

Our Nation Under God

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Michael J. McHugh

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Preface

Young students often struggle to comprehend the flow of history in general and the origins of American history in particular. The text that follows has been designed to help youngsters obtain a fundamental understanding of how the nations of the earth developed and why the Americas were among the last continents to be settled. This book also provides a simple overview of the history of the United States and its geography.

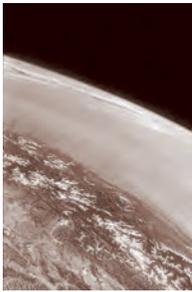
In addition to these features, the text seeks to give students a clearer grasp of God's purposes for civil government, family government, church government, and self-government. It is the author's desire to do more than simply tell students the way things are in the world. Youngsters need to be told why our world is the way it is. In short, they need to be given a basic framework for understanding God's plan for the world He has made.

May the mighty God of heaven and earth bless those students who study this history text.

—*Michael J. McHugh*

Contents

Prefaceiii



God Governs Everything 1



God Made the Nations 19

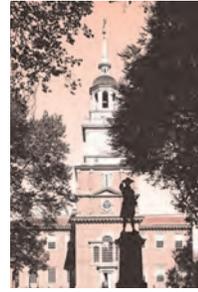


The Period of Discovery33



Others Come to America53

The War for Freedom79



Pioneers Fill America93



Inventions Help America111



America in Modern Times131



America in the Days to Come147



Index149



“The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness...”
 (Psalm 24:1a).
 God created the earth and all creatures to bring glory to Himself.

1 God Governs Everything

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.—Genesis 1:1

The Bible teaches us that Jesus Christ made everything and everyone in the world. He made the land and sea. He made each person who walks on the earth.

Every man, woman, and child, therefore, has the duty to serve and glorify the great Creator God. The same God who made each of us also controls the world He has created. God controls the creatures that He made through the laws that He has given them in the Holy Bible. He also controls the life of each person through God the Holy Spirit.

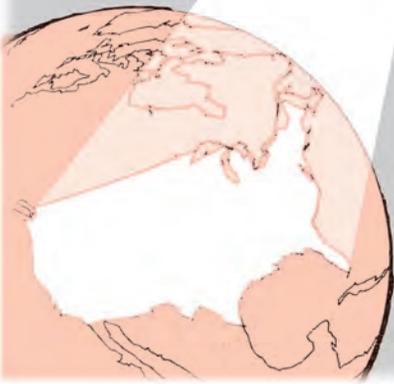
God Rules the World

God’s control over the world is called His government. The mighty Creator expects each person to follow His rules for living so they can be holy and happy. Unless we follow God’s Law, we will not know how to serve and glorify our Maker. When the people of the world honor God’s gov-

ernment, they enjoy peace on earth. When people refuse to follow God's plan, they find only sadness and death. We will now learn about the four types of governments that God set up to rule mankind.

God's Plan Has Four Kinds of Government

1. SELF-GOVERNMENT (A plan for each person)
2. FAMILY GOVERNMENT (A plan for the family)
3. CHURCH GOVERNMENT (A plan for the church)
4. CIVIL GOVERNMENT (A plan for each nation)



God rules over each nation with the heavenly light of His wisdom and power.

Self-government— God's Plan for Each Person

When God made Adam and Eve, He gave them rules or laws to follow. However, the first man and woman chose to break the rules God had made because they thought that they could live by their own wisdom. They did not want to obey God and live under His loving rule of government.

After Adam and Eve sinned, they lost the ability to follow God and His Word. All of mankind fell into the paths of sin and rebellion set by Adam and Eve. For this reason, everyone is a slave to the sin-

ful nature that seeks to follow the wisdom of men instead of the wisdom of God.

In the Bible we read:

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.—Matthew 4:4

This Bible verse teaches that all people on earth have the duty to live their lives according to the teachings of the Word of God. Sometimes this is called the duty of self-government under God’s Law. All boys and girls must build their lives around the truths that God has given in the Bible.

