not to wander into the wrong areas at night, and we teach them to protect their purse or wallet when they are in a crowd.

Unfortunately, very few parents now teach their children the basic principles of good government—what was once called "civics." We teach our kids how to protect themselves individually, but we neglect to teach them how to protect their society, their government, and their liberty. Why do we not see the inconsistency in this? We know that failure to instill a strong moral foundation in our children will set them up for a fall. Why, then, should we be surprised when failure to teach the principles of good government causes the complete fall of our civilization?

At stake is everything we hold dear: our liberty, our freedom to worship, our freedom of speech, and our ability to provide for our families.

Why aren't these principles taught?

The truth of the matter is that our current generation of parents and teachers are unable to train children in these basic principles because they never received this training themselves. For over 100 years, the Biblical principles so well understood and explained by our founding fathers have been methodically removed from textbooks. By the time of the Great Depression, we had graduated several generations of Americans who did not understand these concepts.

Because these principles come from Scripture, their preservation and propagation should be the responsibility of the church. Most of the decay and depravity in our society today is the direct result of the church's failure to learn and teach these moral and Biblical principles.

Biblical Principles of Government (formerly called "Christian Citizenship") is a ten week class that reintroduces the principles of government and economics as understood by our nation's founding fathers.

*A Neglected Study:
Continued*

**Can you answer these questions?
Can you clearly explain your answers to your kids?**

Can government take any action it pleases? How do we decide what governments can and cannot do? Does the majority rule? What about terrorism? Is it necessary to give up rights to gain security? What does the Bible say about the roles of family, church, and government? Is it ok to bring Biblical principles into government? What about the separation of church and state? What causes poverty and how is it best addressed? Is public debt ok?

These and many other issues from evolution to economics will be covered in this course. This class is unlike anything you have ever attended. Instead of focusing on discussions about events and issues in the news, this course spends most of its time building a foundation upon which to evaluate current issues. So even if the hot political issues change, you can still use this foundation to make sound judgments. Consider investing the time to attend. Your family, your church, and your country will reap the benefits for generations to come.

Biblical Principles of Government Course

10 Weeks, 12 Modules – Topics & Outline

- I. Foundations
 - a. Evolution vs. creation
 - i. How do we defend our faith?
 - ii. Why does it matter?
 - b. Importance of origins
 - i. Origin of man
 - ii. Origin/source of authority
 - iii. Origin/source of rights
 - c. Authority vs. power
 - d. Types of governments
 - i. 3 God-ordained institutions
- II. Forms of Governments
 - a. Monarchy, oligarchy, democracy, republic
 - b. The nature of man – Plato vs. Paul
 - c. How the protestant reformation also reformed civil government
- III. Economics #1
 - a. Desert island scenario
 - i. Introduces:
 - 1. Capital
 - 2. Money
 - 3. Supply
 - 4. Demand
 - ii. Economic systems compared
 - 1. Socialism
 - 2. Capitalism
 - 3. What is the biblical analysis of each?
 - 4. Property & property rights
 - a. Marx vs. Scripture
- IV. Economics #2
 - a. Inflation
 - b. Recessions, depressions
 - c. Currency supply
 - d. The invisible hand
 - i. Why even atheist economists are forced to recognize God
- V. Charity
 - a. Biblical standards
 - i. Who receives
 - ii. Who gives
 - iii. How we should give

Topics and Outline:
Continued

- b. Charity: the key to evangelism
- c. Competition between church and state for charity
- d. Historical perspectives on charity
- VI. The Constitution
 - a. Biblical principles used by the founders
- VII. Decision-making processes
 - a. The world's process
 - b. The biblical process
 - c. Principle vs. practicality
- VIII. Education
 - a. Biblical reasons to educate
 - b. Biblical ways to educate
 - i. Who learns
 - ii. Who teaches
 - iii. When we should teach
 - c. History of education in America
- IX. History
 - a. Different views of history
 - i. Atheist views:
 - 1. Random
 - 2. Pendulum
 - 3. Perfectibility of man
 - ii. Judeo-Christian views
 - 1. Always providential
 - a. Theist/deist vs. Christian
 - 2. Optimistic vs. pessimistic
- X. Strategies of our adversaries
 - a. Our spiritual adversary and his strategies
 - b. Our human adversaries and their strategies
- XI. International issues
 - a. Just War Theory and St. Augustine
 - b. International trade
 - c. Treaties and the Constitution
- XII. A plan for renewal and revival in America and the world

