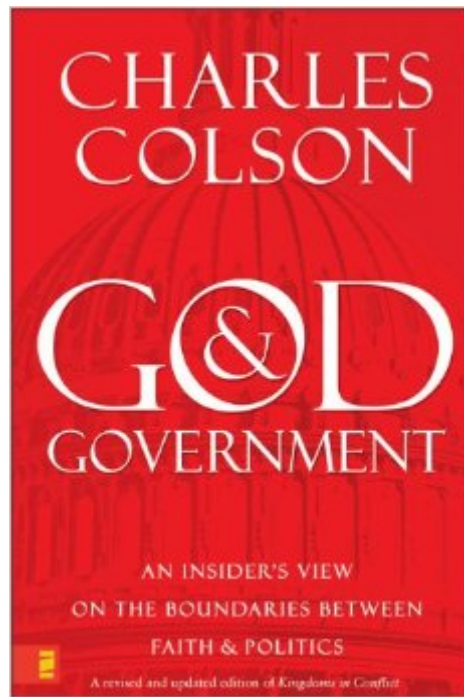


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God & Government



Synopsis

How should Christians live their faith in the public arena? Twenty years ago, the first edition of Chuck Colson's *Kingdoms in Conflict* became a bestseller, a must-read for people interested in politics and the relationship between church and state. Now, with a passion for truth and moved by the urgency of the times we live in, Colson has written *God and Government*, re-voicing his powerful and enduring message for our post-9/11 world. In an era when Christianity is being attacked from every side—books being written charging Christians with being theocrats and trying to impose their views on an unwilling culture—what is the message of the Christian church? What does the Bible say, and what do we learn from history about the proper relationship between faith and culture? Appealing to scripture, reason, and history, this book tackles society's most pressing and divisive issues. New stories and examples reflect the realities of today, from the clash with radical Islam to the deep division between the reds and the blues. In an era of angry finger-pointing, Colson furnishes a unique insider's perspective that can't be pigeonholed as either the religious right or the religious left. Whatever your political or religious stance, this book will give you a different understanding of Christianity. If you're a Christian, it will help you to both examine and defend your faith. If you've been critical of the new religious right, you'll be shocked at what you learn. Probing both secular and religious values, *God and Government* critiques each fairly, sides with neither, and offers a hopeful, fair-minded perspective that is sorely needed in today's hyper-charged atmosphere.

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Customer Reviews

Chuck Colson brings to this book his wealth of experience, passion and intellect. Having lived his life in both "kingdoms" -- the secular state as well as in ministry -- Colson sheds much needed light and balance into the conflict between the role of the church in the world of the state. What Colson does most strikingly in this work is call for a measured, authentic Christianity by those who most want to affect society for Christ. Is there a role for Christians in government? Colson argues yes. Is government the solution to the world's problems? Colson argues no, or at least not entirely. Intellectual, yet readable, *Kingdoms in Conflict* is one of the best books I've ever read. Published in the late 1980's (at the height of the Moral Majority movement) it is still highly relevant to anyone seeking a cogent analysis of American politics today and the part Christians have in it and out of it as we seek to affect our world.

Colson takes a topic that has been discussed by Christians ever since the disciples questioned Jesus about it when He was in Galilee with them, i.e., the role of God's kingdom and that of man's. Colson contends that the kingdom of God is within a person. It is not an external means of control exercised by political power. In the Epilogue he cites Winston Churchill's last words, "there is no hope." But Colson counters that statement by explaining that spiritual things are not based on the circumstances of this present world. On the other side of the coin, however, Colson presents specific examples throughout history where Christians have actively been involved in politics and government because of their belief in the eternal, unseen kingdom of God within. Having an awareness of things eternal, while contributing in this life is the balance he is seeking to describe.

Although not strictly a scholarly work, Colson draws enormous breadth and integrity of expertise into this epochal exposition of the relationship of church to state. I must confess that it took me 20 years to pick up this book, and that only on a whim. I had no desire to read Colson, having little belief in the value of celebrity or notoriety in lending value to a man's words. Though not a hater of things American, I am not starry-eyed about American mentality, especially when it comes to politics, and rather turned off by the way Americans (and others) confuse the domains of religion and politics, not just on the political right but at all points of the political spectrum. That Colson had been a special advisor to Richard Nixon during the Watergate scandal had pretty well put him off my radar. I could not have been more wrong about him. This book is the first I have read in which a comprehensive exposition of an appropriate relationship of church to state is laid out. Colson cannot be accused of confusing the two domains, yet he is clear about the valuable relationship between personal, and collective, faith, and public domain politics. A man highly qualified to speak about both, and his

education in the school of hard knocks has paid off in spades. Though some reviewers appear to regard the book as a vilification of the religious and political right this is quite unfair -- Colson is balanced in both domains and his writing reveals little pandering to partisan interests. He could equally address a Republican Convention, or a Democrat one, or stand aside and offer telling criticism of both parties. The same balance is evident in his theological writing. I am reminded of the angel leading an army whom Joshua met and asked, "Are you with us or with our enemies?" The angel replied "Neither. I am for the Lord". As for the book itself, it has an engaging style. The chapters are short, mostly in the form of parables. The first is an account of a fictional American president whose religious zealotry leads the world to the brink of war, a cautionary tale. Other chapters are straight retelling or dramatizations of the lives of men and women who held in their hands the keys to major world events of the 20th Century, retelling in gripping form the rise of the Third Reich, the behavior of the Church in Germany, the weak response of Chamberlaine, slippery dealings in the hallowed halls of American government, murder, redemption and forgiveness in the Phillipines and Northern Ireland, and much more. The weakest point is a short digression into science and cosmology early in the book, a subject Colson would probably to best to leave untouched in his writing. It's the only blemish I can find on what is otherwise a masterwork. Although written to the current state of the world 20 years ago, prior to the Fall of the Soviet Union, the Tienamen Square massacre and the First Gulf War, and the rise of globalized Jihadism in its current form, the book is strikingly current and insightful. Perhaps it is because the context of his writing is merely context---he does not write for it, but he draws on that background to write timeless wisdom. I highly recommend the book not only to Christians but to anyone interested in answers to the unsolvable political and religious conundrums in the world. Although Colson offers few answers beyond Christ, it is perhaps enough to note that the answers he does offer are rock solid, and his book is more of an arrow in a direction than an 'X' marking the spot where treasure is buried.

In this book Charles Colson cogently describes causes and effects of cultural changes and comprehensively supplies Scriptural references to explain historical events. I read it when it was first released, many years ago. I've read many books since then and its content still haunts my memory. I look forward to buying it once more. This time I hope I don't lend it to anyone, as it's a great book to reread.... again and again.

Chuck's Colson's work, and his life, continue to be a source of great fascination. This book is not only well written, but gives the most balanced perspective I've ever read on contemporary issues

from a Christian worldview. And some of Colson's remarks will surprise even the most conservative and liberal Christians. There are few Christians as balanced and as thoughtful as Chuck Colson...

Tom Terry

When reading this book back in 1989, one had to assume Colson was thinking of Pat Robertson's run for the White House when he wrote this book. Eleven years later the American people elected a born-again Christian as President in George W Bush. Some of the things Colson warned about have now come to pass. Although the events of 9/11 were out of the President's control and demanded action, there is little doubt that his Faith has shaped his view of world events. "Kingdoms in Conflict" is a warning that God's Kingdom is not of this world and it cannot be forged through politics or war. Man's kingdoms and God's Kingdom are in conflict. Colson's time in the Nixon White House and his born-again experience has allowed him to see the dangers of using politics to advance a religious belief. This book is more relevant today than it was in 1989.

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