

DECLARATION OF FAITH CONCERNING CHURCH AND NATION

(See Book of Forms Appendix E for official text; Biblical references listed below.)

The Lordship of Christ in Church and State

1. The one Holy Triune God, sovereign Creator and Redeemer, has declared and established his kingdom over all powers in heaven and earth. By the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and by his exaltation to the right hand of the Father, all things have been made subject to Him, so that even age-long evil is overruled for good. We worship and obey Jesus Christ as Lord of lords and King of kings, Judge and Governor among the nations. He is both Head of the Church and Head of the Civil State, although their functions under him are to be differentiated, and their relationships to him are not to be confused.

The Respective Functions of Church and State

2. Jesus Christ, in the administration of his Father's will, employs all the heavenly and earthly powers he may choose to serve Him. He employs the Church and the Civil State, entrusting to each its own distinctive function. He has ordained the Church to serve him in the proclamation of his word, in the administration of his sacraments, and in the life of faith which works by love. He has also in his grace ordained the State to serve him in the administration of his justice and benevolence, by discerning, formulating, and enforcing, such laws and policies as will promote the well-being of all its citizens and curb license, discord, and destitution.

The Authority of the State

3. Christ, the eternal Word of God, through Whom all things consist and from Whom by the Holy Spirit all men receive their gifts and powers, calls and appoints men to the offices of civil government. He commissions the civil authorities with the right and duty of using force under law against internal disorder and external aggression.

The Stewardship of Power

4. The righteousness of God, which came to decisive triumph in the cross and resurrection of Christ, is the sole foundation of national justice, development, and destiny. Every organ of power in the Nation, whether cultural, political, or economic, is a stewardship under Christ, and can properly function only by obedience to his revealed word. Every abuse of power constitutes a breach of trust, destructive to the abuser and injurious to the glory of God among his creatures.

The Limits of Earthly Authority

5. It is high treason against the Lord Jesus, and deadly both for the Church and for the Nation, to attribute to any man, group, or institution, the total power that belongs to Him. God alone is absolute Lord of the bodies and consciences of men, and he demands that we obey him against all authorities, whether civil or ecclesiastical, whenever they claim absolute power, especially the power to control men's thinking on right and wrong.

The Church and Tyranny

6. It is the Church's duty to denounce and resist every form of tyranny, political, economic, or ecclesiastical, especially when it becomes totalitarian. A citizen is not barred from disowning any government or organ of power which usurps the sovereignty of Jesus Christ, and indeed may be obliged by God's word to rebel against it. But if involved in such action, the Church must remember that the weapons of her warfare are finally out of this world. Led by the Holy Spirit she will in any situation bear public witness to the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ and to the freedom of all men in Him.

The Relation of Church and State

7. The Church and State are intimately related, with manifold overlying concerns and common responsibility to their Lord. Their true relationship derives from the subordination of each to Jesus Christ. Each is bound to aid the other according to its appointed power and functions, but neither is given any right thereby to attempt domination over the other. We reject any doctrine which misconceives the Church as the religious agent of the State. We reject any doctrine which misconceives the State as the political instrument of the Church. We reject all doctrines which assume, whether on sectarian or on secular grounds that the Church's life should be or can be completely dissociated from the life of the Civil State.

The Church's Service to the State

8. The Church must not merge or confuse her Gospel with any political, economic, cultural, or nationalistic creed. At the same time the Church may not hold aloof from the affairs of the Nation, whether the authorities be of

the faith or against it, for she must fulfill the ministry laid upon her by her Lord who became one with man for man's redemption. She owes a manifold service to the State. Her preaching, sacraments, and discipline confront the Nation with Christ's judgment and grace. She offers thanksgiving and supplication to God on behalf of all men, with particular intercession for those in authority, praying that the overruling power of the Holy Spirit may fructify what is good and uproot what is evil in national and international life. In discharging her commission to evangelize she promotes righteousness and peace among men. As her Lord may lay it upon her, she declares and commits herself to his will by public proclamations of her courts or agents. In fulfillment of the law of Christ, she engages in special work of Christian love. Her members take full share as their Christian calling in commerce, politics, and other social action.

The Christian's Civil Duty

9. Christians must always do their utmost to honour the civil laws, and to fulfil all statutory obligations whether financial or personal, as unto Christ the Head. Nevertheless, no citizen is thereby relieved of his constant responsibility to work for the remedy of any unjust statute, or iniquitous assessment, or violation of conscience.

The Civil Government's Duty Toward the Church

10. In its ordained service of God, the State has a three-fold duty to the Church. It has the duty of establishing public peace and providing protection, guarding impartially the rights of every citizen. It owes to the Church in all her branches, without partiality, the recognition of her office and of her consequent right to due resources, time and opportunity, for the public worship of God, for the education of her children in his truth, and for the evangelizing of the Nation. It must pay serious attention whenever its office-bearers are addressed by the Church in the name of the Lord Jesus concerning the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Reformation by the Word of God

11. During the present age, while the Lordship of Christ is not yet openly disclosed nor perfectly acknowledged, men are beset by sin in every private and public relation. Our existence in this world is continually threatened by anxiety, covetousness, imperfect justice, and proneness to corruption. The Civil State and the Church are constantly in need of reformation by the Word of God. Wherefore it behooves all civil and ecclesiastical persons to seek the grace of Christ without which they cannot rightly know or do his will.

The Final Manifestation of Christ's Dominion

12. The Lordship of Christ, in the midst of the evil and sorrow of this present world, must be discerned by faith, with the full assurance of our hope in Him. He is coming again for the healing of the nations and the perfecting of the Church. In that day when he reveals the New Jerusalem, his sovereign dominion over the universe will be made openly visible to all, causing every knee to bow and every tongue to confess that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, to the glory of God the Father.

