

Bylaws  
of the Association for Public Justice

Preamble

As Christian citizens we join with the Psalmist in a song of thanksgiving to the Lord:

Sing to the Lord, all the earth;  
Sing to the Lord, bless His name;  
Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day.

Say among the nations, “The Lord reigns;  
Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved;  
He will judge the peoples with equity.”  
[The Lord] is coming to judge the earth.  
He will judge the earth in righteousness,  
And the peoples in His faithfulness (Psalm 96:1-2, 10, 13).

Called together by the good tidings of the Lord’s grace and mercy, we humbly acknowledge our responsibility for many of the injustices in the United States and in the relationships between the United States and countries around the world. We confess that to place ultimate trust in “the people” as the source of both political authority and constitutional sovereignty is idolatrous faith. This truth has led our nation both domestically and internationally to impose the will of some “people” on others in ways that have often confused the power of majorities or of minorities with the power of justice, thereby encouraging individualism, arrogance, greed, materialism, racism, sexism, cyber-utopianism, oppression of the weak and the poor, and countless other forms of injustice.

We pray that, in face of so many national and international injustices, God, through Jesus Christ, will graciously forgive us our complicity in political unrighteousness and give us insight and courage so that (1) we may understand that the great commandments to love God and our neighbors as ourselves have distinctly political implications, and that (2) we may exercise the kind of political service that will encourage the establishment of justice and aid the restraint of injustice so that all peoples might enjoy an increasing measure of God’s joyful and peaceful purpose for human life on earth.

With thanksgiving, confession of sin, and prayerful expectation before the Lord we join in organizing this association.

Article I Name

This name of the organization shall be the Association for Public Justice..

## Article II Objects

This association endeavors to foster all those activities which promote the understanding and achievement of public justice.

## Article III Basis

As followers of Christ, we declare with believers in many times and places that the world belongs to God, who is the “Maker of heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them” (Ps. 146:6).

By the authority of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, we confess that God, in his manifest love and wisdom, created the world “very good,” teeming with life and potential. With this act of creation, God created humanity in his image (Gen. 1:27). God then commanded us to “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground” (Gen. 1:28), a charge to *develop* the world that God created, according to the plurality of created, God-ordained cultural spheres. God’s command to “fill” the earth encompasses all of our culture making, including politics.

We confess humanity brought sin into God’s good world. All spheres of life bear the marks of our continued rebellion. We only need to look to our own hearts to see the effects of sin, but these effects are widely visible: sickness, death, injustice, immorality, and more; “the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth” (Rom. 8:22). In our interactions with family and friends, our work and our worship, education, play, art, in our role as citizens – and in the state – we see the mark of sin in our world.

We confess that although our world, through humanity’s sin, has lost its first goodness, God’s good, creational intentions still endure, however muted, – an act of God’s ongoing grace. With steadfast love and mercy God continues to preserve his creation by the power of his word and Spirit, by sending not only sun and rain (Matt. 5:45), but his one and only son as our Savior.

We confess that God through Jesus Christ has chosen to vindicate His will to establish justice in the creation. Through obedience, even to death on a cross, Jesus suffered God’s judgment against human sin – the root of all injustice – thereby reconciling the creation to God, fulfilling God’s plan to establish righteousness in the world. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the ascended Lord –the Light of the World –now works to expose the darkness of sin and to illumine the pathways of justice, including justice in the political sphere. In His light we are able to understand our calling to be obedient to Him as servants and disciples, including in our role as citizens.

As joy-filled recipients of the promised salvation of God, we confess that God’s Word exposes our sin and guilt, teaches us that all of human life should unfold as service to God, and draws us together through His grace into a new life of political responsibility. We commit ourselves to

grateful obedience, offering our hearts and lives to God, to do his work in the world. Longing to see God's kingdom fully come, we strive onward towards the vision of God's justice and righteousness, towards that day when God will "wipe every tear from their eyes." (Rev. 21:4). We long for the day when injustice will end, expecting the day of the Lord, when Christ comes again. Our world belongs to God, the God who created all things in the beginning, the God who sustains all things by his word and spirit, the God who is coming back, in glory and honor, to make all things right again. Accordingly, through faith in Christ, in the power of His resurrection, we hereby commit ourselves to live politically in keeping with the following affirmations. We believe

1. that any establishment of justice in the world is possible only because of God's judgment and redemption of the creation in Jesus Christ who, as King of kings, possesses all authority in heaven and on earth. Out of the power of his resurrection all authority on earth is delegated by Him as a responsible stewardship. He delegates this authority directly to institutions such as families, schools, churches, and the state.
2. that every legitimate human authority on earth is a calling from God – our Creator, Judge, and Redeemer. Governments are God-ordained institutions of human accountability, called by God to uphold public justice for all citizens who live under them. Governmental authority is distinguishable from other God-given authority in families, schools, churches, and numerous other institutions and organizations. To the extent that public justice is established in the world, we accept it with thanksgiving as a gift of God's patient, providential grace.
3. that a political order exists as a territorial community of civic justice, which is a public-legal community existing for the purpose of guaranteeing justice to every citizen and institution within its territory. "Public justice" indicates the creational calling of the state whose legitimate functions are established internally by public legal principles and limited externally by the task which God delegates directly to other social institutions. The proper task of the state is to bind together, in a public legal community, all persons, groups, and institutions within its territory.
4. that government is the office of human authority within the political community (state) which is called by God to establish, enforce, and adjudicate laws for the sake of public justice. Citizens of the state may, through freely elected representatives, legitimately exercise influence in legislation and in the general direction of the policies of their government, thereby fulfilling their responsibility to help hold government accountable to its calling.
5. that the principles of public justice demand of government an equitable handling of the goods, services, welfare, protection, and opportunity that it controls, without penalty or special advantage to any person, organization, institution or community due to religious, racial, linguistic, sexual, economic or other social and individual differences
6. that the policies of government should be founded on the recognition that the ongoing development of human culture can thrive only in responsible freedom.

