



70th General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church **RESOLUTION**

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Resolution 70:10

An Argument Regarding the Duty of Government to Safeguard the Moral and Spiritual Fabric of Society

We, the delegates to the 70th General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church, meeting at Grand Island, New York, August 3-8, 2006, note with alarm the increasing decay of the ethical, spiritual, financial, and societal fabric of our nation, and are resolved to declare divine principles and commands that address these situations, and urge our leaders to apply those same principles in their function as God's servants among mankind.

The experiences of the United States government and society are not unique. Any society that has not carefully labored to uphold the laws of God in its legislation and policies has experienced the same kind of problems that threaten to destroy the moral and financial stability of a nation. [See Appendix, below.] Governments that contemplate making the foundation of their legal and societal practice any standard other than what their Creator has given them are in danger of leading their countries into moral chaos, rampant crime and corruption, medical epidemics, and financial ruin, as well as promoting hopelessness in the lives of everyday people.

Two seminal issues continue to be sharp points of contention in law and society: abortion and homosexuality. They are significant issues because they both deal with the principle of who is in charge of life—God, or man. The impact of one's position on these seminal issues upon lesser matters of law and society is immense and unavoidable. The government (or individual, for that matter) that fails to recognize the authority of God's Word and law is essentially saying that it, and not God, is supreme. Such a viewpoint is folly of the highest magnitude. Psalm 2:1-5 reads: "Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 'Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.' He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the LORD shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure."

Specifically concerning abortion and the care of the pre-born child in the womb, Exodus 21:22-25 says: "If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if any harm follows, then you shall

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give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.” Exodus 21:22-25 is a significant passage because it underscores with clarity the legal mechanics of abortion. First, consider that the injured or killed pre-born child is not treated as mere developing tissue. Rather, the passage treats the child as a person, with all the constitutional, legal and civil rights of any other person. Secondly, consider that the death of the child is treated as a matter of “life for life.” Genesis 9:6 explains that if human life is taken unlawfully by another, the death penalty is required: “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed.”

Similarly, homosexuality also strikes at the very existence and maintenance of human society, striving as it does against the divinely created reproductive and familial order. The apostle Paul sees homosexuality as the final expression of degenerating depravity. In Romans 1:24-28 he writes,

Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting.

God’s judgment upon such sin was severe as described in Leviticus 20:13: “If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them.” Homosexuality is a form of passive genocide, striking at God’s right to create His creatures when and where He wills.

The Apostle Paul states in Romans 13:1-7:

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

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God's Word is clear: governments are not instituted to be self-serving. They are not even primarily to be servants of the people, or servants of a particular church. They are servants of the Almighty God. As they serve Him, they will indeed serve their constituents well, and their nation will prosper. On the other hand, governments that strive to wrest to themselves the natural resources, power structures, and hearts of the people will only subject their constituents to corruption and will usher in the eventual collapse of order and freedom.

How, in the final analysis, does a government work? A written constitution does not make a government a republic unless the people want it to be such. In other words, the people must believe the government has legitimacy. How do they conclude that a government has legitimacy? They must observe that it has integrity. And how, or by what means, do they judge that their government has integrity? They so judge based on their own consciences within them. Romans 2:14 and 15 read, "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them." God put the conscience in each person. Conscience and the Bible have the same origin. God is author of both. If the people see that the laws of the government are right, they will be more inclined to obey them, and hence make a functional nation, with domestic tranquility, possible.

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 33:12).

The 70th General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church, meeting in Grand Island, New York, August 3-8, 2006, urges the government of the United States, and governments everywhere, to heed the warnings and admonitions of their Creator in the performance of their delegated legislative, executive and judicial duties, for the sake of the safety and security of both corporate national life and that of their own souls before God.

Appendix

A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW: Economics or Morality?

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"You shall meditate in this book of the law ... that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it: for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success" (Joshua 1:8).

This verse describes what is called a *Biblical World View*, a philosophy which believes that behavior, ethics, and learning must be judged against the standards set forth in God's Word and that nothing can ultimately be successful apart from the application of those standards. Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws*, the legal benchmark used in America from 1766 to 1920, explained that system of standards:

These laws laid down by God are the eternal immutable laws of good and evil.... This law... dictated by God himself, is of course superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe, in all countries, and at all times: no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this.... The doctrines thus delivered ... are to be found only in the Holy Scriptures.... No human laws should be suffered to contradict these.

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Under this legal standard, God's standards were the plumb line for law, government, education, etc. That philosophy of life, sometimes called *Scottish Common Sense Realism*, first introduced on this continent by early colonists and later codified by Blackstone, permeated American culture for over two-and-a-half centuries.

In this half of the twentieth century, much of the church has drifted away from the Biblical World View philosophy and has embraced a belief structure described by law professor Dr. John Eidsmoe as that of *saved humanists*. That is, many embrace Christianity as a standard for religion, but not as a standard for life.

Exit polls following the last Presidential election illustrated the dichotomy between belief and application which currently exists within the Christian community: 45 percent of those who labeled themselves as *evangelicals* voted for *economic* issues above *moral* issues. Few can ignore the government's serious economic problems and burgeoning federal deficit; however, to elevate economics above morality is not only Biblically untenable, it is even secularly illogical.

If the economy and a reduction in federal spending is to be the goal, then it first must be recognized that much of the government's skyrocketing spending is on programs resulting from the societal effects of immoral behavior (*i.e.*, welfare support to teen mothers, research and treatment of over two dozen different sexually transmitted diseases, repaying the public losses resulting from both violent and white collar crime, creation of substance abuse and drug enforcement programs, etc.) Many expensive federal programs result from moral-based problems.

In 1994, the U.S. government spent \$21 billion on welfare to teen mothers—mothers still attending either junior high or high school. Is \$21 billion an economic problem? Certainly, but it is spending caused by a moral problem. The government spent billions on AIDS (according to the Center for Disease Control, 87 percent of the 244,939 current AIDS cases were contracted either through sodomy or illegal drug use, both moral problems). Millions were spent on the treatment of two dozen different STDs (sexually transmitted diseases), a moral problem; \$200 billion was lost to white collar crime and \$310 billion on violent crime (the inability to distinguish between right or wrong and to control one's behavior by a societal norm is a moral problem).

In addition to the direct costs, add the secondary and tertiary costs of our moral malaise: include the costs of the additional courts and staff needed to prosecute immoral behavior; include the costs of the additional prisons and staff required to house those violators; include the operating and maintenance costs of additional prisons and the costs of the increased bureaucracy it produces; include the resulting increases in the budgets of the Justice Department, the Health and Human Services Department, the Center for Disease Control, the Drug Enforcement Agency, and numerous other departments and agencies, etc.

The list could continue, but the principle is established: if the moral issues remain unaddressed, the economic costs will remain unbridled. John Adams concluded that to change governments without addressing moral issues is an exercise in futility: "It is religion and morality alone which can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand ... if this cannot be inspired into our people in a greater measure than they have it now, they may change their rulers and the forms of government, but they will not obtain a lasting liberty" (June 21, 1776). When all things are considered, a Biblical World View philosophy is the most logical approach.