

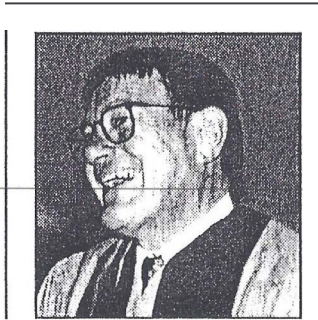
What's the role of a Christian citizen?

There are two questions that people of faith should always ask: One is, "What should I do to be a good citizen in Seattle or wherever I live?" And the second question is, "What should Seattle do for me?" Both of these questions are about debts that are owed. One is the debt I owe as a believer in God to share light and share life in the places where I live and work. The second is about the debt a nation or city has to its citizens. "What do I have a right to expect from government and society?"

My role as a Christian, whether I live in a busy city like Seattle or in a quiet country village, is portrayed simply and directly in the Bible. I am to remember who I am — one who is loved by God. (Deut 5:12-15) And I am to share the good news that deserves the remembering about God's love and light toward the whole world. (Phil. 2:14-16)

THIS MEANS that I am to be a human model of hope in the place where I live. What is remarkable when you think about it, is that this person-to-person infection of hope has always been God's strategy for changing societies. It is the way hope is communicated and experienced. The challenge for me as a Christian is to be in a steady and wise way an influence for good, whether in the city or in the countryside.

The big question concerning such a mandate is this: "Can I be a Christian presence of hope in a society that is hostile or apathetic toward hope?" By the grace of God, the answer is a resounding, "Yes!" It is a fact that Christians do quite well and prove very durable in harsh settings.



From Your Pastor

Earl F. Palmer

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But what about the second question? "What does the government owe to me?" Ours is a country of laws and elected governance. Therefore, we are able to look to a grand constitutional vision which is the mandate for those who govern and we who live together in a common country.

This constitutional vision in its simplest terms promises four things: fairness and freedom, the commitment to serve the

God has given us a chance to be a generous presence of moderation in bitter and angry places because we know of the generosity of God himself. This moderation is one of the most useful gifts we have to share in the places where we live and work.

I BELIEVE we have our most lasting impact when we model that generosity of spirit that has its source in the good-

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BECAUSE of the second two mandates that promise peace and common good we expect a fair trial if charges are made against any person. A jury of our peers should promise to fairly weigh evidence and then both accused and accuser should trust that such an evaluation by a jury of peers will best serve justice. I do not believe juries should be sequestered in isolation for long trials in what amounts to a desperate and unrealistic attempt to ensure their fairness. I believe the better approach is to seek their pledge to fairness and let them live as normal citizens who enter the courtroom each day to listen to evidence and then decide.

Citizenship and faith are not against each other. Society needs people who hope in God and the people of hope need a place to share their best gift.