Biblical References

1. The Lordship of Christ in Church and State

Hebrews 1:1-2:10; Isaiah 44:24-28; Acts 4:24-28; cf. Psalm 2; Daniel 7:13-14, 27; Zechariah 9:9-10; Matthew 28:18; Luke 1:31-35; Isaiah 52:13-53; 12; Romans 14:9-12; Colossians 2:15; Philippians 2:5-11; Acts 2:22-36; I Corinthians 15:24-28; cf. Psalm 100; I Peter 3:21-22; Romans 8:18-23, 31-39; I Timothy 6:13-16; Revelation 1:5; 11:15-18; 17:12-14; 19:11-16; Psalm 22:28; Ephesians 1:10-11, 19-23; Colossians 2:10; Matthew 28:19-20; Isaiah 10:5-19; 45; Jeremiah 27:1-11.

2. The Respective Functions of Church and State

John 3:35; I Corinthians 15:20-28; Jeremiah 1:9-10; Deuteronomy 4:32-40; Isaiah 45:1-7; John 19:11; Ezekiel 33:1-9; Matthew 16:18-19; 28:18-20; II Timothy 4:1-5; James 2:14-17; Romans 13:1-7; Luke 3:12-14; Genesis 45:5-8; I Kings 3:3-28; I Timothy 2:1-2; Amos, e.g. 2:6-8; 5:11-12, 24; 8:4-8.

3. The Authority of the State

John 1:1ff.; cf. Psalm 33:6; Hebrews 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17; Ephesians 1:3-14; Genesis 45:5-8; Jeremiah 27:5-11; Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 2:21; Isaiah 10:5ff; 45:1-6; Romans 13:3-4; Nehemiah 4:7-20.

4. The Stewardship of Power

Colossians 2:14-15; I John 5:4-5; Revelation 1:18; Hebrews 1:3, 8-9; Psalm 72:1-4; Romans 13:1, 6-7; Nehemiah 5:15; Matthew 24:45-25:30; John 12:35-36; Romans 14:23b; Deuteronomy 28:58-68; Daniel 5:17-28; Deuteronomy 8:11-20; Acts 12:20-23.

5. The Limits of Earthly Authority

II Thessalonians 2, esp. vss. 3-4; Acts 4:23-30; cf. Psalm 2; Revelation 13 and 14:9-11; 17:13-14; Romans 14:7-9; I Corinthians 4:1-5; 6:15-20; John 5:22-23; James 4:12; Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-32; Daniel 3; I Kings 22:13-14; Jeremiah 26.

6. The Church and Tyranny

II Samuel 12:1-14; I Kings 21; Amos 7:10-17; Daniel 3:8-18; Exodus 1:17; I Kings 11:26-40; II Kings 9; Acts 4:18-20; 5:25-32; Matthew 4:1-11; 10:16-22; 26:51-54; II Corinthians 4:7-11, 10:3-5; II Kings 6:15-17; Acts 2:32-36, 5:25-32, 7:51-60; 26; James 5:1-11; II Timothy 2:8-9.

7. The Relation of Church and State

Amos 7:10-15; Acts 22:22-29; Deuteronomy 8; Malachi 2:10-16; Jeremiah 1, esp. vss. 5, 9-10; Matthew 28:18-20; Daniel 3:16-18; I Timothy 2:1-5; Matthew 22:15-22; Luke 12:13-14; John 18:28-37; Matthew 5:13-16; 17:24-27.

8. The Church's Service to the State

Mark 12:28-34; cf. Exodus 20; Matthew 6:24; Daniel 3; 6; The Prophets, passim, e.g., Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah; Romans 13:1-6; I Peter 2:12ff.; Matthew 25:31-46; Romans 13:7-14; Matthew 5:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5; Acts 3:12-21; I Peter 2:11-12; 4:1-5; I Timothy 2:1-2; Daniel 9:9-19; II Chronicles 6:21-40; 7:14; Amos 5:14-24; II Corinthians 5:14-21; Acts 4:13-20; II Samuel 12:1-15a; II Corinthians 8:1-15; Philippians 4:10-17; Luke 10:25-37; Luke 3:10-14; John 17:15-18; Ephesians 6:5-9.

9. The Christian's Civil Duty

I Peter 2:13-25; Titus 3:1-2; Romans 13:5-10; Mark 12:14-17; Acts 5:27-29; Isaiah 1:17; Amos 5:14-15; Micah 6:6-8; Esther 4:12-14.

10. The Civil Government's Duty Toward the Church

Acts 19:28-41; 21:30-39; 22:24-29; Exodus 5:1-4; Ezra 7:11-25; Acts 25, 26.

11. Reformation by the Word of God

II Thessalonians 2:1-12; Mark 13:21-23; Luke 18:8b; II Corinthians 4:3-18; Romans 1:18-32; 3:9-18; 7:15-25; Jeremiah 17:9; I Kings 12:25-33; 13:33-34; James 4:1-3; 5:1-6; Isaiah 55, 59; Hebrews 4:12-13; John 12:25-26, 35-50.

12. The Final Manifestation of Christ's Dominion

John 5:17-29; I Corinthians 12:26; Hebrews 10:37-12:3; Romans 8:18-25; I John 3:2-3; Colossians 3:3-4; Acts 1:11; II Peter 3; Luke 12:35-40; Revelation 7:9-17; 22:1-2; Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 21; Romans 2:11-16; Philippians 2:10-11; Revelation 1:7-8; 5:11-14; 19:11-16; I Corinthians 15:20-28.