

Christian Mandate vs Stolen Mandate

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COMMENT Should Christians support the Bersih 3.0 rally? I say yes, without any hesitation. The Bible bids us to stand up and make a difference in times like this. It's our Christian Mandate.

Read, for example, St Paul's epistle to the Christians in Rome living under Imperial Caesar: 'Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.' (Romans 13:1 ESV)

Yet many Roman Christians chose to defy the governing authorities of the day by not worshipping Caesar and were thrown to the lions for the emperor's amusement. The Roman Empire imploded subsequently.

Two things come to mind about this verse. The first is the symbiotic relationship between the government and the governed. The other is the fact that it is God who puts or allows governments to be in power regardless of the form they take.

NONEHowever, the choice of government is obviously left to the people unless we expect God to descend from heaven and impose His will in the upcoming general election in Malaysia.

The next thing to note is that the people must be subject (or submit as in some translations like the NIV) to the government of the day.

The word 'picture' used here in its original Greek form means nothing less than total obedience like that of the Roman soldier to his officer in Paul's time.

When translated into English, the word seems to denote a submissive person who is thought of as docile, inferior, meek, weak, quiet, numb, without authority, in need of guidance, like a child or as someone who has given up in despair.

The biblical context is far from this. Submission is of a mutual and reciprocal respect as evident in the various epistles or letters of Paul in the New Testament. Submission in the Bible is about subjecting oneself to governing authorities based on justice and righteousness in the sight of a holy God. (Amos 5:24, Micah 6:8)

Does the Bible allow us to oppose unjust and unrighteous governing authorities? Yes in certain circumstances even as far back as the Old Testament. For instance in Exodus 1:17: 'But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but let the male children live.'

The narrative refers to Pharaoh's orders to the two Hebrew midwives to kill any Hebrew baby boy they deliver. Because of their refusal to obey the royal order, among other things, the baby Moses was saved only to grow up and confront Pharaoh to "let my people go".

Then there is Daniel who refused to obey the Persian law not to pray to his God and was thrown into the lions' den only to be saved mysteriously by divine intervention.

In the Books of Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament, Peter and John, defied the high priests' orders not to preach about Jesus and the ruling authorities of the day were powerless to act against them.

Should Christians support Bersih 3.0?

First be clear about Bersih (clean). It is an election reform movement co-chaired by former Bar Council

president Ambiga Sreenevasan and A Samad Said.

NONE Ambiga was one of eight recipients of the 2009 Secretary of State's Award for International Women of Courage Awards. Pak Samad is a poet laureate in his 70s.

These two luminaries, together with other like-minded reformists, were courageous enough to be face tear gas at last year's Bersih 2.0 in their quest for clean and fair elections.

Bersih has only three demands:

1. The Election Commission (EC) must resign, as it has failed in its responsibility and has lost the confidence of the public.
2. The electoral process must be cleaned before the 13th general election.
3. International observers should be invited to observe the 13th general election.

Ong Kian Ming, the director of the independent Malaysian Electoral Roll Analysis Project, has mentioned that a few hundred thousand dubious voters have been registered with various irregularities. He also said there are 3.1 million potential non-resident voters out of an electoral roll of only 12 million.

In Sabah, the situation is insane. The 2000 census gave the total population of Sabah and Labuan as 2,468,246. The biggest single group was non-Malaysian citizens at 552,967 (22 percent) followed by Kadazan/Dusun 458,768 (18 percent).

Now look at the 2010 census. The total population was 3,206,742, a 30 percent increase. Non-Malaysian citizens shot up by 61 percent to 889,779 while Kadazan/Dusun only grew by 2.8 percent to 568,575.

It's the non-Malaysians (presumably Filipinos and Indonesians) who determine the outcome of elections there. How did the EC allow so many foreigners to be voters overnight?

azlan In the face of all this, EC chief chief Abdul Aziz Yusof has made the audacious boast that he has the cleanest electoral roll in the world! He and the whole EC were appointed by the Agong to ensure elections are fair and free. They should all resign or be sacked for gross negligence and insult to this royal appointment.

To make matters worse, the government squandered its last chance to make amends when it rushed through amendments to the elections law in the wee hours of the morning last Friday, like a thief in the night.

The amendments now make independent monitoring of elections even more difficult, thus increasing the probability of another Stolen Mandate by the ruling coalition.

This is the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. Yet, some Christians are asking 'shouldn't we pray instead of going out into the streets'?

bersih announcing 3rd rally 040412 leaflet Make no mistake - when electoral fraud happens, something also happens in the spiritual realm.

St Paul reminds us: 'For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.'

The Bersih 3.0 Duduk Bantah (sit-in protest) is on Saturday at Dataran Merdeka in Kuala Lumpur and in various other cities throughout the country. Simultaneous protests are planned by Malaysians in more than 40 cities around the world.

Exercise your Christian Mandate. Go there, duduk bantah, get down on your knees and pray. Then expect a miracle - the end of a Stolen Mandate.

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