Biblical Principles of Government Course *Former Host Churches*

- ❖ *Big Valley Grace in Modesto*
- ❖ *Connecting Point Church of the Nazarene in Denair*
 - ❖ *Cornerstone Fellowship in Livermore x2 ***
 - ❖ *Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian in San Jose*
 - ❖ *Gatetree Baptist in Danville*
 - ❖ *Grace Bible Church in Pleasant Hill x2*
 - ❖ *Lone Hill Church in San Jose x2 ***
 - ❖ *Northside Baptist in Modesto*
 - ❖ *Valley Bible Church in Pleasanton*
 - ❖ *Ceres Christian Church in Ceres*
 - ❖ *Newark Community Church in Newark*
- ❖ *Almond Valley Christian Reformed Church in Ripon*
 - ❖ *Fairway Park Baptist Church in Hayward ***
 - ❖ *Trinity Southern Baptist Church in Fresno*
 - ❖ *Zion United Reformed Church in Ripon*
 - ❖ *Ark Baptist Church in Milpitas x2*
 - ❖ *Hope Center Covenant Church in Pleasant Hill*
 - ❖ *Zion Lutheran Church in Piedmont*
 - ❖ *Woodward Park Baptist Church in Fresno*
 - ❖ *The Home Church in Campbell*
 - ❖ *Monte Vista Chapel in Turlock*

***Reference letter of recommendation at end of packet.*

Biblical Principles of Government Course

Evangelism

The Church with its reliance on Holy Scripture should be the purveyor of both wisdom and absolute truth in a society. If our modern-day problems have answers based on morality, truth and principle, should we expect that these answers would come from unbelievers? Certainly not! Christians should be the custodians of these answers, but we are frequently unable to locate them in Scripture or to effectively communicate them to a world hungry for the information.

The Institute for Principle Studies exists to be custodians and teachers of these answers and to accomplish five purposes in so doing:

1) To Promote Evangelism

There are a number of ways in which the teaching of Biblical principles of government, economics and history assists evangelism. First, when we can communicate effective and beneficial solutions to today's problems and demonstrate that these great ideas come from Scripture, we greatly increase the credibility of Scripture as well as the unbeliever's interest in Scripture. There are individuals that have been lead to faith in Christ from the study of government and other non-theological disciplines. Many more could be reached if Christians really understood the Biblical principles of all fields of study—especially government and economics.

Second, throughout history, one of the greatest tools for evangelism has been the institution of Christian charity. As we meet the needs of the sick and poor, we demonstrate our obedience to God, we demonstrate our love for others, and we open hearts and minds to the good news. Unfortunately, adversaries of the gospel, both spiritual and earthly, recognize the power of genuine Christian charity and have worked hard to replace it with government programs that look like charity, but instead of glorifying God and promoting the gospel, these government programs become as god to countless millions of people.

As the Institute for Principle Studies teaches the church the benefits of the Biblical approach to charity and the Scriptural prohibitions against government charity, we believe that we can slowly but surely revitalize this important role of the church. And if this revitalization happens, we predict a blossoming of effective evangelism.

Third, the widespread teaching and acceptance of evolution has substantial impacts that go beyond our understanding of origins. An adequate discussion of this subject requires far more space than is available here, but it is important to understand that extensions of evolutionary thought impact every field of study including: law, economics, history, biology, psychology, sociology and theology just to name a few. These relationships need to be understood by modern Christians if we are to be relevant in our society.

Unfortunately, many, if not most, American Christians hold a political philosophy that is predicated on evolution.

Evangelism: ***Continued***

Many IPS courses and writings defend the creation account of Scripture while demonstrating the reasons why evolution is unscientific.

2) To Restore Righteousness

Relativism is rampant in both America and in the American church. Relativism, which teaches that there are no absolutes, produces both moral decay and disdain for the law of God. Our approach to teaching by principle provides both philosophical and practical support of Biblical truth and is an antidote to relativism.

3) To Preserve Liberty

Liberty is a byproduct of the gospel and an imperative of Scriptural teaching. Historically, it has been the followers of Jesus who have battled tyrants, opposed slavery and produced liberty. When the church studies the full word of God and all of its applications, God has been good to bless that society with liberty and prosperity. But when the church compartmentalizes Scripture and shrinks from its duty, that society loses both liberty and prosperity.

