

Statement on the Political Responsibility of Mitchell Road Presbyterian Church

We, the members of Mitchell Road Presbyterian Church affirm these truths:

That the Holy Scripture, comprised of the books of the Old and New Testaments, is the written Word of God which alone reveals God's will for His Church; that all these sixty-six books of the Bible are inspired by God and are given to the Church as the only rule of faith and life. [1]

That the visible church is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ; that it consists of those persons who are gathered into one body under Christ the head, with those who profess true religion, and all of them having joined together into particular churches, one of which is Mitchell Road Presbyterian Church. [2]

That the sole functions of the church, as a kingdom and government distinct from the civil commonwealth, are to proclaim, to administer, and to enforce the law of Christ which is revealed in the Bible; that the power of the church is ecclesiastical and exclusively spiritual; that it derives its authority from Christ, who is the king of the church, and who has given to His church divine revelation, which is the Holy Scripture, as the only rule of faith and life. [3]

That God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, has ordained civil authorities to be over the people under Him for His own glory, and the public good; that to this end He has armed them with the power of the sword, to defend and encourage those who are good, and to punish wrongdoers; and that the state must determine its own structure and the practical use of its power by human reason through the course of providential events. [4]

That the church has no right to construct or modify a government for the state, and the state has no right to frame a creed or polity for the church; that it is, rather, the duty of civil authorities to see that no one is abused, injured, or insulted on account of his religious faith or lack thereof; and that it is the duty of all who are members of the visible church to pray for those in authority, to honor them, to pay them taxes and whatever is owed them, to obey their lawful commands which in no way oppose God's law, and to be subject to them for conscience's sake. [5]

That the members of Mitchell Road Presbyterian Church, who are lawful citizens of the State of South Carolina and of the United States of America, enjoy an historically unparalleled privilege to participate freely in the establishment of their own civil government, with its laws and administration, through their right to vote and their right to accept and execute offices of civil authority; that as God gives them opportunity, it is their Christian duty to exercise their civil privilege to support true religion, justice, and peace, according to the beneficial laws of each government which in no way oppose God's law; that this civil privilege is vested in them individually and in no way adheres to the visible church of which they are members. [6]

Statement on the Political Responsibility of Mitchell Road Presbyterian Church

We, the members of Mitchell Road Presbyterian Church, in order that we may practically apply the truths we affirm, commit ourselves to these endeavors:

To use our stated worship services and all our other ministries to proclaim that Christ freely forgives and accepts everyone who believes the gospel and turn to Him; to proclaim that Christ will transform everyone who turns to Him, making them new men, and restoring them so that they will increasingly, from their hearts, obey the law of Christ; to proclaim that from that time appointed by God the Father, everyone who has turned to Christ will enjoy being present with Christ for eternity; and to proclaim that Christ will visibly return to the earth, and, as king over all creation, He will govern with righteousness and justice, so that finally there will be peace on earth. [7]

To fulfill the duty Christ has given to His body now on the earth, which is the church, to administer and enforce the law of Christ among the citizens of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, by teaching, reproof, correcting and training them to walk by the Spirit so that they will truly love the Lord their God with all their heart and soul and mind, and their neighbors as themselves. [8]

To pray for our nation and its leaders, in as much as God has ordained civil authorities to be over the people under Him for His own glory, and the public good; to submit to all lawful commands of all lawful governing authorities which in no way oppose God's law; and to honor all those in authority over us; and especially to honor those who now serve or have served defending our cherished civil freedoms. [9]

To teach each Christian that it is his responsibility to decide which proposed legislation, candidates for office, or political party best supports true religion, justice, and peace; to teach that all such decisions must be made with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to enlighten their conscience by the Word of God; to teach that such matters of conscience do not fall within the authority of the visible church; and to make it very clear that such matters of conscience are not in any way a condition of fellowship with other believers at Mitchell Road Presbyterian Church. [10]

To remind those who serve in public office that civil government has its authority from God and, therefore, those who hold public office will surely answer to God for their exercise of that authority; to remind the civil government that it must do what God commands, that it must not do what God forbids, but that it may do whatever else is not forbidden; and should the civil government fail in its duties to God, to publicly make that indiscretion known on the basis of God's Word. [11]

And finally, in committing ourselves to a practical application of these truths we, the members of Mitchell Road Presbyterian Church, will also refrain from:

Using our stated worship services for patriotic rallies, honor guard ceremonies, political action statements, or as a forum for the support of political candidates; conducting voter registration, providing forms for voter registration, or distributing voter guides; and from all other political activities which are the duties and privileges of individual citizens but are not functions of the church.