Children must ask the Lord to give them hearts that want to obey His commandments. When God gives people the power to cheerfully obey, they can begin to practice self-control or self-government.



**Even a child is known by his deeds, by whether what he does is pure and right.
Proverbs 20:11**

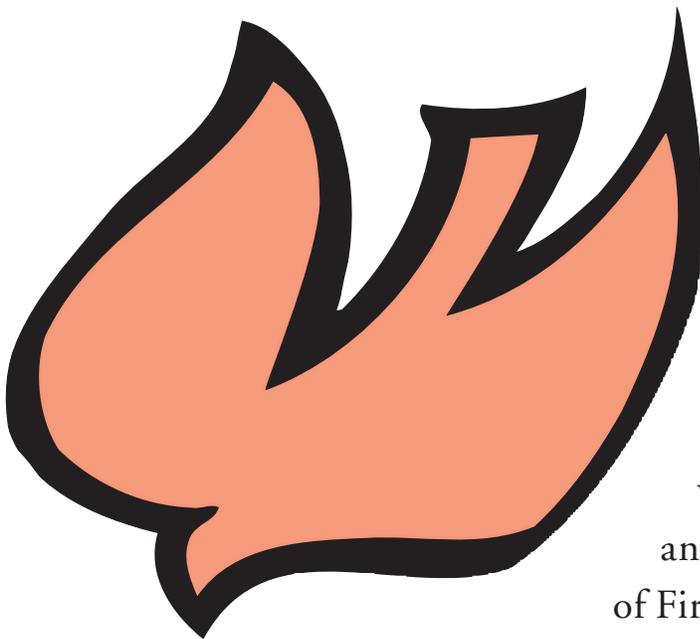
■ Exercise

List five things you can do to be self-governed under God’s Law.

1.	
2.	

3.	
4.	
5.	

A good child will want to be self-controlled or self-governed under God's Law. Unless a person is brought to the point where he can follow God's ways without having to be forced, he will never be able to live peaceably with any of God's governments.



Self-government, therefore, is the most basic and important type of government in God's plan for mankind. Wicked people by their very nature will not be controlled by God's Law and will be unable to live happy and fruitful lives. In the book of First Corinthians we read: "But

the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

The power to turn away from sin comes from God. Only by trusting in the work of Jesus Christ as Savior can a sinner find the strength to live a godly life.

To understand why people need to obey God's rules, we can think about a baseball game. If there were no rules in a baseball game, and every player and team did something different, there would be no game. And if each player tried to be the coach and refused to stay in his position, the team would fall apart.

In the same way, God controls the world and sets the rules for the game of life. People who refuse to follow God's rules will find that their lives fall apart. The Lord has a perfect order and plan for mankind to follow. The Word of God, the Bible, shows us God's rules for living.

Family Government— God's Plan for the Family

The Bible teaches us that after God made Adam, He said that it was not good for man to be alone. The wise Creator decided to make a special helper for Adam so he would be completely happy and not lonely. When God created Eve and brought her to Adam, He made the first family!

Before Adam and Eve sinned, they lived together in perfect unity and happiness. God planned for the government of the family to protect and bless them. He also planned for Adam and Eve to take respon-



Without rules and order, a baseball game would be impossible to play.

sibility for the care and spiritual nurturing of the children that God would send.

After Adam and Eve sinned, God's plan for the family was still the same. Men and women, however, would not be able to live together in perfect peace and joy because of sin.

God, in His wisdom, had already chosen the man to be the head of his family. Nevertheless, the family would now need a strong leader to keep peace in the household. The father would be responsible to see that God's loving commands were followed by each family member. The wife would help her husband and submit to his leadership as long as it was not wicked. Children would have the duty to honor and obey their parents for the Lord's sake. Special



The family is designed by God to be the basic unit of society.

blessings were promised for children who honored their parents.

**Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.
—Exodus 20:12**

The government of the family became even more necessary to men, women, and children after sin entered the world. The world became deceived by Satan and his lies. People began to hurt and hate one another as they followed the foolish ways of Satan. The family unit provided children with the important blessings of loving support and protection, as well as companionship and education.

The wise Creator knew how important the government of the family would be as He planned the best way for people to live together. Many children do not enjoy the blessing of a loving home with caring parents. In such cases, God Himself is able to care for children who turn to Him as their heavenly Father.



Families should be places of loving support and protection.

Activity

Complete the family tree on the page below by filling in the names of your family members. Feel free to ask your parents for help with this project.

GRANDFATHER

GRANDFATHER

GRANDMOTHER

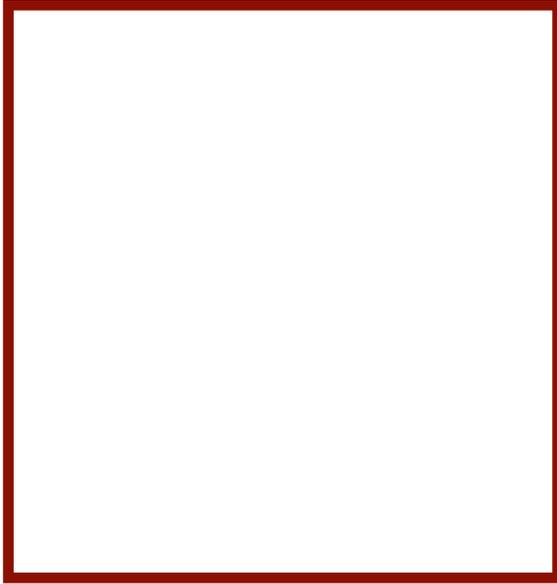
GRANDMOTHER

FATHER

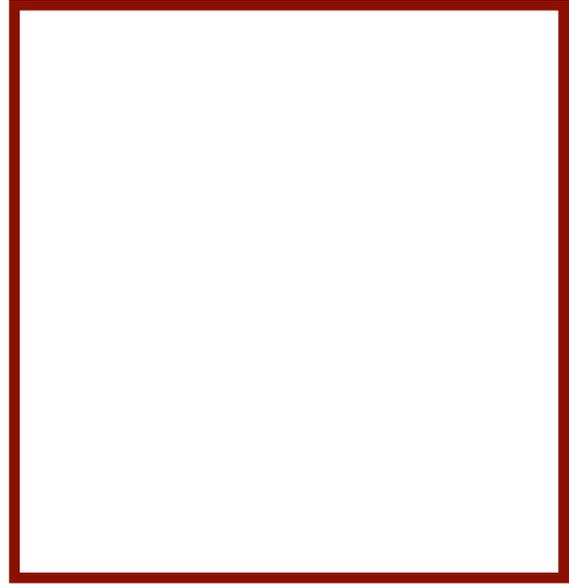
MOTHER

YOUR NAME





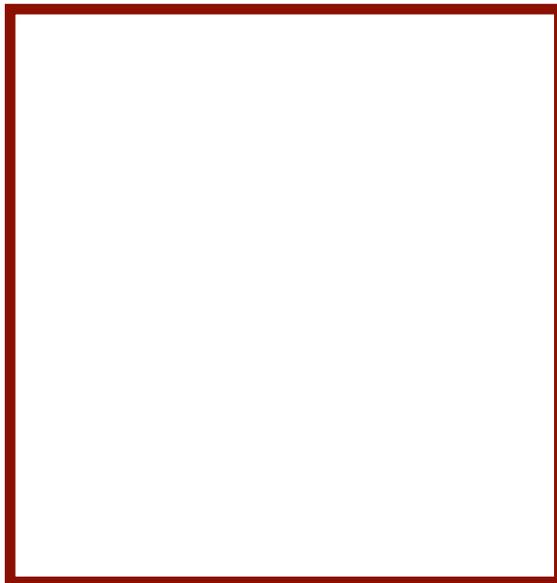
Father



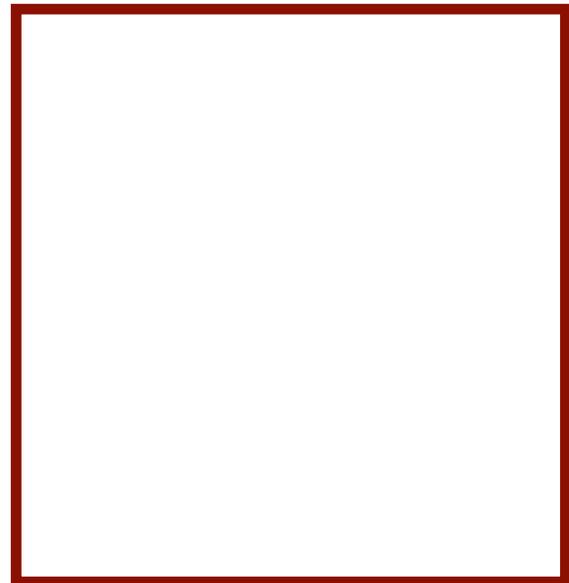
Mother

If God has blessed you with a family, please draw pictures of your parents in the top boxes or glue in photographs of them.

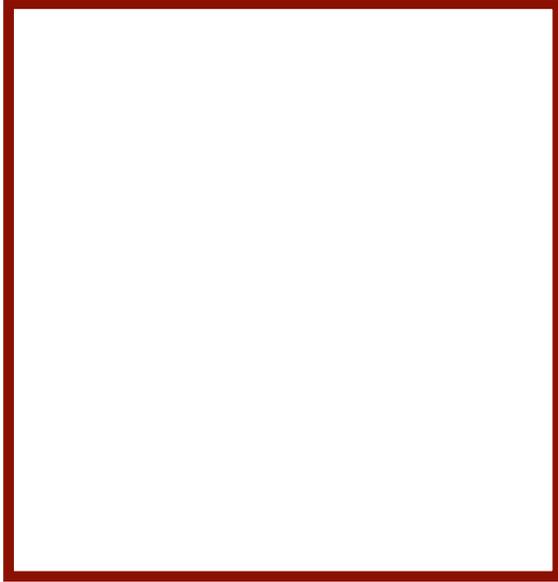
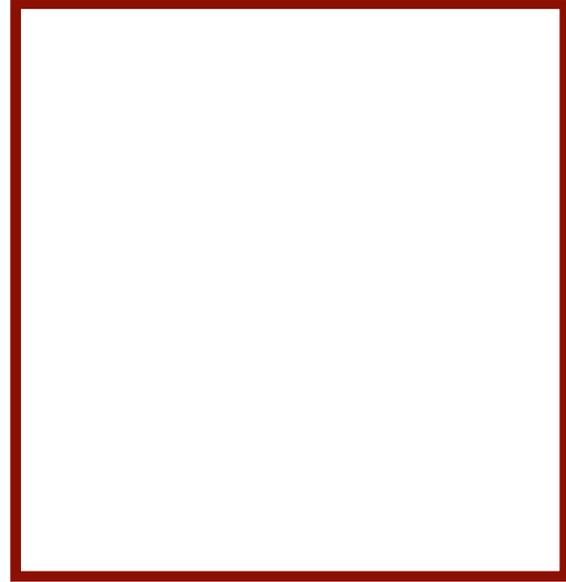
Do you have brothers or sisters? If so, please draw pictures of them in the boxes below or glue in photographs of them.



Brother or Sister



Brother or Sister

**Grandfather****Grandmother**

Do you know who your grandparents are? Your grandparents are your parents' moms and dads! Draw pictures of two of them, if possible, in the boxes above or glue in photographs of two of your grandparents.