There is a serious and increasing risk that our children and grandchildren may not live in a free society. Our freedom of worship, of association, of property rights and countless other liberties are being successfully attacked. Unless we act sacrificially to rebuild the foundations of liberty, we will lose the great heritage of freedom that was so costly to our ancestors. We should never forget that our liberty was purchased on the guillotine, at the stake, and on the battle field with the blood of Christian martyrs. We must not let the fruit of their heroic efforts be destroyed.

4) To Strengthen Families

The modern family carries a tax burden that is unparalleled in human history. Throughout recorded history there has not been a king or a tyrant who was able to extract a greater tax burden than that collected by modern governments. This has sent moms into the workforce leaving children to be trained by those outside of the family. Teenage rebellion, street gangs and crime are but a few of the consequences of our outrageously expensive government. Only a return to Biblical principles of government will stop this attack on the family.

5) To Glorify God

God is glorified when His people are obedient to Him. In our zeal to avoid legalism, we often neglect to teach the Biblical prohibitions and admonitions of Scripture. Scores of these Scriptural principles are regularly violated by well-intentioned Christians who have never heard or applied these truths. Although our primary motive for knowing and obeying these principles should be to honor our God, there are great societal benefits when these principles are widely understood.

Biblical Principles of Government Course

Our Biggest Challenge

One of the greatest challenges in our ministry is the difficulty of communicating to the Christian community the importance of our mission. To most believers, government, economics and history are not the first things we think of each morning. We know that government is important because government policy determines how we deal with abortion, marriage and scientific research, but that is about as far as it goes. In an effort to communicate the importance of our work, the Institute for Principle Studies would like to make two bold assertions.

First, that most Christians don't have a Biblical view of government. Since before the American Civil War, there has been an effort to expunge Christian thought and Biblical principle from the teaching of government, civics, economics and history. Most of us don't know these concepts because our parents, pastors and teachers never learned them.

Second, that producing a Biblical view of government among Christians would transform our nation and our world. There is tremendous power in the word of God. To the extent that we study, understand and implement God's guidelines, we will be blessed, but if we fail to study, understand or implement these guidelines (and commandments), we will suffer great consequences.

One part of our ministry is a 20 hour course in which we just scratch the surface of the important government and economic principles that Christians should know. It is impossible in this short space to adequately communicate these concepts and their importance to our readers, but here are just a few brief statements to whet your appetite.

There is a Biblical principle relating to whether we centralize or decentralize government power. This is highly relevant to whether we endorse or oppose the new North American Union and other current proposals.

There are Biblical standards for charity that specify who should receive it, who should provide it and how it is to be paid for. Since more than half of all government spending is for the purposes of helping the poor, this is critical to our society.

There are principles in Scripture that favor some methods of taxation, but argue against others. Not only does this issue have a tremendous impact on the efficiency of the economy, but following proper principle would significantly reduce incentives to cheat.

Our estimates indicate that adopting Biblical standards of charity and taxation could reduce the tax burden on the American family by 60%. For two income households, this is an amount greater than the gross income of the second wage earner.

Our Biggest Challenge:
Continued

What is the Scriptural view of property? Is eminent domain Biblical?

Are prisons Biblical? If so, for what crimes? The answer to this question has significant implications for the prevention of crime.

Most Christians have never received instruction on these principles, yet a proper understanding can significantly reduce most of the problems that we face in our modern society. As we teach these concepts and advocate for Biblically based solutions to the ills of society, it is the goal of the Institute for Principle Studies to introduce the world to the **Book** that contains, and the **God** who provides, this divine wisdom.

Biblical Principles of Government Course

Student Comments

Some excerpts from letters received after one of our most recent classes:

We also enjoyed the opportunity to attend Mike's Government, Economics, and Christian Decision Making class this last spring. It was the best use of 10 weeks that our family ever spent together. Mike's excellent teaching radically changed my mind to what I originally was taught many years ago of the principles of government and its role in our society... Although I was very resistant to changing my long-standing beliefs, by learning the truths imparted from God to our nation's founding fathers, I have a better understanding of what our government's role in our society should be. More important, by taking the class together as a family, Mike's teaching provided us as parents with a wonderful opportunity to discuss and teach our children God's biblical principles for family, government, and Christian decision making.

