

# **Platforms of Political Engagement as Christians.**

# Sanctity of human life.

1. **Human Life and God's Image:** Every human life, from conception to death, reflects the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Christians must therefore advocate for a consistent ethic of life, especially focusing on the vulnerable (the unborn, aged, impoverished, terminally ill, and those with disabilities). Public policies should protect these groups.
2. **Abortion and Sanctity of Life:** Abortion is seen as an assault on human life, as every life is made in God's image (Psalm 139:13). Christians should work to address unplanned pregnancies and promote sexual ethics that value the sanctity of life.
3. **Contraception and Unmarried Sexuality:** While contraception is complicated in the context of extramarital sex, it is important to address these issues while upholding biblical sexual ethics.
4. **Euthanasia and Human Dignity:** Christians oppose euthanasia and embryonic research that destroys life. Human life, regardless of condition, must be treated with dignity and ethical research should be supported.
5. **Medical Research and Ethics:** Support for ethical scientific research that promotes health and well-being should be embraced, but caution is needed to avoid dehumanizing practices like cloning and unethical genetic manipulation.
6. **End-of-Life Care:** Compassionate care for the dying, including hospice and palliative care, should be prioritized instead of euthanasia. Christians should focus on alleviating suffering in ethical ways.
7. **Scientific Advances:** Medical advancements should enhance human life without crossing ethical boundaries, such as attempts to extend life unnaturally or manipulate human biology beyond God-given limits. Discernment is needed in emerging technologies.

## Reference Scriptures (NLT):

1. Genesis 1:27: "So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."
2. Psalm 139:13: "You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb."
3. Genesis 3:1-19: (Summary) This passage recounts the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve's disobedience led to sin and death entering the world.
4. Genesis 11:4-9: (Summary) This passage tells the story of the Tower of Babel, where humanity's pride led them to try to make a name for themselves, prompting God to scatter them by confusing their language.

## Strengthening family health.

1. **Family as Central to God's Vision:** The family plays a fundamental role in human society and reflects God's design for human beings. At creation, God established marriage and family as the foundation of human relationships (Genesis 1:27-28, 2:23-25). God's relationship with humanity is portrayed using familial language.
2. **Church as a Family:** The Bible describes the Church in terms of family, where believers are brothers and sisters in Christ (Matthew 12:48-50; Colossians 1:2; Hebrews 2:11). Marriage is presented as a covenant between one man and one woman, symbolizing God's covenant with His people (Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 3:20, 31:32; Ephesians 5:23, 31-32).
3. **Value of Singleness:** Single men and women are also valued in the Church and may dedicate themselves to service and vocation (1 Corinthians 7:32-35). Their contributions are seen as part of the family of God.
4. **Mutual Responsibility and Love in Families:** Family life teaches love, trust, justice, and mercy, and promotes mutual responsibility and service. Families are essential for nurturing children and building healthy societies.
5. **Role of Government:** While families and churches are primarily responsible for the nurturing of children, the government plays a role in promoting policies that protect and encourage healthy family life. The government should support families but not infringe on parental rights or the integrity of the family unit.
6. **God's Design for Marriage and Family:** Churches should model biblical marriage, where a man and woman honor their vows and raise any children God gives them in love. However, the constitutional freedom of citizens in a pluralistic society means that not everyone will follow biblical family values.
7. **Social Issues and Family Integrity:** Social problems such as addiction, pornography, domestic violence, easy divorce, and abortion undermine the health of the family and society. The Church should advocate for biblical principles and work to restore broken families.
8. **Protection for Families:** Churches and governments should support families, especially those facing societal challenges like poverty, homelessness, and racism. Efforts should focus on strengthening marriages and families, particularly among the poor.

### Reference Scriptures (NLT):

1. Genesis 1:27-28: "So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. Then God blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.'"
2. Genesis 2:23-25: "'At last!' the man exclaimed. 'This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken from 'man.'" This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame."
3. Romans 8:23: "And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and

suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us.”

4. Galatians 4:5-6: “God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, ‘Abba, Father.’”
5. Matthew 12:48-50: “Jesus asked, ‘Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?’ Then he pointed to his disciples and said, ‘Look, these are my mother and brothers. Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!’”
6. Colossians 1:2: “We are writing to God’s holy people in the city of Colossae, who are faithful brothers and sisters in Christ. May God our Father give you grace and peace.”
7. Hebrews 2:11: “So now Jesus and the ones he makes holy have the same Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters.”
8. Isaiah 54:5: “For your Creator will be your husband; the Lord of Heaven’s Armies is his name! He is your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of all the earth.”
9. Jeremiah 3:20: “But you have been unfaithful to me, you people of Israel! You have been like a faithless wife who leaves her husband. I, the Lord, have spoken.”
10. Jeremiah 31:32: “This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife,’ says the Lord.”
11. Ephesians 5:23: “For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church.”
12. Ephesians 5:31-32: “As the Scriptures say, ‘A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.’ This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one.”
13. 1 Corinthians 12:12: “The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ.”

