

A TIME TO STAND FOR WHAT YOU BELIEVE!

By Reg Higginbottom, pastor, Moulton and Monterey Christian Churches, Iowa

In Acts 5:29, Peter and the Apostles were on trial, accused of disobedience to authority. Their response in verse 29 is, "We ought to obey God rather than man." I was reminded of this scripture after a discussion about the recent rally in Des Moines to call for a constitutional amendment to define marriage as a covenant between one man and one woman only. That is not only the traditional understanding of marriage, but the biblical one as well. The call was to seek a vote so that the people can express their values and conscience.

But I believe the issue is deeper than that. The hidden issue is the removal of Christian values from society, so that everything goes. When Christian freedom goes, we lose our voice, to say nothing of the constitutional right to worship and live according to the values and beliefs of our faith. This has happened because too many good people have stood by and said or done nothing. Now, more than ever, it is a time to stand for what we believe.

This is an election year. In such years, our party loyalties come out. Does your party support the values that your faith teaches you? Many people are of one party or another because that is what they or their family have always been. They dismiss differences with their party's stances, saying "that's not what I believe" or "they would never do that."

If you support the core values of your party, but don't like the direction it is taking them, then get out and work for change. If they continue to push values that contradict your faith, it is time for change. Change for the worse often happens because good people say or do nothing.

Within a democracy we have the freedom to voice our views and values and live according to the dictates of our consciences. If we don't use our freedom, we lose our voice to those who do not share the same values.

As a Christian I am the first to admit that I am not always right and that I make mistakes. I am still growing. However, my ultimate authority and standard must be the Word of God. Indeed, that is

where we all must stand. Jesus in Luke 6:35 says, "love your enemies, do good." When we disagree with people, we need to love them and treat them as we want them to treat us. Sometimes we Christians have messed up on both loving our enemies and those with whom we disagree, and also in the way we treat others.

We must live and stand for what our faith teaches. This nation was formed by Christian leaders and based upon Biblical values. Today there are those who deny that and want to remove Christian values from government and from day-to-day living as well. The idea that our constitution calls for "separation of church and state" is a myth. Look at the Constitution; it is not there! The only mention is that the government shall make no law concerning one's free right to worship according to the dictates of one's conscience. The restriction is not upon people but the government.

Something at the rally that disturbed me was the response from our legislators. Most said "let the courts decide." That is not the courts' responsibility. Theirs is to enforce and interpret the law according to the constitution and the intent of the law. It is our elected legislators' responsibility to govern and pass laws necessary to protect individual freedoms and the needs of society. We Christians need to express our needs. If our legislators are not representing our values, we need to let them know. And the ultimate voice that we have is on election day.

It is a time to stand for what you believe. Our right to believe and practice our values is being lost because too many good people have done nothing. Our freedoms are being lost because for too long we have done nothing or failed to stand up.

We are fast losing the freedom to voice our views. If we do not stand and make our voices heard now, a time is soon coming when people of faith will be faced with the choice Peter had nearly 2,000 years ago, "Do I obey God or man?" I know how I will stand, do you? The consequences are eternal!