- R.F. in Livermore, CA

You have such a gift for teaching and for making difficult topics easy to understand. I'm always amazed by your depth of understanding of the different topics you cover, and the logic you display. It must be your years of debate experience!

Each time I take the course I get something new from it, and each week is a good opportunity to refresh my knowledge and help me be a better teacher for my students. Thank you so much for offering the class to the community!

- V.H. in Turlock, CA

Your speaking and teaching are very captivating and inspiring, helping us learn how to think on the basis of biblical truth.

- C.C. and F.C.

Great class! I'm glad the kids were able to attend and have a biblical perspective on principles of government taught and encouraged. It's good medicine for apathy to politics and government class.

- P.S. in Patterson, CA

[My two teens] got a great deal out of all they learned and have been able to apply it to other areas of study. Each night when they got home, about 10 pm since we live in

Student Comments:
Continued

Oakdale, they would spend another hour telling me about the things you taught, looking things up, and searching the bookshelf for titles.

What you are sharing is invaluable and I want you to know how much I appreciate your stepping out in faith into this ministry full time.

- J.L. in Oakdale, CA

I received my copies of the [class recordings] . . . Thank you! I'll be starting the 5th time listening through this week (can't quite let go of them long enough for somebody else to listen to them yet) and learn something new or better each time.

- R.T. in Waterford, CA

From anonymous comment cards:

“Not enough time.”

“Great inspiration for us to dig into history for life lessons.”

“Very clear and easy to listen to—made complicated issues understandable.”

“We need to know this!”

“[I learned that] to be wise as serpents is as much of a command as to be harmless as doves—economics is a moral issue.”

“Government studies are very new to our family. This class, plus the books you have made available, will *begin* to set a foundation we have desperately needed. Thank you!”

“I've learned so many new things that I can't wait to share with others.”

“[Mike's] enthusiasm is contagious!”

“I appreciated the boldness [with which] potentially controversial ideas are presented and yet with an equal amount of humility and encouragement for the students to seek out the truth of the statements.”

Biblical Principles of Government Course

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is the target audience for the class?

A. We find that interest in the class crosses all age ranges. We appeal well to seniors, working professionals, families, and high school students.

Recent classes have been drawing audiences of 150 to 240 people. Generally 25 to 30 percent of those enrolling in the class come from the congregation of the hosting church—if the host church promotes the course. You can expect that the majority of participants will come from outside your church family. These students are typically drawn from publicity and outreach into the broader community done by both the hosting church and by our organization.

It is not unusual for 20% or more of our audience to be comprised of students who are repeating the class.

Q. Is it legally permissible for a church to host a class such as “Biblical Principles of Government”?

A. Just like most churches, the Institute for Principle studies is a 501-c3 nonprofit ministry. The same IRS limitations that apply to your church apply to us as well. At our founding, we analyzed whether to seek tax-exempt status. Among our founders and advisors, there were many who were concerned about the limitations that tax exempt status might place on our actions. After investing considerable amounts of research and thought to this matter, we concluded that every activity on our agenda was permissible under state and federal regulations for 501-c3 organizations.

The Institute for Principle Studies does not endorse candidates or political parties. The mission of IPS is educational, not political. Telling someone how to vote or who to vote for is like giving a fish to a beggar. It may meet a short-term need, but the root problem causing the hunger is still present. We see our ministry as teaching people to fish. By providing our students with eternal truths and sound principles, we give them the tools to make their own decisions—not just in one election, but for a lifetime.

Just as it is permissible for a church to host a conference on Biblical principles of marriage, it is equally acceptable to host a conference on Biblical principles of any other subject—even government.

Frequently Asked Questions: Continued

Q. How will this course be perceived within our congregation? Will it make waves or be divisive?

A. We have never heard of any complaint about the existence of the Biblical Principles of Government course at any church. Congregations are hungry to learn more about the Bible and how it applies to all of life. Our experience is that this course is met with either enthusiasm or apathy, but not with opposition. Additionally, we find that there is a tremendous interest in the history of America and the views of our founding fathers—and this material is an integral part of the course

This is not to say that every student agrees with everything taught in the course, but students don't seem to find the teaching objectionable or unreasonable. Many students tell us that they loved the class because it made them think about things that they had not thought about before.

As we developed the course, one of our first objectives was to produce a course and a curriculum that would not be divisive. We were concerned, as all churches are, about causing friction between brothers and sisters in the Lord. So we set out to create a course that starts with Biblical basics and builds precepts and principles step-by-step.