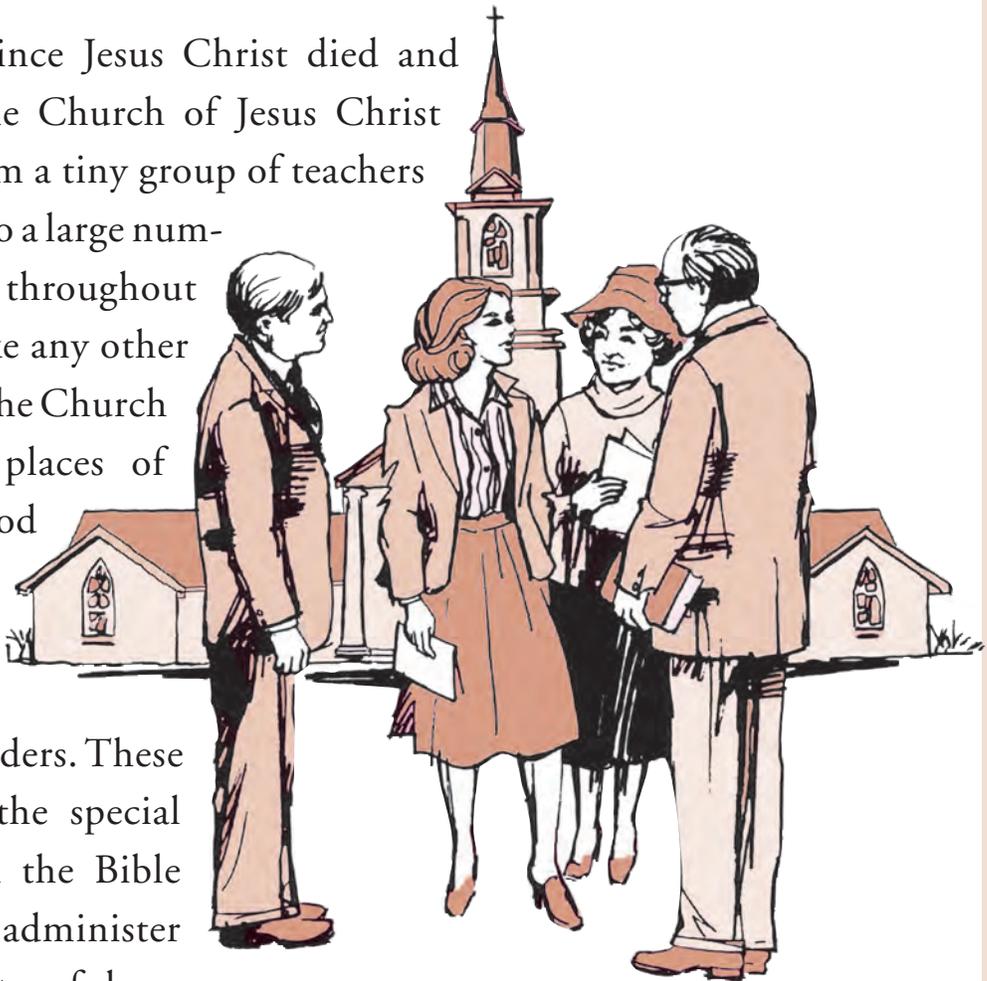
Church Government— God's Plan for the Church

Since the days of Adam and Eve, God has always had people to worship and serve Him. Today every person, young or old, who loves God is a part of His Church. People sometimes make the mistake of thinking that the Church is a building of some kind. The true Church, however, is made up of people who trust in and serve the God of the Bible.

It has always been God's plan that man bring glory to his Creator. After man's fall into sin, however, it became important for man to be under the direc-

tion of spiritual leaders in the Church. Before man's fall, he did not need anyone to help him worship and serve God. After the Fall, it became very important for man to submit to God's plan for helping him to grow in the knowledge and grace of Jesus Christ. This is why God gave His people Church government.

