

HEARTBEAT

Hope in Christ Church Monthly Newsletter

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How should one decide if civil disobedience is appropriate?

By Pastor Scott

While the Scriptures call all people to submit to the authorities that have been established (Rom. 13), should we submit to every direction they give? Clearly the answer is no. To mistakenly argue that we must is to commit the sin which the German Church of the 1930-40's committed. There are some governmental mandates which go in direct opposition to the teaching of Scripture, and when they do, the Church must stand in opposition.

So how should one approach the question of civil disobedience? It is essential in times like this to remember a number of things as one evaluates and contemplates refusing to obey a legitimate governing authority. First, one must ask if the issue in question is a matter of weight or a tangentially insignificant issue. For instance, a rule against gun ownership, while violating the constitution, is not a weighty issue for the Christian. He or she can fulfill all the essential demands of God with or without a gun – singing praise, reading scripture, evangelizing others, being hospitable, etc. Weighty issues, however, are those which impinge upon the direct commands of God as they relate to worship or living out the Christian faith and making God known. This is why Christians in closed and hostile countries continue to evangelize and worship together, even though the government forbids. Weighty issues demand a recognition of the hierarchy of authorities – God first, then ecclesial-civil-familial as equals but each given their own sphere of responsibility.

Once one believes that an issue is weighty the second step in determining if disobedience is warranted is to study the word of God. Are there direct commands to do or not do the activity in question? Is their significant testimony in the word of God supporting opposition? Does the Scripture record people doing the action or abstaining from it

throughout? For instance, worship opens the word, closes the canon and is present as a major component of nearly every page of Scripture. Therefore, worship must continue no matter what the governing authorities declare. In addition, it is useful to ask if the activity can be fulfilled in new or creative ways that would allow obedience. This requires one to be able to step outside of the cultural bonds which so many of us are chained in and to realize that Worship on Sunday at 9 am in your best clothes contains a lot of extra man made custom layered on top of the command to worship the Lord and sing praise to him. Recognizing the cultural add-ons can and must be considered before disobedience is practiced.

Third, it is always useful to compare a tentative position with the creeds and confessions of the tradition to which one belongs. As Reformed believers, we would do well to consult the Three forms of Unity, the Westminster standards, the Helvetic confessions and other such works. The wisdom of the tradition is helpful in seeing how others may have worked through relevant and related topics. For example, the 21st chapter of the Westminster Confession discusses the components of worship.

Fourth, one ought to look at Christian history. Has the church across time and space practiced disobedience on this issue or ones closely related? If so, the weight of Christian history supports disobedience as well.

Finally, pray and consult with other knowledgeable believers before making a final decision. Realize that not all may share your conviction. But you are responsible for your conscience before the Lord. Remember, however, that the path of disobedience is often a lonely path and it frequently invites the wrath of the authorities. Part of honoring the authorities when we disobey them is being willing to suffer their punishments willingly.

Think of Shadrack, Meshach and Abednego willingly going to the furnace for their refusal to worship Nebuchadnezzar's statue (Dan. 3).

May God guide and direct each of us, as the present reality seems to increasingly be leading the church towards times where this process will be needed more and more.



IN HIS HANDS

*Safely in his hands I stand
Wherever I may be
For I know that God is with me
Thru all eternity*

*The gift of grace he gave to me
Thru His son
Christ Jesus is his name*

*What a price he did pay to pardon my sins,
Past, Present and future.....
Thru all eternity*

*So let us stand up and testify for Jesus
For the burden of sin He bore
For me*

*How glorious that day will be
When I stand in grace, face to face before God
Thru all eternity*

Author: GOD

Scribe: Helen Bowman 2017

God's Redemption

Submitted by Don Recker

"There is a nice story I once heard a priest tell about Pope John XXIII when he was still an Italian cardinal. He was having dinner one night with a priestly assistant who was reporting to the cardinal about another priest, a real renegade, who was doing things that were embarrassing the hierarchy. The future pope listened calmly, sipping wine from a goblet. Finally the assistant cried out in a frustrated tone, 'How can you take this so calmly? Don't you realize what this priest is doing?' The cardinal then gently asked the younger priest, 'Father, whose goblet is this?' 'It is yours, your grace,' the priest answered. The cardinal then threw the goblet to the floor, and it shattered into many fragments. 'And now whose goblet is it?' he asked. 'It is still yours,' was the answer. 'And so is this priest still my brother in Christ,' said the cardinal, 'even though he is shattered and broken.'"