In the early years of the course, we had students complete anonymous surveys both before and after the series of classes. In the pre-course survey, we asked students how they classified themselves socially, spiritually, and politically. We asked them where they were on the political spectrum and we asked questions about party affiliation, union membership, and much more. Although the majority of these early audiences classified themselves as Christian, conservative, and republican, we also had self-described non-Christians, liberals, and democrats in the classes. The survey at the end of the series of classes produced three very interesting results. First, very few changed how they labeled themselves. Those who classified themselves as liberal still kept the liberal label, and those who were conservative kept that label. The same was true of party affiliation. In a few cases, spiritual labeling did change because we did have a few unbelievers who accepted Christ during one of the courses.

Second, all participants gave the course positive reviews: liberals, conservatives, republicans, and democrats alike.

Third, all but a very small number of participants changed their opinions about a number of issues.

The survey results indicate that the course succeeded in changing people's worldview and opinions without insulting or degrading the labels that they applied to themselves. And most importantly, student responses indicated that it is possible to do this in a pleasant, fun environment that doesn't create animosity.

Biblical Principles of Government Course

What We Ask of the Hosting Church

Facilities

Since this class is usually offered to students at no cost (except for the cost of the study guide), we depend on the hosting church to offer the use of their facilities without cost. At some point during the 10 weeks, we take a free will offering from the class as a thank-you to the church.

Although the enrollment in the class will vary from location to location, we generally draw between 150 and 250 students. Therefore, we need a room with seated capacity in the 150 to 300 range. Tables are not necessary. A sound system with a wireless lapel microphone is very important.

Advertising & promoting the class

We expect the hosting church to give the class a reasonable level of advertising and promotion to its members. These promotional avenues might include the church newsletter, the church bulletin, church mailings, the church web site, posters in and around the church, mentions from the pulpit during the time usually devoted to announcements, etc. We don't place any specific requirements on our host church other than the commitment to do *some* promotion within the church.

The Institute will also advertise and promote the class to the best of our ability. Past experience indicates that about one-third of total attendance will come from the hosting church. The other two-thirds usually come from IPS promotion and word-of-mouth from students who have taken the class and are recommending it to friends.

Sales and solicitations

We ask that the hosting church allow IPS to sell books and other supplemental material at the classes. We believe that the educational process must extend beyond the classroom. To that end, we have identified a number of books and publications that will assist the students in their quest to develop a Biblical worldview. Since most of these works are not readily available at bookstores, we offer them to the students at our classes.

At some point during the 10 weeks, we will also make an appeal for contributions to the Institute to fund our work. This is what supports us and allows us to continue teaching this class, which is foundational to our ministry.

Biblical Principles of Government Course

Items Needed

1. Lectern
2. Small table next to the lectern for Mike's reference materials
3. Wireless lapel microphone
4. Projector
5. Screen
6. VGA cable at the lectern that is connected to the projector
7. Two long tables in the lobby or foyer for registration and book sales. We also need an electrical outlet available for our point of sale system near these tables.

If you are unable to provide any of the above items, please contact the IPS office at least two weeks before the event.

For more information about the Biblical Principles of Government course, contact:

***Institute for Principle Studies
P.O. Box 278, Modesto, CA 95353
(209) 575-2005
info@principlestudies.org***

Biblical Principles of Government Course

Biography of Mike Winther

Mike Winther is the President of the Institute for Principle Studies and sits on the Board of Scholars at the Mackinac Center for Public Policy. ** He holds a degree in political science from the University of Idaho. He leads tours of historical places and events on the East Coast where he teaches about the real foundations of America. As a frequent speaker at conferences and conventions, Mike teaches government, economics, and history to audiences throughout the country. Mike has written numerous articles and essays and is the author of a textbook on rhetoric and academic debate.

Mike is a lifelong student of history and government. He feels a burden to teach the important principles of government and economics—principles that were known by many of our founding fathers, but unfortunately were forgotten a generation later. After graduating from the University of Idaho, he worked as a professional campaign consultant in Washington and California. He is the founder of the Institute for Principle Studies, a Christian think-tank dedicated to researching and teaching foundational principles of government, economics, and history. He is the co-developer of a government and economics curriculum that teaches the foundational principles of good government and economics.

