

# Politically Homeless II : HOW we engage

Summary of Andrew Mook's sermon - [sanctuaryri.org/teaching](http://sanctuaryri.org/teaching)

## Introduction

The message opens with a reflection on **Philippians 1:27**: “Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ,” urging believers to “live as active citizens of heaven” while also being mindful of earthly citizenship. In political and social contexts, Christians should strive to represent their faith with integrity, focusing on God's standards rather than solely national ones.

## Citizenship and Government

1 Peter 2:11-17 calls believers to live well as “foreigners and exiles,” presenting a model of non-retaliatory conduct even amid persecution. With examples from Nero's reign, it illustrates how early Christians faced severe trials but remained faithful witnesses.

Christians are to respect governing authorities as **Romans 13** prescribes, yet with the awareness that God's authority supersedes all human power. This means respecting leaders unless they conflict with Christ's teachings, as noted in **Acts 5:29**: “We must obey God rather than human authorities.”

## Bearing Witness

The message emphasizes “bearing witness” as the central Christian call. Believers are like witnesses in a courtroom—tasked not with convincing or overpowering, but faithfully testifying to Jesus' reality. This idea is supported by **Acts 1:8** and **1 Peter 3:15**. Bearing witness involves embodying Jesus' teachings through both actions and words, conveying God's kingdom as a lived experience.

## The Medium Is the Message

Using an analogy about receiving a text proposal, the speaker illustrates that “the medium is the message,” meaning that how we communicate can reveal as much as what we communicate. This principle is seen in Jesus' incarnation—coming as a servant, not as a king of earthly power, showing us that God's ways are inherently relational and sacrificial.

## Engaging Culture

The sermon suggests three approaches for cultural and political engagement:

1. **Reject** – Stand against harmful practices, such as exploitation and violence. Examples: the civil rights and abolitionist movements, which were driven by Christian commitments to justice and mercy.
2. **Celebrate** – Support aspects that align with kingdom values, like community development and the arts.
3. **Transform** – Engage critically, upholding good while addressing flaws. For example, championing free press and fair markets while critiquing where they fall short.

## Creating Kingdom Culture

Historically, Christianity has contributed institutions like hospitals and universities, revealing God's kingdom in tangible ways. Rather than simply critiquing culture, Christians are called to create, bringing the values of God's kingdom into everyday life.

## Sobriety in Political Engagement

Acknowledging that we live in the “already and not yet” of God's kingdom, believers must resist utopian ideals. Every political structure will face corruption, and Christians are tasked with discerning and adjusting social practices to reflect kingdom values without resorting to force or coercion.

## Witness Over Winning

The message emphasizes choosing “witness over winning,” with historical examples:

- **Desmond Tutu** led the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, prioritizing healing over revenge.
- **Oscar Romero** spoke for the oppressed in El Salvador, maintaining a stance of love and justice until his martyrdom.
- **Clarence Jordan** established Koinonia Farm, a community embodying racial reconciliation in the South.
- **William Wilberforce** fought the slave trade through moral persuasion, illustrating the value of enduring witness over political power.

## Jesus on the Cross as the Ultimate Witness

Jesus exemplified witness over winning by choosing to die on the cross instead of asserting His power. **Philippians 2** describes His humility, while **Luke 23:34** highlights His forgiveness. Jesus' crucifixion demonstrates that true victory comes through self-giving love, not domination.

## Final Reflections

Believers are urged to see politics through Jesus' lens, aligning more with God's kingdom than any earthly party. As **2 Timothy 2:1-4** suggests, we are to pray for leaders, embodying hope and peace that point to God's rule. Our ultimate hope isn't in politics but in Jesus, the "solid rock," emphasizing that God's kingdom, not earthly power, is the true answer to the world's needs.