Government therefore has no authority to direct society by attempting to gain control of the internal life of non-political communities, institutions, and organizations. Rather, it should restrict itself, in accord with the principles of public justice, encouraging, protecting, and making room for the development of the full range of cultural life, giving special attention to those minority groups or aspects of human culture which may from time to time be oppressed or in danger of losing their freedom to develop.

7. that no person or community of persons anywhere ought to be compelled by governmental power to subscribe to this or any other political creed. Governments ought to honor the conscientious objections that any of its citizens may have against governmental-imposed obligations, provided such objections do not conflict with the government's responsibility to uphold public justice.

#### Article IV Members

Those individuals who accept the Basis set forth in Article III, who in consultation with staff affirm and sign the "Membership Agreement," and who annually make an appropriate financial contribution as determined by the Board, shall be Members of the Corporation. Members shall have the following privileges and responsibilities:

A. To support prayerfully and to criticize responsibly the Corporation's principles, goals, policies, and leadership.

B. To participate in the Corporation's activities within the framework of the guidelines, policies, and programs set forth by the Board of Trustees.

C. To receive official Corporation periodicals and such additional published material as may be determined by the Board of Trustees.

#### Article V Leadership and Authority

Every office of leadership in the Corporation shall require of the officeholder affirmation of the Basis set forth in Article III as well as the Trustee Affirmations & Code of Ethics, the ability and desire to think and act constructively in furtherance of the Corporation's efforts to develop a biblically grounded understanding of politics and law, and to promote civic education oriented by that understanding. Every officeholder shall be faithful in fulfilling his or her stipulated responsibilities of service to the Corporation.

#### Article VI Board of Trustees

The Corporation shall be governed by a Board of Trustees composed as follows:

- A. The Board shall consist of not less than five (5) and not more than ten (10) members.

B. Election to the Board shall be by majority vote of the Board.

C. All Board members shall serve a three (3) year term. Board members who have served two (2) successive terms shall not be eligible for reelection for a period of one (1) year following the completion of such terms.

D. At least 20% and not more than 49% of members of the Board must also be current members of the Board of Trustees of the Center for Public Justice.

E. In addition to the elected Board members, the Executive Director shall serve as an ex officio member of the Board.

#### Article VII Duties of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees of the Corporation shall have the following duties in addition to those listed elsewhere in these Bylaws:

A. To elect from among its members a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

B. To appoint an Executive Committee consisting of the officers of the Board with the Chief Executive Officer and/or other members of the Board or executive officers as the Board may determine.

C. To appoint such committees as it considers necessary.

D. To retain such advisors as it considers necessary.

E. To appoint such staff as it considers necessary.

F. To oversee the supervision and administration of all properties and financial affairs of the Corporation to ensure financial integrity.

G. To establish policies for the Corporation that enables the mission of the Corporation to be accomplished.

H. To prepare a slate of nominees for election to the Board, and to vote on that slate at a duly authorized meeting of the Board.

I. To meet at least once each year and at such other times as may be necessary. All additional meetings shall be called by the Chair of the Board in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Board or by the action of one-third of the members of the Board. A majority of the members of the Board must be present at each meeting to constitute a quorum for the purpose of taking any official action.

#### Article VIII Local Chapters

Local Chapters may be organized under the supervision of the Board of Trustees and shall initially adopt such Bylaws as may be recommended for Local Chapters. Subsequent revisions in such Bylaws may be proposed by Local Chapters, subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall assist Local Chapters in their development and may adopt as part of its Bylaws additional guidelines for organization, activities, and evaluation of such Local Chapters.

#### Article IX Parliamentary Procedure

The rules contained in ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER shall govern meetings of the Corporation's Board of Trustees in all cases in which they are applicable and not inconsistent with the Bylaws or special rules of order adopted by the Board.

#### Article X Amendments

Amendments to these Bylaws may be initiated by any member of the Board of Trustees. Written notice of intention to propose an amendment shall be communicated to all members at least three weeks prior to the meeting at which a vote will be taken on such amendment unless notice of intention to propose such amendment was given at the last official Board meeting prior to the meeting at which a vote will be taken on such amendment. The affirmative vote of three-fourths of the number of currently filled Trustee seats shall be required for passage .

#### Article XI Dissolution

Dissolution of the Corporation shall require a three-fourths affirmative vote of the Board of Trustees. In the event of dissolution all assets shall be disposed of in a manner and to such organizations as may be determined by majority vote of the Board of Trustees, provided, however, that the assets donated shall not be distributed to any member of the Board of Trustees but shall be donated to an organization whose purpose is not inconsistent with the purpose of this organization, and which is exempt under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended.