**Mackinac is pronounced Mack-in-aw

Photo:





December 4, 2006

Mike Winther
Institute for Principle Studies
Modesto, CA

Dear Mike:

Thank you so much for your ministry and your excellent teaching at Cornerstone Fellowship on Biblical Principles in Government. Your passion for teaching American history and government based on Biblical principles has infected us all. You have not only taught us God's Truth, but you have also given us an important perspective about our responsibilities as citizens of the United States, and motivated us to take action to honor these Truths!

All of the comments I have received from the class affirm the high value of this course. Here are the comments I have heard most often:

- This is valuable and beneficial information for understanding our county and government.
- As Christians we need to understand our true history and protect it.
- Why didn't they teach this in my public school!?
- This material is unique. It identifies God's plans for family, church, and civil government and is not available elsewhere!
- This course and material must be shared – everyone should have access to it.
- The class is excellent for young students and adults alike.
- Excellent research materials were made available.
- Mike's positive and friendly teaching style makes the 10-week course go by too quickly.

Thank you again for helping edify us with this valuable information. We look forward to a continuing relationship with your ministry.

Sincerely,

Mark Calcagno
Senior Executive Pastor

John Gilpin
Director of Adult Education



Fairway Park Baptist Church

425 Gresel Street, Hayward, CA 94544

510.471.0200

Charles L. Eldred, Pastor

www.fpbc.org

Dear Pastor

I would like to commend Mike Winther, the Institute for Principle Studies, and the Biblical Principles of Government class to you. I realize the constant requests you receive from persons, groups, and organizations wishing to utilize your facilities or platform; and I know IPS will not disappoint your trust.

Mike speaks knowledgeably on an often-misunderstood topic: The Biblical Foundations of Government. He does so in a winsome way, allowing the Bible to speak as clearly without forcing it into a pep rally for American nationalism. He presents the Biblical view of government and allows the listener to draw their own conclusions.

The class is highly practical! Personal applications are given almost constantly throughout the lessons. Broad applications for larger institutions are given (namely, state and church) but the primary focus is on the individual and family. By producing better trained citizens, a better social government can result.

Our church has been pleased to host IPS for several events; and we look forward to continuing that partnership. I urge you to consider scheduling IPS for your church in the upcoming months. It will be time, effort, and energy well spent.

Contact me if you have further questions. I can be reached via email at pastor@fpbc.org.

Sincerely yours for them because of HIM,

Pastor Charlie Eldred

Fairway Park Baptist Church exists to reflect God's glory in the Hayward area by producing lifelong followers of Jesus Christ who accurately understand, personally apply, and consistently practice the teachings of God's Word.

February 25, 2010

To those interested in the ministry of the Institute for Principle Studies,

We have hosted Mike Winther's "Biblical Principles of Government" class twice now for the San Jose area. Each time it has been a blessing in a number of ways.

First, Mike's conversational style and his ability to reduce complex issues to their foundational principles makes each session understandable, easily grasped, and rewarding as the value of understanding these issues hits home. What is the meaning and purpose of government? Where does authority come from? Where do rights come from? What is the difference between practical and principled decision making? As these and other questions are addressed the significance of Biblical insight becomes obvious. Mike with clear illustrations and the application of Scripture addresses these questions. As one participant said, "Now I know what government is supposed to do and what I'm supposed to do."

Second, Mike provides a wide range of resources. Citations from the Founding Fathers to contemporary authors, as well, of course, as numerous passages of Scripture under gird Mike's lectures. Yet, the guiding principle is that Scripture should be applied to every area of our lives. It is in this way that we develop a Christian worldview and the Bible principles for government. A criticism of evangelicals has been that we are a mile wide but only an inch deep, but Mike offers the antidote of this rich application of Scripture to all realms of life and the fostering of a Christian worldview. He begins us on that journey by applying it specifically to the realm of government.

Third, though it is a ten week course, enthusiasm and interest were maintained during the whole ten weeks. On our second time through the class, we had a large number of repeat attendees. Attendees left feeling that they had been enriched, equipped, and better informed as believers and citizens.

I appreciate the opportunity to encourage others to take advantage of the "Biblical Principles of Government" class and the other resources of the Institute for Principle Studies. Mike and his staff have been most easy to work with and offer a deeply enriching ministry to churches.

In Him, Whose we are and Whom we serve,

Dr. Ray Stamps, Pastor
Lone Hill Church
Los Gatos, California