

The Theological Declaration of Barmen

Faith and Politics

Barmen's questions to us:

- When are we tempted to put political loyalty above loyalty to Christ?
- When are we tempted to see physical strength or social power and influence as a sign that “God is more with us than with others”?
- How as Christians can we be thankful for and loyal to our nation without making the nation our god?

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Seitliche Eröffnung

Am Sonntag, dem 12. Dezember, ist in Barmen die 12. Synode der Deutschen Bekenntnis-Synode eröffnet worden. Die Synode wird am 14. Dezember in Barmen im Bismarck-Saal geschlossen werden. Die Synode wird am 14. Dezember in Barmen im Bismarck-Saal geschlossen werden. Die Synode wird am 14. Dezember in Barmen im Bismarck-Saal geschlossen werden.



Die Barmener Kirche

Der Bismarck-Saal



Berichtabend im Klingelholz

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Die Mitglieder der Synode im Klingelholz

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5. "Fear God. Honour the emperor!" (1 Pet 2.17)

Scripture tells us that, in the as yet unredeemed world in which the church also exists, the state has by divine appointment the task of providing for justice and peace. [It fulfils this task] by means of the threat and exercise of force, according to the measure of human judgment and human ability. The church acknowledges the benefit of this divine appointment in gratitude and reverence before him. It calls to mind the kingdom of God, God's commandment and righteousness, and thereby the responsibility both of rulers and of the ruled. It trusts and obeys the power of the Word by which God upholds all things.

We reject the false doctrine, as though the state, over and beyond its special commission, should and could become the single and totalitarian order of human life, thus fulfilling the church's vocation as well.

We reject the false doctrine, as though the church, over and beyond its special commission, should and could appropriate the characteristics, the tasks, and the dignity of the state, thus itself becoming an organ of the state.

2. "Christ Jesus, whom God has made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption." (1 Corinthians 1:30)

As Jesus Christ is God's assurance of the forgiveness of all our sins, so, in the same way and with the same seriousness he is also God's mighty claim upon our whole life. Through him befalls us a joyful deliverance from the godless fetters of this world for a free, grateful service to his creatures.

We reject the false doctrine, as though there were areas of our life in which we would not belong to Jesus Christ, but to other lords - areas in which we would not need justification and sanctification through him.

5. "Fear God. Honor the emperor!" (1 Pet 2.17)

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4. "You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant." (Mt 20.25,26)

The various offices in the church do not establish a dominion of some over the others; on the contrary, they are for the exercise of the ministry entrusted to and enjoined upon the whole congregation.

We reject the false doctrine, as though the church, apart from this ministry, could and were permitted to give itself, or allow to be given to it, special leaders vested with ruling powers.

6. "Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Mt 28.20)

"The word of God is not fettered." (2 Tim 2.9)

The church's commission, upon which its freedom is founded, consists in delivering the message of the free grace of God to all people in Christ's stead, and therefore in the ministry of his own Word and work through sermon and sacrament.

We reject the false doctrine, as though the church in human arrogance could place the word and work of the Lord in the service of any arbitrarily chosen desires, purposes, and plans.

The Church's Task:

1. Serving others by serving the gospel
2. Reminding the state of its responsibility for justice and peace
3. Modeling a different way of doing "politics"

