

from government. The petition was referred to the House and the Senate Judiciary Committees and they investigated the issue for a full year to see if it would be possible to separate Christian principles from government. After one year they came back with the report saying, "Had the people during the Revolution had a suspicion of any attempt to wage war against Christianity, that revolution would have been strangled in its cradle."

And then, nearly 100 years later, in 1947, in a case known as *Everson v. the Board of Education*, the Supreme Court took a different angle on the church/state issue and their ruling was this. "The first amendment has erected a wall of separation between church and state which must be kept high and impregnable." And that was the first time the original understanding of the separation of church and state, presented by our founding fathers in the constitution, had been reversed. It was originally intended to protect the church from the state, and now it is intended to keep the church from influencing the state. It was an absolute, about face, 180 degree reversal from what our forefathers intended.

And since 1962, which was the first ruling to officially separate religious principles from government, in our schools and other areas, since that time, when the high and impregnable wall was erected to keep religious principles out of our government, teenage pregnancies for girls between 10-14 has increased over 600%. Sexually transmitted diseases skyrocketed. SAT scores in school went down for 18 straight years. And violent crimes increased over 600%. George Washington put it well when he said, "If you remove religious principles, you will lose morality in America."

The Bible says that government and its leaders are accountable first and foremost to God.

IV

I don't have a lot of time to cover the fourth point in your outline, except to say that all of us, who are citizens of this country are commanded by God to submit to the government, regardless of who we are or how much money we have or what position we fill. And the only time we're given permission not to submit to government is if government commands us or forbids us to do that which is contrary to the word of God. And if you want a proof text for that, it's found in Acts 5:29.

We're also told to pay taxes. Not only did Paul write it in Romans 13, but Jesus said it in Matthew 22, as we heard earlier in the service. Loopholes may be legal, but cheating isn't.

And as a child is called to give honor and respect to parents and an employee to an employer, so citizens are called to show honor and respect to those who govern.

V

And fifth, what does Romans 13 say about the specific role of we who are Christian citizens? In verses 9 and 10 it says, "Love your neighbor as yourself. Love does no harm to its neighbors. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law." You want to know how to help the government? Don't add to their work load. If, in all that you do, you're attempting to respond to the needs of those around you, treating them with love, whether that be the person next door or the guy in traffic next to you, or the person at work who wronged you—if you are treating them with Christian love—then the government doesn't have to worry about you and their job becomes much easier.

And Christian citizens, also, because they, or at least they should have a clear understanding of the word of God—have a respon-

sibility to keep the government and law makers in check, when it comes to issues on which God has clearly spoken. We cannot remain silent. And if we do, we have no right to complain.

And Christian citizens have been instructed in Paul's first letter to Timothy to pray for those in authority over us—which we'll be doing a little later in the service.

CONCLUSION

Some concluding thoughts: Benjamin Franklin said, "We need God to be our friend, not our enemy." You've seen what's happened to our country since we began to remove God's influence from our land.

To you, who are here today as our governmental officials, I want to thank you for taking the time to be here. Some of you are members of our congregation and would be here anyway, but that's not the case for a number of you. Some of you, like Congressman McIntosh have traveled a long way to be with us today and we thank you for making the effort. And I want to encourage all of you who are our elected officials to be bold, courageous leaders, not blown by the whims of what may appear to be popular opinion, or political correctness, but directed by what is right.

Secondly, I want to say especially to our governmental leaders, that the church is the very best friend government has. Thomas Jefferson said it first when he said, "The reason Christianity is the best friend of government is because Christianity is the only religion in the world that deals with the heart." The threat of punishment is sometimes effective and rehabilitation has a purpose but unless you change the heart, you won't do much to affect behavior. And the Church, the Body of Christ, is committed to affecting hearts.

Thirdly, to our public servants, I want to encourage you to stay close to God. In light of what we've seen today from Romans 13, I don't know how you can do your job if you don't. If you're from our community and don't have a church home, then please know that you are always welcome in our midst. Be reminded that you have a God who loves you, just as you are, even when others might be on your back and constantly criticizing. You can't be in any position of leadership and not have someone taking shots at you. But God loves you.

He is a God who came to be your servant, nearly 2000 years ago, as He paid for your offenses and your sins as well as those of the rest of us, on a splintered, wooden cross, and who offers you not only his love, but also his full and complete forgiveness.

And to the majority of us who hold no public government office, but who are citizens of this blessed land, we need to understand, that if people are to be put into office, men and women who will stand firm on the issues on which God has spoken, and whose first concern is obedience to the one to whom they're accountable, then you and I must participate in the process, at every level. We need to make our views known and to exercise that privilege that we've been given in this country.

May God bless you, our elected and appointed officials. May God bless us as a community. And may God bless America.

Please remain seated, as David Florine comes forward to lead us in a time of prayer and confession.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF LATINO/AS CONTRA SIDA-LATINOS AGAINST AIDS

HON. BARBARA B. KENNELLY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 5, 1996

Mrs. KENNELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 10th anniversary of Latino/as Contra SIDA-Latinos Against AIDS in the First Congressional District of Connecticut on September 27, 1996.

LCS was founded in 1986 by concerned Latino volunteers who recognized the dire need for specialized services for Latino/as individuals and families affected by HIV/AIDS. Through education and prevention efforts for adults, children and youth as well as HIV precounseling, testing, assistance, advocacy and case management services, LCS has served over 5,000 individuals in the Greater Hartford area.

With a mission of preventing the further spread of HIV/AIDS among the Latino community in Greater Hartford and enhancing the quality of life of those affected by the HIV disease, LCS has become a major collaborator of health care services.

LCS is comprised of a dedicated and energetic board of directors and a base of community volunteers who continue the significant efforts of its founders: Hector Seda, Roberto Negron, Gladys Capó and Myrna Vargas.

I applaud the work of Latino/as SIDA during the past 10 years and offer my sincerest gratitude and hope for LCS's continued success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DAVID MINGE

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 5, 1996

Mr. MINGE. Mr. Speaker, during rollcall vote 403 on House Concurrent Resolution 120 I was unavoidably detained on an airplane flight that was badly delayed by mechanical problems and by weather conditions. Had I been present, I would have voted "yes." I ask unanimous consent that my statement appear in the RECORD immediately following rollcall vote No. 403.

A THANK YOU TO THE HABER FAMILY

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 5, 1996

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce you to a true American family who has sacrificed and served our great Nation. Eight of Charles and Anna Haber's sons all proudly served in World War II between 1936-47.

The story of the Haber family is one of two people immigrating to the United States, meeting, and overcoming hardships, to live out the American dream. In the early 1900's, Charles and Anna each left Czechoslovakia to come to