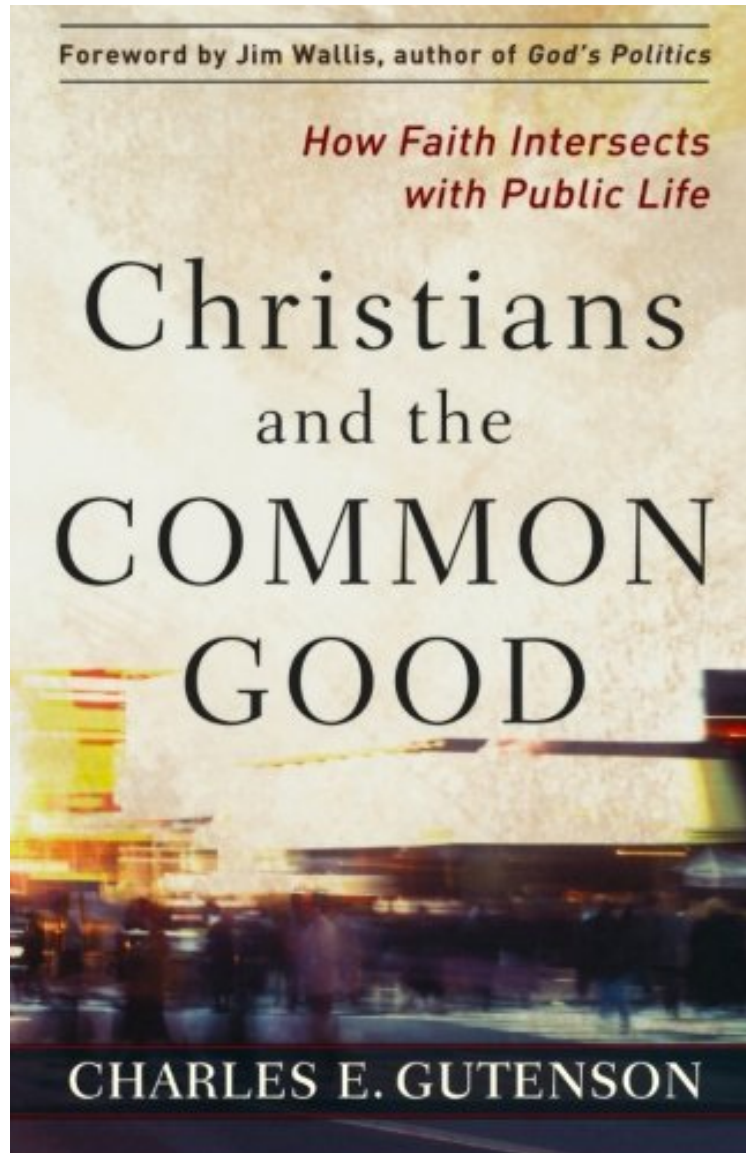


(Free download) Christians and the Common Good: How Faith Intersects with Public Life

Christians and the Common Good: How Faith Intersects with Public Life

Charles Gutenson

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Christians across the spectrum have soured on religious involvement in politics, tempted either to withdraw or to secularize their public engagement. Yet the kingdom of God is clearly concerned with justice and communal wellbeing. How can Christians be active in public life without getting mired down in political polarization and controversy? For too long, the question of faith in public life has centered on what the Bible says about government. Charles Gutenson, a theologian respected by both evangelical and mainline Christians, argues that we should first ask how God intends for us to live together before considering the public policies and institutions that would best empower living together in that way. By concentrating on the nature of God, we can move past presuppositions regarding the role of government and engage in healthy discussions about how best to serve the common good. This lucidly written book includes a foreword by bestselling author Jim Wallis.

From Publishers WeeklyGutenson, the CEO of Sojourners, the Christian anti-poverty group, has written a treatise designed to help persuade evangelicals to heed the Bible's emphasis on social justice. Gutenson, who previously taught at Asbury Theological Seminary, brings conservative credentials to bear. He makes valid points about how some Christians take Scripture out of context or draw misleading connections between select biblical passages and modern-day controversies such as abortion or homosexuality. But his insistence that one can rightly discern God's intentions relies on the same hermeneutical method used by his opponents--those who discern God's intentions in individual salvation rather than social action. Moreover, his support for government safety nets such as Social Security, Medicare, and living wage laws sound like Democratic Party bumper stickers. Evangelicals searching for a social action platform may appreciate the book, provided they are willing to wade through turgid academic prose. (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.From the Back CoverHow Does God Intend for Us to Live

Together?Christians across the spectrum have soured on religious involvement in politics, tempted either to withdraw or to secularize their public engagement. Yet the kingdom of God is clearly concerned with justice and communal wellbeing. How can Christians be active in public life without getting mired down in political polarization and controversy?For too long, the question of faith in public life has centered on what the Bible says about government. This book argues that we should first ask how God intends for us to live together before considering particular public policies and governmental institutions. By concentrating on the nature of God, we can move past presuppositions regarding the role of government and form a reasonable framework for engaging in healthy discussions about how best to serve the common good."An ideal book for Sunday school classes, Bible study groups, and other discussion groups. . . . I am thankful that [Charles Gutenson] has brought together his substantial theological training and his public policy concerns in Christians and the Common Good. At a time when the relationship between faith and politics, the role of government, and the vocation of the Church are all hotly contested issues, [his] keen theological insights, deeply biblical approach, and clear political analysis will be a great help to us all."--Jim Wallis, Sojourners (from the foreword) "Few of us have been businesspeople and biblical scholars and political activists. Charles Gutenson has been all three, and he brings the insight and wisdom of this broad experience to this helpful, thoughtful book on wise Christian political engagement."--Ronald J. Sider, president, Evangelicals for Social Action"Charles Gutenson has undertaken an exceptionally thoughtful analysis of how Christians who are serious about politics should think about the common good. It is beautifully written, swings clear of polemical jargon, and provides much food for thought. This is a splendid springboard for political discussion and action."--William J. Abraham, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist UniversityAbout the AuthorCharles E. Gutenson (Ph.D., Southern Methodist University) is the chief operating officer of Sojourners in Washington, D.C. . He formerly served as associate professor of philosophical theology at Asbury Theological Seminary and has worked as a pastor and a corporate executive. He is the author of *Considering the Doctrine of God* and co-author, with Jim Wallis, of *Living God's Politics*.