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The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates by Pastor Matthew Trehella

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The DOCTRINE OF THE LESSER MAGISTRATES



A Proper Resistance to Tyranny
and a Repudiation of
Unlimited Obedience to Civil Government

MATTHEW J. TREWHELLA

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During this time of Covid lock-downs and restrictions, you may have read stories about or even seen firsthand local leaders such as sheriffs or city leaders ignoring and refusing to enforce those orders. What you may not know is that this course of action is born out of Christian doctrine. More specifically, it is called the “doctrine of the lesser magistrates” or the “doctrine of interposition.”

Pastor Matthew Trewhella in his book (*now available at the IPS bookstore*), [The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates](#), does a tremendous job of clearly explaining the principles of Christian resistance that once were widely known but have recently been forgotten. This is a doctrine not rooted in rebellion but in godly submission.

Our system of government was designed with the separation of powers, not only between the three branches of the federal government, but also between the states and local authorities. It is no accident that the Constitution not only requires those elected to federal office to take an oath to support the Constitution, but also those elected in the “several States” (see Article 6, Paragraph 3). Each elected official in the United States is bound to recognize the Constitution as the “supreme Law of the Land” in matters to which it speaks, and are required to take an oath support and defend it.

In practice, what this means is that even the lowest (or the most local elected official) has been given the duty and also granted the authority to protect the citizens under his care from tyrannical rulers. For instance, if the President proclaims an order contrary to the Constitution, a state governor can ignore that order and protect the citizens in his state from prosecution. This would also mean a city council could do the same against a governor; a sheriff against a county board of supervisors; etc.

Many politicians do not realize this truth, but are told they must follow what those above them have ordered. In addition, many of us feel helpless when we see an out of control President, Congress, Court, Governor, or the like.

What if we start holding our local leaders accountable to protect our rights? What if we started communicating this truth to our mayors, supervisors, sheriffs, assemblymen, and other elected leaders most closely connected to our community? I believe we would start seeing the accountability our Founding Fathers envisioned when they gave us our Constitution. We would begin to start seeing our liberties restored.

Arm yourself for battle with the truths needed to reclaim the liberties our forefathers once enjoyed and our posterity longs to have. [The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates](#) is a good place to start.

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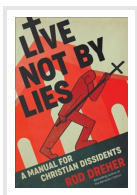
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