

## The Function of Human Government

Bro Paul Goh has completed his 6 months attachment to CERC. In his last message last Lord's Day afternoon, he preached from Romans 13 and exhorted us to submit to the government. This is a timely reminder in view of the new changes in our ruling government.

We can use 3 "Ps" to summarize what Romans 13 teaches about the roles of government. The general function of human government, as instituted by God, may be said to be threefold" to protect, punish and promote.

### **The Function of Protection**

When Adam sinned, he brought chaos into human civilization and society. Society became godless and cruel. The early accounts in Genesis tell us that men killed and murdered to achieve their own ends. This happened even in Adam's own family. Cain's murder of Abel was the first crime in human history, but it was not the only one. The world today is capable of more monstrous crime. But in whatever degree the crime is committed, the offense still stems from the same rebellious nature within every one of us. Ruined human nature is rebellious, and is capable of unleashing many cruelties. For this reason, human society is in need of a form of restraint to protect its citizens. Human government is appointed for this end. An example of this function is seen in Acts 21:27-37 where Roman soldiers stepped in and saved Paul from the enraged Jewish crowd in Jerusalem. In today's word of terrorism, this function of government is important to protect the security of the country.

### **The Function of Punishment**

The Bible in Romans 13 v 3-4, explains that rulers are God's ministers to bear the sword against evil doers. This means that they must act to punish criminals (vv.3,4). They must enact laws to ensure that offenders are punished for their crimes, and that they feel the pain for their evils. In Singapore, the punishment includes the death penalties for such offenses like murder and drug trafficking. The Bible in 1 Peter 2 v 13-14, reiterates this by saying that rulers are sent by God for the punishment of evildoers.

### **The Function of Promotion**

The function of promotion by the Governments, lastly, is to promote the general welfare of the community. The Bible tells us in 1 Timothy 2:1,2, to pray for those in authorities. For if they rule well, we may be able to enjoy a quiet and peaceable life. An orderly and peaceful community, said Paul, is conducive for promoting godliness. Promoting a cohesive and rich community is what our present rulers plan to do. We thank them for their wisdom and vision in bringing peace and harmony to a secular city. But our fellow Singaporeans need more than just tax incentives, more play, and a reduced workweek. These are good things. Like many Singaporeans, I have reasons to be cheerful about. But in the end what our countrymen need is the something spiritual - the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. They need more than earthly welfare. They need eternal life.

**By Pastor Cheah Fook Meng**