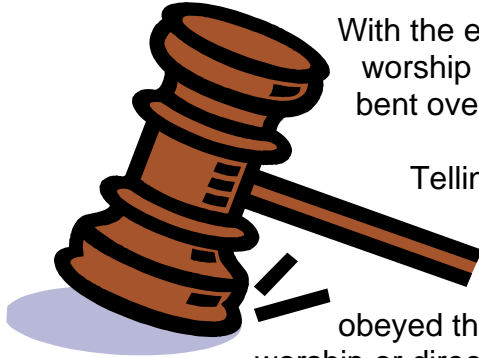


Obeying the Laws

Georgi Vins, a pastor in Russia before the fall of Soviet Communism, was severely persecuted for his faith. He was hounded by the authorities, and eventually put in prison, for his involvement in a network of independent Baptist churches. But no matter how severe the repression and mistreatment became, he and his fellow Christians determined they were going to obey every single law on the Russian books, just or unjust.



With the exception of laws that would force them to cease worship or disobey God's Word, these brave pastors bent over backward to be good citizens.

Telling their story, Dr. David Jeremiah, senior pastor of the Shadow Mountain Community Church in San Diego, Calif., writes in his book *Turning Points*: "Even in concentration camps, they obeyed the rules unless these rules conflicted with their worship or directly countermanded a truth in the Word of God. Their example made them heroes, not only among the Christians but among the citizens of Russia. In the eyes of the world, the cause of Christ was advanced.

"Both Peter and Paul told their readers – who were living under the tyranny of the Roman government – to obey the laws of the land, respect civil authority, and pay their taxes (Romans 13:1; 1 Peter 2:13). God ordained human government for our good, and He desires us to obey even those laws that we dislike. He will bless us as we do so."

Following an agreement between Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev and U.S. President Jimmy Carter, Vins and his family were expelled from the Soviet Union in 1979 with a group of other dissidents, Alexander Ginzburg, Eduard Kuznetsov, Mark Dymshits and Valentin Moroz, in exchange for two convicted Soviet spies.

Vins died in Elkhart, Ind., in 1998, but his example lives on. We are to be obedient to those in authority over us as he was. It was true in the days of Peter and Paul, and it is just as correct for our time.

– Beecher Hunter