

Acts529 Coalition

“We must obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29)

Purpose Statement

The Acts529 Coalition is organized to help Spokane area churches strengthen their biblical resolve, speak with a united voice, and coordinate their efforts, wherever the civil government seeks to restrict, suppress, or punish the free exercise of our Christian Faith. When godly civil disobedience is attacked by the state we want to be able to quickly help and support one another.

Statement on Authority & Unity

Our Christian Faith is revealed in the sixty-six books of the Christian Scriptures. These Scriptures are given to us by God as our only ultimate and infallible source of authority. We also acknowledge that historic ecumenical creeds such as the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Definition of Chalcedon faithfully summarize foundational Scriptural teachings.

Each local church in this coalition has its own government and distinctives but acknowledges that there is one Spirit, one Lord, one faith and one God and Father (Eph. 4:4-6). This reality means that we must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It also means we are required by our Lord to care for and concern ourselves with one another's mutual welfare.

Since this coalition is not intended to separate us from other faithful churches, it does not define the boundaries of our fellowship. Our desire is to promote a greater unity of the churches within the Spokane area. Where faithful churches disagree with the coalition's understanding of church-state relations or specific statements or actions of this coalition, we will be gracious, patient, and humble in pursuing the truth with them.

Unwillingness or inability to join this coalition doesn't prevent the participants of this coalition from coming to the aid of other churches, religious groups, or organizations. We desire to extend the patience, kindness, and mercy of God as far as He does (Mt. 5:44, 45; Acts 17:30, 31; Rom. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).

Theses on Church & State

1. God has given Jesus all authority in heaven and on earth through His resurrection. This means that He exercises authority not only over the church but also all human governments. (Ps. 2; Acts 13:33; Mt. 28:18; Rev. 1:5)

2. Concerning the Church's own government:

- a. The Church is neither over nor under state authority; she has her own authority independent of the state. (Acts 20:28; Mt. 16:19; 18:17, 18)
- b. The church answers to Christ. Where the interests of the church and state overlap, the church cedes none of its authority but acts voluntarily in the best interest of God's people. (Eph. 5:23, 24; Heb. 13:17)
- c. The Church must obey her Lord in everything regardless of civil government edicts or penalties and therefore has a God-given responsibility to reject laws and mandates that conflict with God's commands. Such laws are tyrannical. We will not obey commands to do evil or be hindered from doing good. (Dan. 3; Acts 4:19; 5:29)
- d. We reject tyrannical laws not only because they are wrong but also because they are harmful and unloving. (Dt. 10:13; Mic. 6:8; Gal. 6:9, 10)
- e. Tyrannical laws do not compel even partial compliance. (Dan. 6:7-10 – Daniel didn't pray in secret; Acts 5:28, 29 – Peter didn't preach elsewhere; Acts 9:25 — Christians helped Paul avoid capture)
- f. We are required to speak God's word not only to the Church but also to our society and our civil governments. (Mk. 6:18; Acts 17:30, 31)

3. Concerning civil governments:

- a. God appoints civil rulers and gives them their authority and therefore they are His servants or ministers. (Romans 13: 1, 4; Jn. 19:10, 11)
- b. As God's ministers, civil governments are to exercise their authority for good as God defines it in His moral law. (Prov. 16:12; Rom. 13:3, 4)
- c. The civil government's authority is limited. (2 Sm. 12:9; 1 Ki. 21; Mt. 22:21)
- d. The civil government's role is to make it possible for its citizens to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. (1 Tim. 2:2) As such, it is to be primarily focused on the ministry of justice in order to make good flourish and execute God's wrath on wrongdoers. (Rom. 13:4)

4. Concerning the Christian citizen:

- a. Christians must participate in the rights and responsibilities of their nation. (Acts 22:25; Acts 8:27)
- b. Obedience to the authorities God has placed over us in America means following the Constitution as the highest human law of the land. (Supremacy Clause, Article VI, Clause 2 of the United States Constitution).
- c. Insisting on our rights as citizens is not contrary to the gospel. (2 Ki. 21:6; Acts 16:37; 25:11)

- d. Christians honor civil rulers and submit to their lawfully exercised authority for Christ's sake. They should be easy and delightful to govern and difficult and frustrating to manipulate into silence or wrongdoing. (Ex. 1:15-21; 1 Sm. 24; Dan. 3, 6; Acts 23:1-11)

Participation

In light of actual persecution of our fellow believers, current government overreach, growing hostility to the Christian Faith, and troubling trends and legislation, we want to urge like-minded churches to join the Acts529 Coalition. We ask that you sign on either as an individual pastor (if you don't currently have your church leadership's formal support) or as a church where you are the representative of your church leadership. Please provide all of your contact information so that we can keep you informed of any situations, meetings, discussions, or proposals as they unfold. Your contact information will not be published; it is for communication purposes only. You may, however, give us permission to publish your name or both your name and your church's name as a member of the coalition.