Mouw then observes: "The creation may be shattered and broken under present sinful conditions, but God still loves it. This is why Jesus came into the creation, on a redemptive mission aimed at restoring that which God loves...."

Richard J. Mouw, RESTLESS FAITH, chapt. 7



Happy Birthday



6 Melissa K

8 Eliana R

9 Maggie S

14 Yvonne B

15 Sissy D

16 Darryl G

23 Ali L

24 Don R

27 Brenna K

28 Morgan R

29 Doug S

30 Helen B

30 Abigail M



Joy to The World

Joy to The World is a popular Christmas carol. It's energetic and upbeat. Just makes you want to sing loud and jubilant. For centuries we have been enjoying this song during the Christmas season. But did you know that it wasn't written as a Christmas carol?

“Like Calvin did for the people of his day, Watts also published a work in 1719 that was a translation or rewriting of the Psalms for congregational singing. The hymnbook was entitled (it's long, so prepare yourself), *The Psalms of David: Imitated in the Language of the New Testament and Applied to the Christian State and Worship*. In other words, Watts read the Old Testament in light of the New Testament and wrote his Psalm-book to explicitly point to the person and work of Christ. In that collection, you will find Watts' rewriting of Psalm 98. It is familiarly entitled *Joy to the World*.

The opening line of *Joy to the World* is sometimes sung incorrectly as, “Joy the world! The Lord *has* come.” That is not what Watts wrote. He wrote, “The Lord *is* come.” Watts was not describing a past event (the birth of Jesus) but rather looking forward to a future event (the return of Jesus). The main point of Psalm 98 (which Watts himself clearly understood) was not about the first coming of Jesus, but, rather, about His Second Coming! And that's precisely what the song is about. It speaks of Jesus' final coming to earth when “the Savior reigns” and when “He rules the world with truth and grace.” Watts longed for that glorious final day when the nations (will) prove the glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love.” (Scarlett, Tyler; <https://www.forestbaptistchurch.org/the-story-behind-the-carol-joy-to-the-world/>).

As you sing Joy to the World, think about Jesus being born into this sinful world so that He will grow up and one day save us all by dying on the cross in our place. Then think about Jesus second coming. A time where He will come again and we will all be with Him in glory. Just makes you want to shout for joy!



Giving in October 2020



	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Designated Fund Offerings:	\$ 1,466	\$ 25,786
General Fund Offerings	\$14,862	\$215,657
Rent / Utilities Income	1,313	23,322
Interest Income - Undesignated	<u>22</u>	<u>245</u>
Total Undesignated Income	16,196	239,223
General Fund Expenses	<u>(20,112)</u>	<u>(198,384)</u>
Income Over (Under) Expenses	<u>\$ (3,916)</u>	<u>\$ 40,839</u>
Total 2020 budget, including ministry quotas	\$ 273,588	
Year-to-Date Budget for 11 months	\$ 250,789	
Total Undesignated Income	<u>239,384</u>	
Income Over (Under) Budget	<u>\$ (11,566)</u>	



Loan Balances:

Classis: \$ 10,000

Payroll Protection Program: \$ 26,700



Deacons Digest

By Elaine Snapper

The deacons met via Zoom on Oct. 29, 2020, which was for the November meeting. We reviewed that October was Pastor Appreciation month and we talked about the Interfaith Coat drive, which was set up in our church foyer. We discussed the Christmas tree gifts, which will be for the Lighthouse Mission. A tree will be set up in early December with tags on it.

The budget was discussed, and we opted to keep the same five outreach programs for the upcoming year. These are: Cascade Connection, Envision Mission, the Lighthouse Mission, Seafarers and Street Corners. One reason for keeping the same five outreach programs is the personal connection to members in our church.

Year-end statements for donations will be distributed after the first of the year. We recognize that many in-person events did not occur in 2020 like hymn sings, spring clean-up with breakfast, or the upcoming Christmas programs. Please contact your deacons to share your "outside the box" ideas for encouraging connection in our church body in 2021.

December 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 11:30am Elders Mtg 7pm Deacons Mtg	3	4	5
6 9:30am Worship Service Communion Offering: General Fund	7	8	9 7pm Council Mtg	10	11	12
13 9:30am Worship Service Communion Offering: General Fund	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 9:30am Worship Service Communion Offering: Out- reach Fund	21	22	23	24	25 9:30am Christmas Service	26
27 9:30am Worship Service Communion Offering: General Fund	28	29	30	31		