

CONCERNING CHRISTIANS' CIVIC DUTY

Affirmations and Denials (Topic #14)

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Preamble:

From the beginning of time, people have gathered together in groups, starting with two in the Garden, developing into larger family groups, and finally into nations. With marvelous forethought, God has provided standards for this kind of interpersonal conduct, both for families and for venues we might label as civic arenas. These standards are found most concisely in the Decalogue given to Moses, but they are also interspersed throughout all of the Bible. The Bible therefore is our textbook for civic action. It contains principles that are valid and workable for all people, all cultures, and all time. It must be society's starting point today.

Heroes of the Church in past centuries have recognized there are different jurisdictions within society, each being directly accountable to God, and each of which has certain boundaries and its own governmental structure. Those jurisdictions are: Self Government, Family Government, Ecclesiastical Government, and Civil (state) Government. Tyranny arises whenever any one of these jurisdictions steps beyond its own God-given boundaries and interferes unbiblically with the legitimate action of any of the other jurisdictions.

Civic actions are relevant to all members of the group, because no one in society can function long without affecting others. Choices have consequences, not only for one's self, but for others also. In society we live with and in dependence on others. In order to function in this relationship, we need mutually acceptable rules to ensure that our actions are relatively predictable and fair. (I Cor 12:12-31; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17).

The following statements of affirmation and denial are submitted in the context of the Coalition on Revival's (COR's) Foundation Documents, including specifically (1) The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, (2) the 42 Articles of Essentials of a Christian World View, and (3) the Articles of Affirmation and Denial Concerning the Kingdom of God. This document also is consistent with the principles of the COR Worldview Documents dealing with Law, Government, and Political Action.

-- Statements of Affirmation and Denial follow --

Statements of Affirmation and Denial on the Christians' Civic Duty

Article I

We affirm that God created the family as the foundation of society. (Family is defined here as single- or multi-generational units of persons related by blood, heterosexual marriage, or adoption.)¹

We deny that healthy culture or society can be nurtured or maintained while civil government is indifferent or antagonistic toward the family, or when there is a governmental preference toward the individual which does not simultaneously maintain the integrity of the family.

1. Gen. 1:27; 2:22-24; 5:2; Psalm 127:1-5; 128:1-6; Eze. 22:7; Mat. 19:4-6; Eph. 5:21-6:3; Mal. 2:16; 1Cor. 7:10-11; 1 Tim. 3:5; 5:8

Article II

We affirm that it is the duty of civil government to strengthen and defend the family.¹

We deny that civil government has a right to act in any way detrimental to the health and stability of the family.

1. Deut. 6:4-9; Rom. 13:1-4; Eph. 5:22-25; Jam. 4:17

Article III

We affirm that the principle of civil government is a divinely established sphere, and that all citizens, especially Christians, have a stewardship role in civil government.¹

We deny that civil government is, in itself, evil, or that Christians should avoid involvement in it.

1. Mat. 22:17-21; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17; Rev 1:5

Article IV

We affirm that citizens under any government are accountable to God and their fellow citizens for the preservation and increase of justice, righteousness, mercy, and national stability.¹

We deny that in a republic it is morally acceptable for the citizenry to leave government in the hands of the elite or in the hands of politicians.

1. Exo. 22:21-22; Isa. 1:16-17, 23; 29:13-21; 59:1-19; Jer. 5:28-29; 7:5-7; 22:1-3; 32:17-19; Zeph. 3:1-8; Zech. 7:9-10; Mal. 3:5; Mat. 12:18 with 28:20; 23:23; 1 Tim. 1:8-11

Article V

We affirm that in a society based upon representative government citizens share responsibility for the actions of their leaders.

We deny that in a society based upon representative government the citizenry is held blameless for the actions of those whom they elect.

- Josh. 7:24-25; Dan. 9:5-6, 8; Zeph. 3:1-8; Rom. 5:12-19

Article VI

We affirm that God holds all persons, especially Christians, responsible to establish and maintain righteous civil government.¹

We deny that Christians may avoid involvement in civil government and remain blameless.

1. Exo. 22:21-22; Isa. 1:16-17, 23; Jer. 5:28-29; 7:5-7; 22:1-3; Zeph. 3:1-8; Zech. 7:9-10; Mal. 3:5; Mat. 12:18 with 28:20; 23:23; Rom. 12:18, 21

Article VII

We affirm that any and all concepts of law and civil government have their basis in ideological principles which are moral and religious.¹

We deny that it is possible for either law or civil government to be strictly secular or divorced from ideologies which, in their essence, are religious and moral.

