

THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE BELIEVER

By Sherry Cumby

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Through Jesus Christ, the King of the Jews and the High Priest on the order of Melchizedek, believers have Him as the Advocate before our Father. The "priesthood of the believer" was the third major principle of the Reformation. According to the Scriptures, the early church did not practice that believers went before a priest as a mediator thus support for such a doctrine was unbiblical and without merit. Also, they found no Scripture supporting the claim of secular power of the clergy¹. The priesthood of every believer broke down the dividing wall erected by the Catholic Church separating the spiritual/priests and lay. The Reformists

saw from Scripture that for mankind "*there is one gospel, one justification by faith, one status before God common to all men and women, clergy and laity*", as reported by Dr. Dowley². The Protestants saw the Word of God as the authority for all doctrine, for all mankind, and did not support an exclusive priesthood.

The calling of God upon individuals gave them the responsibility to read and study the Word of God that had been miraculously provided for them in their own language. Regardless of the work in life, all had a responsibility to do the job as unto God for His glory and honor. This idea brought about the understanding that Christians should be about their Father's business not only in the church but in the political arena from the village to the top leadership. This idea flourished and influenced many learned people to be involved in forming the democratic states of Europe and the United States of America. One Scripture that could have been used to build their case was penned by John the Revelator:

Revelation 1:6: "...and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Bibliography (footnote): Both footnotes from Tim Dooley, *Introduction to THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY*, Fortress Press, pg. 353.