## Care for the poor and vulnerable.

1. **Loving God and Neighbors:** Jesus summarized God's law by commanding us to love God with all our heart and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:35-40). He taught that anyone in need is our neighbor (Luke 10:29-37), highlighting the inherent dignity of all people.
2. **God Identifies with the Poor:** God expresses a particular concern for the poor and vulnerable, saying that those who help the poor are lending to Him (Psalm 146:5-9; Proverbs 19:17, 14:31). Jesus also warned that those who ignore the needs of the poor and imprisoned are not His true followers (Matthew 25:31-46).
3. **Justice for the Vulnerable:** The Bible calls for societies to be just and righteous, particularly in their treatment of the vulnerable, including the poor, widows, orphans, and foreigners (Isaiah 10:1-4; Jeremiah 5:26-29, 22:13-19; Amos 2:6-7, 4:1-3, 5:10-15).
4. **Fair Legal and Economic Systems:** Scripture emphasizes the importance of fair legal and economic systems that do not oppress the poor. It condemns usury (unfair lending) and predatory practices (Exodus 22:25; Deuteronomy 15:7-11; Ezekiel 18:7-9).
5. **Equal Opportunity for the Poor:** The Bible advocates for providing people with access to productive resources (education, nutrition, shelter, healthcare) to help them escape poverty and use their God-given talents. Social safety nets should aim to restore people to self-sufficiency.
6. **Public Policy and Family Support:** Governments and public policies should support families and marriages as they play a crucial role in preventing and overcoming poverty. Immigration policies should focus on keeping families together, and criminal justice reform should address issues like over-incarceration that break up families.
7. **International Aid and Trade:** Christians should advocate for foreign aid, fair trade agreements, and other policies that protect human rights and help reduce global poverty. Governments should work to improve conditions in vulnerable parts of the world through diplomacy and aid.

### Reference Scriptures (NLT):

1. Matthew 22:35-40: "One of them, an expert in religious law, tried to trap him with this question: 'Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?' Jesus replied, 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself. The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.'"
2. Luke 10:29-37: (Summary) In this passage, Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan, where He explains that anyone in need is our neighbor, and we are called to show mercy.
3. Psalm 146:5-9: "But joyful are those who have the God of Israel as their helper, whose hope is in the Lord their God. He made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them. He keeps every promise forever. He gives justice to the oppressed and food to the hungry. The Lord frees the prisoners. The Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are weighed down. The Lord loves the godly. The Lord protects the

foreigners among us. He cares for the orphans and widows, but he frustrates the plans of the wicked.”

4. Proverbs 19:17: “If you help the poor, you are lending to the Lord—and he will repay you!”
5. Proverbs 14:31: “Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but helping the poor honors him.”
6. Matthew 25:31-46: (Summary) Jesus describes the final judgment, where He separates the sheep from the goats based on their treatment of the hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, and imprisoned.
7. Isaiah 10:1-4: “What sorrow awaits the unjust judges and those who issue unfair laws. They deprive the poor of justice and deny the rights of the needy among my people. They prey on widows and take advantage of orphans. What will you do when I punish you, when I send disaster upon you from a distant land? To whom will you turn for help? Where will your treasures be safe? You will stumble along as prisoners or lie among the dead. But even then the Lord’s anger will not be satisfied. His fist is still poised to strike.”

# Caring for God's creation.

**"Just as we show our love for the savior by reaching the lost, we show our love for the creator by caring for his creation"**

