

1 Introductory notes

This course has been written for secondary school students, endeavouring to cater for a fairly wide age range. It is intended that younger students with a limited grasp in the area of abstract thinking would be asked to focus more on the factual aspects of the course, whilst older and more mature students would be expected to think through the philosophical aspects raised..

The basic course is suitable for students from very competent Grade 7 (approximately 12 years of age) to Grades 11 and 12 (approximately 17 years). The *Develop a Thesis* section at the end has been set for year 11–12 students.

The course has been written in an attempt to present a biblical perspective on civil government that highlights Jesus Christ as central to all of life. Although the foundations of Australia's civil governmental forms are biblically based, much that occurs in civil government (politics) is not. In that light the course presents the manner in which civil government functions, but seeks to encourage students to consider whether these functions are consistent with biblical principles. It is this analysis of our civil government that is best suited to more mature students. The goal of this course, is to understand the nature, history and function of civil government in Australia, and to encourage students to pursue a better understanding of civil government that would equip students to be part of assisting our nation to fulfil its godly destiny.

LENGTH OF COURSE

The course is designed to be completed in one year, at approximately two hours a week. Younger students will complete the work more quickly, whereas an older student will be able to undertake more comprehensive assignments. The time taken in completing the course will be dependent on the resources you are able to accumulate and how far you wish to extend the student on the range and comprehensiveness of the exercises. It is quite conceivable that many senior students could profitably spend more than one year completing this course.

Teachers should review the content of the course and establish a sequence and a timeframe for their student(s) so that they can plan the completion of exercises. It would be highly desirable for students to visit their state or federal parliament. This would be best appropriated with and through the assistance of your local member who would be invaluable. This will be particularly important for senior students.

USING THE BOOK

There are three different student activities with this course – *Enlarge the Place*, *Write the Vision* and *Develop a Thesis* (see details on page 4 of the student text).



Enlarge the Place

Enlarge the place of your tent, and let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; do not spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes.

ISAIAH 54:2

These *Enlarge the Place* exercises provide extension activities that often can be developed as projects. Many of the activities can consume large amounts of time and energy and will therefore need to be monitored by the teacher. It is recommended that limits be set in terms of time spent or (preferably) the amount to be written.

2 Commentary on the course

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the biblical idea of civil government and concludes with an overview of the structure of government in Australia.

God is government

The first important idea presented is that God is inseparably linked with the idea and practice of government. The heading *God is government* is not incidental, but the very basis of this course. God by virtue of His character is the governor of all that exists; He is the initiator and prescriber of all government, including civil government. In addition to the text refer the student to Isaiah 9:6–7:

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Here the prophet presents the coming Messiah (Jesus) as the governor of all things. This prophetic statement of Isaiah is confirmed by Jesus in ‘The Great Commission’ of Matthew 28:18–20:

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.

There are many other scriptures that speak of Christ’s lordship over all things, but perhaps the best example is found in Colossians 1:15–20.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

This, and other scriptures, can be used in effectively developing a biblical rationale for civil government. Without such a rationale the student will be limited to a deficient and humanistic understanding of civil government that believes civil government is a construct of man’s thinking. These concepts are quite abstract and may prove difficult for younger students to grasp effectively. This is the main reason this course is best suited for Grade 9 to 12 students.

3 Glossary

The glossary from the student text is reproduced here for easy reference.

aboriginal	An original inhabitant
Act	Legislation or statute; the decision of a lawmaking body
adjudicating	Deciding or settling a matter by law or as an authority
advocate	One who pleads in our favour of someone or something – Christ is our advocate
alien	A person who is not a citizen of the country in which he lives; a foreigner
amendment	An article added to a law or set of laws, or put in place of a previous article
annex	To take permanent possession of, as a country taking additional territory
appropriate	To set apart or approve the spending of money for a particular purpose
arbitration	Settlement of a dispute by a person or persons to whom the conflicting parties agree to refer it for decision; mediation
attainted	Found guilty of a crime, involving loss of civil privileges
bankrupt	The financial state of a person or business when legally declared unable to pay one's debts
barrister	A lawyer who is qualified to plead in a court of law
bicameral	Consisting of two houses or legislative bodies
bill	A written proposal for legislation, prepared to be presented in parliament
bounties	Bonuses or gifts paid by the government
Cabinet	The group of senior ministers in a government
census	Gathering of details about the population; an official count of the people
certified	Information declared true and correct by an official spoken, written, or printed statement
checks and balances	Safeguards built into a system to avoid any inappropriate action by setting up limits on power or balancing one institution's powers against another
colony	A group of emigrants settled abroad and the new territory claimed and settled by them
commission	A body of people appointed to perform certain prescribed duties and to report on their findings
committee	A group of people set aside to complete a particular task
common law	A body of law created by judges by virtue of being stated in written opinions. It functions through the doctrine of Precedent; a body of rules developed by the courts to guide them in their application of the common law.

