

Spheres of Societal Transformation

GOVERNANCE

Rationale/Background

God is the ultimate and only independent authority. This must be our starting point as we discuss the role God takes in the affairs of men, especially as his sovereignty relates to civil government. “By Me kings reign, and rulers decree justice” (Prov. 8:15).

The First Commandment reminds us, “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Exod. 20:3). It’s been said: “Men must be governed by God or else they will be ruled by tyrants.” We are not to make ourselves gods. Our parents are not to take God’s place and rule in the family independently of him. Our teachers are not to take God’s place and teach as if there were no authority that gives all the facts in the universe meaning.

Biblical Texts

- Isaiah 9:6;
- Romans 13:6;
- Deuteronomy 1:9- 18; Purpose 1:9-12, Authority 1:13, Representative 1:13, Consensus 1:14, Judicial Branch 1:16-18;

Vision Statement

Transformation of the world through the transformation of the Christian leader in government. Government leaders can either be the greatest agents of transformation in the land, or the greatest obstacle to Godly transformation. The Governance Focus Group operates on the premise that it is the will of the Lord to call and assemble a diverse group of individual government leaders, current and retired, male and female, from all parts of the earth.

We anticipate peer relationships will be formed between leaders, as they interact together, and that these relationships will be a blessing to each other, to the nations and to the Body of Christ.

Working Vocational Mission Statement

To provide and ensure justice and equity for all citizens including executive, judicial, military, law enforcement and central community services.

Purpose and Responsibilities

1. Protect the righteous, i.e. law-abiding citizens (Rom. 13:3-4, 1 Pet. 2:13-14)
2. Punish the evil doer, i.e. criminal (Exod. 20:13; 21:12; 22:2)
3. Administer God’s justice

Principles

The Foundation of Governments

1. The Lord God is the universal Governor of all individuals and nations because He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things (Dan. 4:17, 5:21; Isa. 9:6,7; 1 Cor. 15:25; Col. 1:17).
2. "The government" in the singular, used of ultimate government, must refer to the Triune God, who alone has unlimited and independent authority (right to govern), power (ability to govern), and jurisdiction (sphere of government) (Isa. 9:6, 7).
3. The Bible is the authoritative and inerrant standard by which all aspects of civil government are to be conducted and that God holds man accountable to govern himself by that standard.
4. God is the Originator, Sustainer, and Judge of the government of man by man.
5. Jesus Christ is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He has all authority in heaven and on earth and all governments everywhere function by his permission and are obligated to follow his Laws.

Jurisdictions of Governments

1. God's government is independent and unlimited and that all human governments are established or allowed within His sovereignty (Deut. 4:17).
2. God has established many governments. He has given each its own jurisdiction, all are accountable to God. Among these are self government (which undergirds all institutional governments), family government, ecclesiastical (church) government, and civil governments (e.g., national, state, and local).
3. The various governments (including self, family, church, and state) have different God-ordained jurisdictions that exist at the same time and place, affecting the same people, and that God desires that they respect each other's separate God-ordained jurisdictions.
4. Without self government all other governments are destined to fail.
5. There is a jurisdictional separation between Church and state. 11. Jesus Christ, supporting the jurisdictional separation between Church and state set forth in the Old Testament, acknowledged and supported the legitimate but divinely limited jurisdiction of civil government when he commanded us to "...render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:22).
6. Ecclesiastical government, the church (as an institution with rulers), has legitimate court powers within its jurisdiction (1 Cor. 6; Matt. 18), and that Christians should settle their disputes within the Body of Christ, following the procedures of reconciliation set forth in Scripture.

The Nature and Duties of Civil Government

1. There is a vital distinction between state (i.e., civil government) and society, and that society encompasses all governing institutions, of which civil government is one.
2. God holds civil governments everywhere responsible to protect the God-ordained rights to life, liberty, and private property, and to keep the peace by their legitimate powers.
3. Civil government has the God-ordained power of the sword to punish evildoers and to promote the good. This power includes capital punishment.
4. Civil government has the responsibility of administering justice, which includes and is limited to the commendation of those who do right, the punishment of evildoers by restitution and retribution, and the preservation of peace against domestic and foreign oppressors, and that the fulfillment of this responsibility allows for the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the application of the Word of God to every area of life.
5. Nations have a right to maintain national sovereignty.
6. Civil governments have the God-given authority and responsibility to build up and maintain a strong military preparedness to protect their citizens from foreign threats, and that it is right and wise for them to do so.
7. Civil governments everywhere ought to follow a biblical moral order so that citizens can work out their callings under God, and that they should treat all citizens as juridically equal, i.e., equal in the eyes of the law.
8. Civil government has the God-ordained authority to collect personal taxes (not property taxes) to support its biblically stated jurisdictional duties.
9. Individuals, families, churches, and voluntary associations should care financially for widows, orphans, aliens, and the truly needy through the tithe and offerings.
10. Civil governments must maintain just weights and measures. Christians'

Relations with Civil Government

1. Christians everywhere ought to pray for their civil leaders and to honor the offices they hold.
2. All citizens have a duty to pay a tax because of the services rendered by civil government, and that the Church, the Bride of our Lord Jesus Christ, is tax-immune and not merely tax-exempt (the latter of which might imply authority in the state to grant or withhold the status, making the state sovereign over the Church).
3. It is the responsibility of Christians to seek godly influence on the many civil governments, confronting all of them with the Gospel and Law of Christ, and that for Christians to “stay out of politics” or the political process is to disregard our duty to be salt and light to the

world (Matt. 5:13-16) and dooms society to corruption and judgment, at least in the political sphere.

4. It is the duty of Christian citizens to keep informed of issues, candidates, and trends in their civil governments at all levels.

5. Christians in general and church leaders in particular, like the prophets of old, have a mandate from God to declare society's accountability to God through and according to his Word in every sphere of a nation's activities.

6. The people of God, no matter what their national ties, constitute a "holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9).

Limitations on Governments

1. Those who govern, whether in the family, the Church, or the civil realm, are ministers of God and are thus subject to God's Laws.

2. Wherever citizens are capable of self government, the power and bureaucracy of civil government should be kept as small and localized as possible.

Conclusion/ Summary

With the spread of secularism and all its associated philosophies, Christian influence on governance is needed as never before to ensure that earthly government reflects the priorities and purposes of God. While globalization has been a major cause of the demise of Christian character in government, it also provides a magnificent opportunity for leaders of character to re-establish Christ's influence in this essential area of ministry.

The global networking, encouraging and empowering of Christian leaders in government is powerful in itself, but when done obediently for the purpose and in the power of God, nothing can stand against it.

To be continued...

*Taken from **Transform World Manual***

Transform World Connections

A call to transformation: transformational streams are becoming one fast-flowing river for the healing of the nations.

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