1. **Stewardship of Creation:** As followers of Jesus, Christians are called to care for the earth, acknowledging that it belongs to God and not to us (Psalm 24:1). We are stewards of the earth, tasked with conserving and renewing it rather than exploiting or destroying it (Genesis 2:15).
2. **Environmental Impact of Sin:** Due to humanity's sin, the earth has been polluted and its resources depleted (Isaiah 24:4-6). We have polluted air, water, and soil, leading to a loss of biodiversity, which threatens the well-being of current and future generations.
3. **Consequences of Climate Change:** Climate change intensifies other global challenges, including food and water insecurity, forced migrations, and disease spread. It also exacerbates poverty, especially in vulnerable parts of the world. In the U.S., it increases health risks, sea-level rise, and severe weather.
4. **Redemption of Creation:** God is not only redeeming His people but is also restoring the entire creation (Romans 8:18-23). Christians are called to participate in this restoration, caring for creation as an act of discipleship and as a way of showing love for the Creator.
5. **Government Responsibility:** Governments have a duty to protect the environment and citizens from environmental degradation and its harmful effects. This includes enacting policies that address environmental threats and their consequences.
6. **Christian Responsibility:** Christians should live in environmentally responsible ways, such as conserving energy, reducing pollution, and considering the environmental impact of their consumption. They should also encourage governments to adopt policies that promote sustainability and support vulnerable populations affected by climate change.

Referenced Scriptures (NLT):

1. Psalm 24:1: "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him."
2. Genesis 2:15: "The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it."
3. Isaiah 24:4-6: "The earth mourns and dries up, and the land wastes away and withers. Even the greatest people on earth waste away. The earth suffers for the sins of its people, for they have twisted God's instructions, violated his laws, and broken his everlasting covenant. Therefore, a curse consumes the earth. Its people must pay the price for their sin. They are destroyed by fire, and only a few are left alive."

## Protecting religious freedom.

1. **God's Ordained Role of Church and State:** God has ordained both the church and state as coexisting institutions, each with its own center of authority under God's sovereignty (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17; Mark 12:13-17; Ephesians 4:15-16, 5:23-32). These institutions function separately but are both subject to God.
2. **First Amendment and Religious Freedom:** The First Amendment protects religious freedom, which allows for the free exercise of faith without interference from the state. These rights are fundamental for fulfilling the dual responsibilities of being both disciples of Christ and citizens.
3. **Gospel Pluralism:** The freedom of religion allows both the "wheat and weeds" to grow together (Matthew 13:24-30). This principle of "gospel pluralism" ensures that people of all faiths (or none) can coexist in society, sharing its blessings.
4. **Public Religious Expression:** Religious freedom encompasses more than just the right to worship. The separation of church and state does not mean that religious beliefs must be set aside in the public square. People of faith should have equal access to public spaces and forums.
5. **Government's Role and Establishment Clause:** The Establishment Clause limits the government from establishing a religion, but it does not prohibit the government from assisting religious organizations, as long as the aid is neutral and not directly related to promoting religion (Acts 18:12-17). Government aid must not make religious organizations "state actors" subject to government control.
6. **Autonomy of Religious Organizations:** Religious institutions should maintain autonomy in matters of doctrine, discipline, and employment. Governments must protect the freedom of religious organizations to follow their conscience and beliefs without interference.
7. **Religious Freedom in All Areas:** Religious freedom must be upheld in areas like employment, housing, and education, allowing religious institutions and individuals to follow their beliefs without fear of losing rights or support.
8. **Global Religious Freedom:** Evangelicals are called to defend religious freedom globally. Religious persecution is often linked to broader human rights violations and can lead to conflict. The U.S. has a responsibility to advocate for religious freedom worldwide, ensuring it is prioritized in diplomacy.

### Reference Scriptures (NLT):

1. Romans 13:1-7: "Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished. For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong."
2. 1 Peter 2:13-17: "For the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority—whether the king as head of state, or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right."



3. Mark 12:13-17: (Summary) This passage describes Jesus being asked about paying taxes to Caesar. Jesus responds, "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God."
4. Ephesians 4:15-16: "Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly."
5. Ephesians 5:23-32: "For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything."
6. Matthew 13:24-30: (Summary) In the Parable of the Wheat and Weeds, Jesus explains that both good and evil will coexist in the world until the final judgment.
7. Acts 18:12-17: (Summary) This passage describes an incident where Paul is brought before the proconsul Gallio, who refuses to judge matters of religious law, showing the separation between civil authorities and religious matters.