Statement on the Political Responsibility of Mitchell Road Presbyterian Church

[1] Luke 16:29, 31; Luke 24:27, 44; 2 Tim. 3:15–16;
Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF), Chapter 1, 2;
Book of Church Order (BCO), Preface II, 7

[2] Eph. 1:10, 22–23; Eph. 5:23, 27, 32; Col. 1:18
1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Cor. 12:12–13; Ps. 2:8; Rev.7:9; Rom. 15:9–12
1 Cor. 7:14; Acts 2:39; Gen. 17:7–12; Ezek. 16:20–21; Rom. 11:16
WCF 25, 1, 2
BCO Part I, Chapter 1, §1-2, §1-3

[3] Eph 4:11-14; I Tim 2:1-2; Matt 22:21
BCO Part 1, Chapter 3, 3-3, 3-4

[4] Rom. 13:1–4; 1 Pet. 2:13–14
WCF 23, 1

[5] I Tim 2:1-2; Matt 22:21, Romans 13:6-7
BCO Part I, Chapter 3, 3-4

[6] Jer. 29:7; Gen. 41:39–43; Neh.12:26; Neh. 13:15–31; Dan. 2:48–49; Prov. 8:15–16; Rom.
13:1–4; Ps. 2:10–12

1 Tim. 2:2; Ps.82:3–4; 2 Sam. 23:3; 1 Pet. 2:13; Luke 3:14.; Rom. 13:4; Matt. 8:9–10; Acts 10:1–
2; 2 Chron. 26:18; Matt.18:17; Matt.16:19; 1 Cor. 12:28–29; Eph. 4:11–12; 1 Cor. 4:1–2; Rom.
10:15; Heb. 5:4; John 18:36; Acts 5:29; Eph. 4:11–12; Isa. 49:23; Rom. 13:1–6; Ps. 105:15; Rom.
13:4

1 Tim. 2:1–3; 1 Pet. 2:17; Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:6–7; Rom. 13:6–7; Rom. 13:5; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet.
2:13–16; Rom. 13:1; Acts 25:9–11; 2 Pet. 2:1, 10–11; Jude 8–11; Mark 10:42–44; Matt. 23:8–12;
2 Tim. 2:24; 1 Pet. 5:3

WCF 23, 2, 3, 4

[7] Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14

John 5:24; John 6:37, 40

II Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:4; Rom. 7:6; Ezek. 36:26-27; Jer. 31:33

Statement on the Political Responsibility of Mitchell Road Presbyterian Church

John 14:3; John 17:24; I Thess. 4:17

Matt. 26:64; Ps. 45:6; Heb 1:8; Is 14:5-7, Is 42:1

[8] II Timothy 4:2; Galatians 5:16, 25; Luke 10:27, Galatians 5:14; Romans 13:9-10

[9] I Timothy 2:1-3; Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-15

[10] Jer. 29:7; Colossians 3:14,15, Romans 14:1; Romans 15:7

[11] John Locke, *First Tract on Government* - Locke Political Essays, Cambridge University Press 1997 p. 10, 11 "...those indifferent things that God hath not forbid or commanded, his vicegerent may, having no other rule to direct his commands than every single person hath for his actions, viz.: the law of God; and it will be granted that the people have but a poor pretence to liberty in indifferent things..." "That wherever God hath made known his will either by the discoveries of reason, usually called the law of nature, or the revelations of his word, there is nothing left man but submission and obedience, and all things within the compass of this law are necessarily and indispensably good or evil."