In the days since Jesus Christ died and rose again, the Church of Jesus Christ has grown from a tiny group of teachers and disciples to a large number of people throughout the world. Like any other government, the Church has men in places of leadership. God Himself calls men to serve the Church as pastors or elders. These leaders have the special duty to teach the Bible faithfully and administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Lord has also given the Church deacons. These men take special care of the physical needs of church families as well as the practical needs of the church building.



One of the primary duties of Church government is to make sure that God's people are being equipped to stand against Satan and his kingdom of darkness. In the Bible, God promises to build His Church so that Satan and wicked people shall not overcome it. Jesus Christ, the true head of the Church, once said: "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 6:18b).

Our faith in God is supported and nourished by the work of Church leaders who are themselves faithful to the Word of God. We should be willing to give respect and honor to Church leaders who stand firmly for Christ and His Word.

■ Activity

What is the name of your church?

Who are your church leaders?

Pastors'/Elders' names:

Deacons' names:

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.—Hebrews 13:17

Civil Government—God’s Plan for the Nations

Before Adam and Eve sinned, they were able to practice perfect self-government by God’s grace. They always did what they were told to do, just as God commanded. After our first parents rebelled against their Maker, however, they no longer were naturally good. Obeying God from the heart became impossible for Adam and Eve and all their children after them. They chose to live their lives apart from God’s Law and government. They loved darkness and sin more than their Creator.

In the days of Noah, men were so wicked that God destroyed most of them with a great flood. Afterward, He gave this command: “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed...” (Genesis 9:6a). This established the foundation of civil government.



God gives judges the duty to punish evildoers and protect innocent people.

God in His mercy planned for a special government called civil government to enforce God's Law throughout the nations of the earth. God knew that unless there were rulers who were given power to punish people who



were doing evil acts against their neighbors, the world would soon be like hell itself. Civil government leaders such as presidents or kings, governors, city leaders, and judges have the duty to protect people by punishing those who do evil acts.

All of us have the duty to obey the laws that our civil leaders make, unless such laws clearly go against God's Law. When we follow rules for living made