4 Answers to written exercises

The exercises are designed to provide students with many opportunities for both short answers as well as the development of essay writing skills. In addition, we would encourage discussion of some of the exercises with the students.

There are three different student activities with this course – *Enlarge the Place*, *Write the Vision* and *Develop a Thesis* (see details in the introduction of this book).

Where a question gives rise to an essay style answer it would be wise to adjust the length to suit the student's ability. For example, a Grade 7 student may be asked to write a half-page (approximately 200 words) on an exercise, whereas a senior student may be asked to write two to three pages (800–1,200 words) on the same exercise. Having reviewed the course and determined the time to be spent (1–2 years), you will be able to be selective as to which exercises you set and the length of answers you will expect. Exercises can be changed or adapted to suit your purposes.

There is no obligation to answer all the questions, as the exercises have been set to provide more than adequate scope for assessing the student's grasp of the subject.

Answers to all exercises are presented in the following section. Where a longer essay type answer is required we have given an outline of ideas that could be included in the answer. Additional comments that may be helpful in your assessment of the student's work are also included, indicated with an arrow (➔).

Suggested marks are listed following the *Write the Vision* exercises. The marks indicate the value of a particular exercise in comparison with others. They are suggestions only and you may wish to put more or less emphasis on particular exercises.

Students are asked to answer all the exercises they do in full sentences, to encourage the development of orderly and full thought. By contrast, single word or multiple-choice exercises simply test information retention.



ENLARGE THE PLACE

Chapter 1 – Introduction

- 1 Study and write a brief summary of the following passages that teach about the family:
Deuteronomy 6:4–8; Ephesians 5:22–6:4; Colossians 3:18–21.

These are the foundational passages from which can be built a biblical position on families and the roles of the various members. Students should explore the role of fathers, mothers and children.

- 2 Explore the government of your church and write a brief essay on its structure and comment on how effective you perceive it to be in the members lives, and in its prophetic voice to the community.

The student should identify the type of government in their church (episcopal, presbyterian, democratic, etc.) and identify how that form of government is implemented. Their assessment of the effectiveness of the government should be from their own observations and experiences.



WRITE THE VISION

Set A

1 Explain Dr Glenn Martin's definition of civil government.

Dr Glenn Martin's definition of civil government makes it clear that civil government is not the result of man's deliberation, but is the gift of God to mankind. Dr Martin then speaks of 'orderly procedure', which is another way of saying 'living at peace with one another'. It is the function of administering justice in the society. He mentions a fallen society because without sin there would be no injustice. It is necessary to have an instrument of justice as man in sin will not be consistently just to his fellow man without some form of external government.

+ The idea of civil government being God's instrument for justice is found in Romans 13:1–7.

6 MARKS

2 What do you think is meant by the heading *God is government*?

Government is the exercise of authority and as God has all authority (Matthew 28:18–20), God is government. He is the governor of all things and all levels and types of government are legally under His control.

+ This is a question of God's authority and sovereignty. The aim is to help students work from the biblical notion of God's authority to be able to make application of this principle in all areas of life; in this case to civil government. The fundamental message of Romans 13:1–7 is that God is the authority over all governments of men whether they recognise Him or not.

6 MARKS

3 What are the four forms of government, given to man by God's authority?

The four forms of government given by God's authority to mankind are individual (self) government, family government, church and civil government.

+ The expectation is that the student recognises that authority comes from God and is delegated as 'spheres of authority' to man.

4 MARKS

4 What are the three levels of civil government in Australia?

The three levels of government in Australia are local, state and federal (commonwealth).

+ Note we have used the term *level* for the different types of civil government and *form* for the four forms of government, from the individual through to the state. Make an effort to emphasise this differentiation between *level* and *form* as it could cause some confusion for students, not in terms of understanding, but in terms of using a consistent terminology.

3 MARKS