

# STEWARDS OF THE STATE

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## Responsible Citizens

Christians, guided by God's Word, should serve as responsible citizens of the state. Predating the U.S. Constitution, the 16<sup>th</sup> century Augsburg Confession insisted that the powers of the church and civil government must not be mixed (AC XXVIII 11-12). Today we commonly refer to it as "The Separation of Church and State". Under the constitutional rights guaranteed us, however, citizens are requested and expected to participate in government matters. The Scriptures advocate involvement. Jesus commanded: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Matt. 22:21) We are to support government by honestly paying our taxes. Christians are urged to pray for those who govern us, obey the law and honor those in authority. (1 Tim. 2:1-2; Titus 3:1-20; 1 Peter 2:13-17). On the other hand, government has responsibilities to constituencies. 1 Peter 2:14 commissions government to punish evil and reward good. Yet instances may occur when government may end up doing just the opposite. In such instances, Christians, as stewards of the state, should not stand idly by. They should exert their Christian influence.

## The Danger of Apathy

Culture influences government. The current culture pervading society, commonly called "Post-modern", is not Christian. It has conditioned minds to be less sensitive regarding the promotion of Biblical principles and ethics in government. Sensing that no party and few candidates fully share Christian ideals, Christians are in danger of becoming apathetic. They may feel it a waste to try to influence politics and government. Some might even come to the point of saying: "Why vote?"

## Conscientious Citizens

Christian stewards of the state, guided by consciences governed by God's Word, should vote! Intelligently! Informed! They should examine candidates' positions and consider their integrity, philosophy, performance and,



especially, their stance regarding Christian principles. Some cities provide "Voter Guides" online - [www.\(city\).com/voterguide](http://www.(city).com/voterguide). It's important to look beyond party politics and cautiously analyze campaign rhetoric (media commercials are not to be fully trusted). Ultimately, leaders should be chosen and issues voted upon according to Biblical principles and not simply party affiliation or mere self-interest.

## Current Problems

- > **Abortion**
- > **Redefinition of Marriage** - endorsing same-sex marriage
- > **Threats to Religious Freedom** - renewed efforts to force religious ministries to violate their religious conscience. (HHS mandate)

## Here We Stand!

Before the head of state, Emperor Charles V, Martin Luther upheld his Christian convictions with the words, "Here I Stand!" Recently, on Feb. 16, 2012, LCMS President Matthew Harrison made his stand before the House Oversight & Government Reform Committee regarding the U.S. Dept. Of Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate that required all health insurance plans, including those of religious bodies, to cover abortion-inducing birth control. He was one of several witnesses among other denominations, who addressed the HHS mandate under the caption: "Lines Crossed: Separation of Church and State; Has the Obama Administration Trampled on Freedom of Religion and Freedom of Conscience?" During the testimonies President Harrison stated: "We fought for a free country and we won't give it up without a fight."

## The Stand of the LCMS

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has made its stand. It has firmly declared abortion murder - homosexual, lesbian lifestyles anti-Scriptural and marriage, the union between a man and a woman - the HHS mandate a threat to religious freedom. Make your stand as a Christian Steward of the State!