

Message to the Center for Christian Virtue: Jesus and the Church He Built Did Not Request the Roman Government to Fund the Church

In the first century BC, church and state were completely separated. The wall of separation reached the mountain tops. The wall eventually collapsed. When the wall of separation between the church and Rome collapsed, the church started a long road to apostasy and corruption. The church became a powerful force in civil government and a source of conflict.

Centuries later, followers of Christ realized the folly of the church-state union and attempted to reform and in some case restore the church to the pattern provided in the New Testament.

The founding fathers of the United States understood this history and thus, attempted to avoid the mistakes of the past. They were careful to separate church and state. On one hand, they avoided the establishment of religion, and on the other, protected the free exercise of religion.

It is troubling that a segment of the current “Christian” community is demanding government money to support faith. The Center for Christian Virtue and all other religious groups that demand government money for their faith should learn from history.

Vouchers and direct support to private religious schools are wrongheaded. An 18th century theologian said it this way: “The very tendency of religious establishments by human law, is to make some hypocrites, and the rest fools; they are calculated to destroy those very virtues that religion is designed to build up; to encourage fraud and violence over the earth. It is error alone, that stands in need of government to support it; truth can and will do better without.” (John Leland, Baptist Minister, 1790)