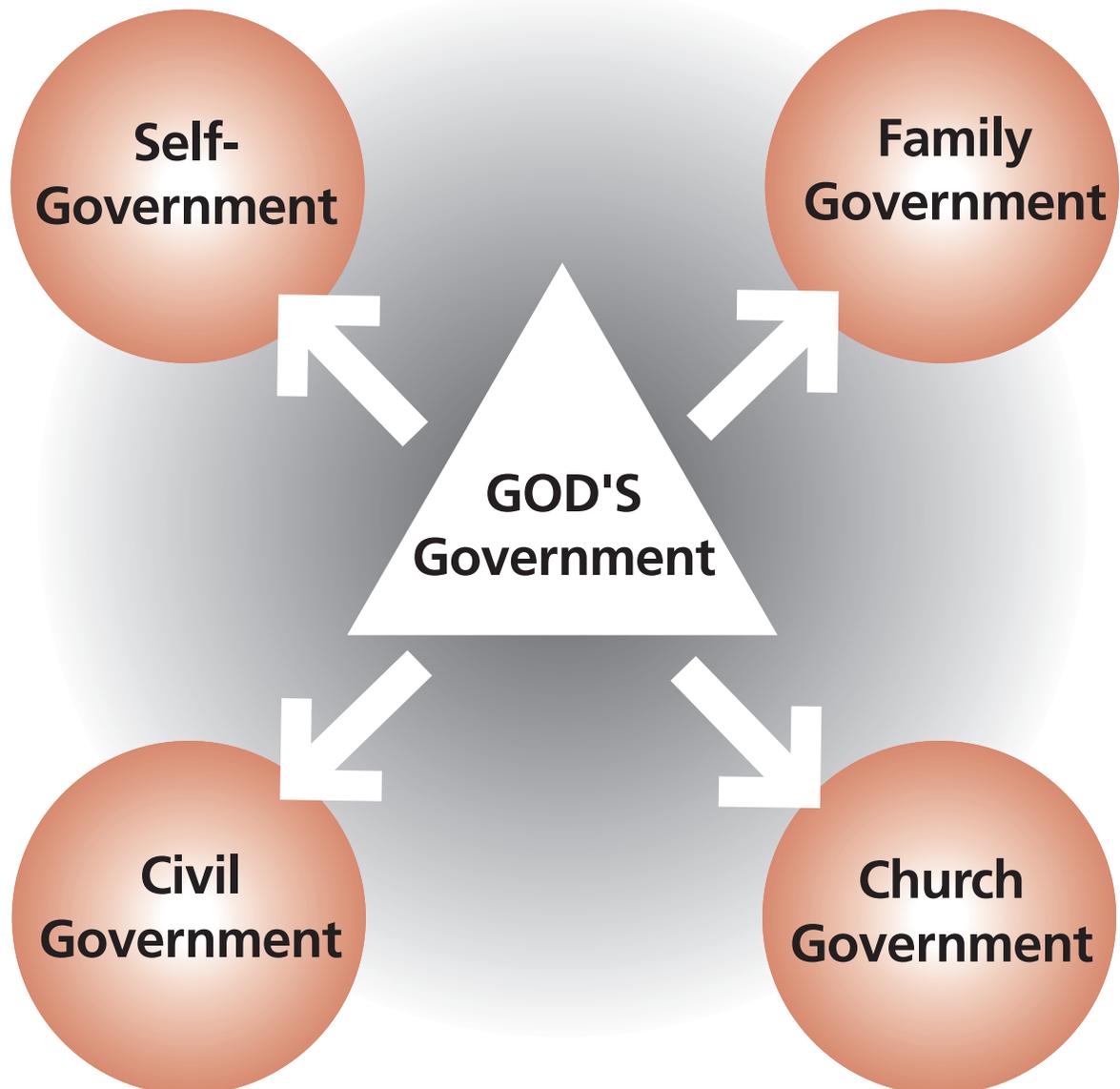
by faithful leaders in civil government, we are honoring the will or plan of God for our lives. The Bible states: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king ... or to governors" (1 Peter 2:13, 14).



Policemen help keep our cities peaceful. They carry guns by God's authority for this purpose.

Without the help of civil government leaders, our cities, towns, and nations would soon be controlled by wicked men who would spread death and sadness. For this reason, God's Law gives great power to civil leaders to punish criminals and lawbreakers.

For example, God has given such leaders the power to kill criminals who wrongfully take the lives of other human beings. Because of this punishment, wicked murderers are discouraged from taking the lives of good people and are forced to live peaceably.



Four Governments Under God

Our wise and wonderful Creator gave mankind four great governments to enable human beings to live together in peace. The goodness and wisdom of God can be seen in His plan to set up godly governments for people to follow. We must all do our part to submit to God's will for ourselves, our families, our churches, and our civil institutions.

■ Activity

Find out the name of the civil leader that is at the head of your local city or town. Write this person's name in the space below.

Read the following Bible verses from 1 Timothy 2 that talk about praying for those in authority. Have you prayed for your civil-government rulers lately? If not, now would be a good time!

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

—1 Timothy 2:1, 2

Make up a special prayer list for civil leaders in your part of the country and use this listing as a reminder to pray each week for civil leaders.

1. _____ _____
2. _____ _____
3. _____ _____
4. _____ _____
5. _____ _____
6. _____ _____
7. _____ _____
8. _____ _____
9. _____ _____
10. _____ _____

Chapter 1 Review

Fill in the blanks with the correct answers.

1. God rules the world He made through _____
special governments.
2. _____ government lets a person follow
God's Law without having to be forced.
3. _____ government gives human beings
the blessings of loving support and protection, as well as
companionship and education.
4. _____ government helps God-fearing
people to strengthen their faith and to stand against Satan.
5. _____ government has been given
the power to force people to live by the laws of God and to
punish evildoers.
6. What Bible verse tells us to pray for our leaders? _____
