

Faith and Politics – Preparatory Study and Questions for Reflection

Preparatory reading:

The Theological Declaration of Barmen

The Confession of 1967

(Both of these confessions can be found in the Book of Confessions; if you don't have a copy, go online at: <http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/boc.pdf>)

Scriptural texts: 2 Samuel 5:1-5; Amos 7:10-15; Matthew 22:15-22; Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 4:14-30

Questions to consider from the reading:

- What is the model for using earthly power in 2 Samuel 5:1-5. What is the role of humans, and of God?
- What can you surmise about the role of a prophet from reading Amos 7:10-15 and other parts of the Old Testament? How would they define “politics”? Would they be able to separate “politics” from “religion”?
- How would you define what we mean when we say “politics”?
- What is the difference between “politics” and “ideology”?
- What is the chief concern being addressed in *The Theological Declaration of Barmen*?
- Do you think there is a distinction between being “partisan” and being “political”?
- Should religion spur us to patriotism, or lead us to question it? Could your faith ever cause you to disobey your country, or to claim a higher allegiance?
- Do you think Jesus separated “religion” from “politics”? Is this what he is communicating in Matthew 22:15-22?
- Does Luke 4:14-30 have anything to do with “politics”? What about Matthew 25?
- What is the main concern of the *Confession of 1967*? Is this creed urging us to be “political”?

Questions to consider about our community life:

- Does the Word of God compel us as Christians to influence our political process, and how we live together as a secular community and nation? Why or why not?
- Is being “partisan” OK for the church? How would you draw lines about what's OK and what's not regarding the church getting involved in the political process?
- Is it legitimate for the Pastoral leader to be “political” from the pulpit? What is and isn't legitimate in the practice of preaching the Word to the congregation?
- Do you think the Pastor has the right to endorse political candidates? If so, is it advisable? Under what circumstances?
- Is agreement necessary for unity in Christ? How might disagreement and a variety of perspectives actually enrich Christian community?