# Preserving human rights.

1. **Human Rights and Responsibilities:** Since God created human beings in His image, people are endowed with rights and responsibilities. Governments are responsible for protecting these rights, such as life, liberty, justice, and security, as well as the freedom to express beliefs and act on them.
2. **Legal Rights and Moral Dignity:** Even when people act against biblical teachings, they retain their God-given dignity and legal rights. Governments must ensure these rights are not unjustly denied, providing for the general welfare while promoting the common good.
3. **Religious Liberty and Free Will:** Religious liberty is a foundational right given by God, allowing people to freely choose and express their religion. Christians defend this right not only for themselves but for other religions as well.
4. **Protecting Bodily Rights:** Every person has the right not to have their body unjustly harmed (rape, violence, torture, etc.). Governments, businesses, and institutions should protect individuals from abuse, and create safe spaces for reporting violations.
5. **Support for Refugees:** Christians should have a special concern for refugees and those fleeing violence and persecution. Governments should offer asylum to refugees, prioritizing family reunification and protection for the most vulnerable.
6. **Criminal Justice Reform:** The criminal justice system should focus on victim restitution, rehabilitation of offenders, and reintegration into society. The system should avoid excessive punishment, particularly for racial minorities, and address the long-lasting consequences of incarceration.
7. **Preventing Crime through Virtue:** Crime can be prevented by cultivating “seedbeds of virtue,” such as healthy families, churches, and communities. Churches are urged to help crime survivors heal and support offenders in reintegration after they have paid their debt.

Reference Scripture (NLT):

1. 1 Timothy 5:1-2: “Never speak harshly to an older man, but appeal to him respectfully as you would to your own father. Talk to younger men as you would to your own brothers. Treat older women as you would your mother, and treat younger women with all purity as you would your own sisters.”

# Pursuing justice and reconciliation

- 1. Dignity and Belonging in Community:** The Bible teaches the essential dignity of all humans and the desire to belong to a community. Sin, however, has caused division and alienation, including racial separation. The gospel, in contrast, brings reconciliation not only between God and humanity but also among estranged groups of people (Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:14-18; Colossians 3:11).
- 2. Affront of Racism:** Racism is a sin that denies the personhood and belonging of individuals created in God's image. It disrupts the peace and unity that God intended for humanity. Christians are called to confront racism, recognizing it as incompatible with the gospel vision of a diverse, reconciled community (Revelation 7:9).
- 3. Racial Injustice and Systemic Racism:** Racism exists not only in personal prejudice but also in systemic institutions that perpetuate inequality. This is evident in the United States' history of genocide, slavery, segregation, and exploitation of marginalized groups. Though progress has been made, racial bias still harms Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics, and other ethnic minorities (Romans 10:12).
- 4. Church Responsibility:** The Church has a special responsibility to model good race relations and promote racial justice. Christians are called to support efforts that address poverty, incarceration, and educational inequity, which disproportionately affect minority communities.
- 5. Rejecting Racism and White Supremacy:** The Church must confess and repent of its role in justifying or ignoring racism. Christians of all races are urged to reject white supremacy and work toward healing and reconciliation. The Church should lead efforts to end racial injustice and foster equality in both the Church and society (2 Corinthians 5:16-20).
- 6. Racial Reconciliation and Leadership:** Christians are called to advocate for policies that respect the dignity of all races and ethnicities. This includes ensuring voting rights for all citizens and opposing voter suppression. The Church should also promote leadership that reflects the diversity of its communities.

## Reference Scriptures (NLT):

- Galatians 3:28: "There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus."
- Ephesians 2:14-18: "For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations."
- Colossians 3:11: "In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us."
- Revelation 7:9: "After this I saw a vast crowd, too great to count, from every nation and tribe and people and language, standing in front of the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes and held palm branches in their hands."
- Romans 10:12: "Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him."

## Just peace and restraining violence.

1. **Vision of Peace:** Jesus and the prophets looked forward to a time when God's reign would bring about peace and justice, where people enjoy the fruits of their labor without oppression or violence. This vision involves more than just the absence of violence; it calls for actively building relationships of respect and understanding.
2. **Christian Role in Peace:** Christians have a unique role in promoting peace, working through their relationships in the global Body of Christ and missionary outreach. Positive engagement across different sectors like education, trade, and environmental protection can reduce the likelihood of violent conflict.
3. **Role of Governments:** While Christians do not seek to bring God's kingdom through force, governments have a responsibility to protect social order. Governments may justly use force under limited conditions, such as defending homelands or liberating the oppressed. Military action, when necessary, must follow just war principles to avoid unnecessary violence.
4. **Just War Principles:** These principles help clarify when military action is justifiable and ensure standards of right conduct in warfare. Governments should evaluate the use of force critically, considering the moral and emotional consequences for veterans, victims of conflict, and their families.
5. **Support for Veterans:** Veterans often face emotional trauma and moral injury, in addition to physical wounds. Governments are urged to address these needs, while Christians continue their ministry through military chaplaincy.
6. **Nonviolent Peacemaking:** Christians should engage in practical peacemaking and nonviolent conflict resolution. This involves diplomacy and conflict transformation at local, national, and international levels, promoting respect across national, tribal, and religious boundaries.