1. Gen. 1:27 with Rom. 1:18-22; Exo. 20:2 as a preface of Exo. 20:3-17; Rom. 13:3-4; Micah 6:16

Article VIII

We affirm that every law and every concept of civil government is the implementation of a group's or individual's religious and moral ideology.¹

We deny that either law or civil government exist apart from religious and moral ideologies. We further deny that either law or civil government are amoral, or non-religious.

1. (See VII¹)

Article IX

We affirm every civil government holds some single religious and moral ideology above other competing ideologies, and is thus partial to that reigning ideology.¹

We deny that it is possible for all religious and moral principles to be represented equally by any civil government, or that civil government is able to function value-neutral.

1. Gen. 1:27 with Rom. 1:18-22; Lev. 18:2-4; Psa. 115:2-8; Isa. 44:9-20; Hab. 2:18-20; 2 Thes. 2:3-4

Article X

We affirm that God, in the Bible, teaches principles related to man's civic responsibilities and rights, and that these precepts apply to all men, Christian and non-Christian.¹

We deny that any man is morally free to govern or enact laws at variance with the truth of the Bible.

1. (These things are evident in the biblical passages listed under the other "Articles.")

Article XI

We affirm that civil government will function most beneficially for all citizens when it is based on Biblical principles.¹

We deny that there are principles superior to those found in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible on which civil government and civilization may be founded.

1. Deu. 4:5-8; 29:18-28; Psa. 19:7-9; 82:1-8; 89:14; 119:144, 160, 172; Ezek. 33:10-19; Jonah 3:6-10; Micah 6:8-16; Zech. 5:3-4

Article XII

We affirm that Jesus Christ, to whom all authority in Heaven and in Earth is given, has the supreme right to rule in every earthly state and institution by submission of its people and civil government to the principles of the Bible in both the Old and New Testaments.¹

We deny that any man or system has a lawful or moral right to cast off the government of Jesus Christ, or to rule over men in either their consciences or their bodies in opposition to the principles of the Bible, or Jesus Christ.²

1. Psa. 2:1-12; 72:8; 110:1-7; Mat. 28:18; Luke 19:11-27; Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 1:16-18; 3:17; Rev. 1:5
2. Acts 4:19-20; 5:20; Rom. 13:4

Article XIII

We affirm that God created church and state as separate entities.¹

We deny that either the Church should rule over the state, or that the state should rule over the Church.

1. Deu. 31:9; Josh. 8:33; 20:4; 2 Chron. 26:17-20; Mat. 22:21; Acts 4:19-20; 5:20; Rom. 13:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:13-17

Article XIV

We affirm that the Church should influence the state toward moral goodness, justice, and mercy, and should hold the state accountable to the principles of the Bible.¹

We deny that the Church has no duty or right to speak into the civil sphere, and *We deny* that it is moral for the Church to remain silent while civil government violates biblical principles.

1. Deu. 17:18-20; Prov. 24:11-12; Jer. 4:1-2; 12:14-17; 22:1-5; Mal. 2:7-9; 3:13-18; Rom. 13:4; 2:12-16; 1 Tim. 1:8-11; Rev. 1:5

(Continued on page 5)

Article XV

We affirm that the Great Commission includes the mandate to disciple all nations into Christianity, so that both its institutions and its people come into agreement with biblical concepts of civil government.¹

We deny that the Great Commission includes no mandate to influence the civil realm toward biblical principles and activities.

1. Isa. 2:1-4; 42:5-8 with Acts 13:47; Isa. 45:22-24; Hab. 2:13-14; Mat. 12:18 with 28:18-20

Article XVI

We affirm that the Church is responsible to teach its people principles of biblical civil government, and encourage their involvement in civil government to the degree of their individual callings.¹

We deny that the teaching responsibilities of the Church can be fully discharged without Biblical instruction in the principles and duties of a Christian's participation in civic responsibilities under Christ's Lordship.

1. Lev. 20:22-23; Deu. 1:15-17; 5:31; 6:1, 7; 11:19; 1 Pet. 4:11; Rev. 1:5

Article XVII

We affirm that Christians should seek political office at every level in order to help guide their nation toward Christian principles.¹

We deny that every Christian should seek political office, or that Christians who are elected should seek to aggrandize power for personal gain rather than Christian principles.

1. Esther 10:3; Pro. 14:34; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 1 Tim. 2:1-4

Article XVIII

We affirm that all men are morally obligated to obey the laws of God rather than the laws of man when they conflict.¹

We deny that anyone is released from moral obligation to God's laws by submitting himself to man's law.

1. Exodus 1:15-21; Daniel 3:16-18; 6:6-10; Acts 4:19-20; 5:29