

REFORMATION PARTY COVENANT

The Reformation Party Council of Officers would like to invite anyone who shares the convictions expressed below to personally sign this covenant. You can do so privately, of course, but if you wish to sign the covenant in a more public manner, you are welcome to send your name to us at info@reformationparty.org and we will add it to a list of names on the Reformation Party website. When you send your name in, you could also, as you desire, send other information you would like printed with it, such as your city and state, your occupation, etc. Another way to make your signing of the covenant more public would be to hold a public signing--that is, by creating a public event with invitations to people in the local church or community to come and join you, where you and perhaps others can sign the document together. This sort of thing could be done at an already existing event as well, such as a Bible conference, etc. You could even inform the media and invite them to be a part of it (if you feel comfortable with that!). If you do a public signing, please send us (again, at info@reformationparty.org) a brief account of how it went which we can post along with your name on the website. In these sorts of ways, we can let others know what we have done and encourage them with our own witness and stories.

There is much precedent in both biblical teaching and practice as well as in the history of the Reformed church for the practice of covenanting. A "covenant" is an agreement between two parties. Obviously, this concept plays a major role in biblical Christianity. After the creation of man, God graciously entered into a covenant with Adam (the covenant of works), whereby he promised him glorified or eternal life upon the condition of a perfect and perpetual obedience. If Adam had not sinned and had received the promised reward, it would not have been because he, in and of himself, placed God in his debt; but because God always obeys his gracious promises. The covenant of works does have the concept of merit, but it is not merit in the sense that Adam's own works have intrinsic value before God and thus force the Lord's favor, but merit in the sense that God will honor a perfect and perpetual obedience because he has graciously promised to do so. Even apart from his sinful condition connected to the Fall, man is incapable of meriting anything at the hand of God because everything he has comes from God. A human being attempting to merit something from God is like borrowing \$20 from a friend and then attempting to use that money to buy something from that same friend. You can't buy something from someone using money that already belongs to him!

Recognizing this fact, the Westminster Confession of Faith describes the foundation of the idea of a covenant with God in this way:

The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto Him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of Him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which He hath been pleased to express by way of covenant (WCF 7:1).

We are reminded of Paul's words to his listeners on Mars Hill:

“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things” (Acts 17:24-25).

Because of our failure to meet the demands of the covenant of works, God has instituted another covenant, the covenant of grace, by means of which sinners can be saved from sin and made right with God. In the covenant of grace, God "freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him that they may be saved, and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe" (WCF 7:2).

We see, then, that our very lives as created beings and as the redeemed are grounded in a covenant relationship with God. In addition to these foundational covenants, there is a long tradition of God's people making additional covenants with God, which covenants involve additional vows to live a life of obedience to the will of God, supplicating him that he might glorify himself and bestow his blessings on those who have made and who keep their promises to God.

We see this practice in the lives of individuals. Consider the example of Jacob in Genesis 28:20-22:

“And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.”

Jacob was already in covenant with God, who had promised to be his God and to bless him (since he was Abraham's heir and thus heir to the covenant made with Abraham), but Jacob adds to this an additional vow to obedience and prayer for blessing, reaffirming his covenant relationship to God and its attendant blessings and responsibilities.

We also see this practice carried out by the people of God as a whole, or in larger groups, such as in a national capacity. There are many examples of this in the Scriptures, such as the covenant the people of God made with God in the days of King Josiah:

“And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord. And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant” (2 Kings 23:1-3).

Since the apostolic age, the people of God have continued to engage in the practice of making and renewing covenants with God. A prime example of this practice is the Solemn League and Covenant, which was sworn to by the leaders as well as the common people in the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland in the seventeenth century. In this covenant, the people of the three kingdoms swore their commitment to preserve, promote, and defend the true religion in the kingdoms according to

their several places and callings. Other prominent examples of this practice would include the covenanting of the Lords of the Congregation in Scotland during the sixteenth century as they bound themselves to God to promote the biblical Protestant faith in opposition to Romanism, and the Puritan New England colonies who practiced covenanting as a part of the foundation of their self-consciously biblical societies.

In light of this well-attested biblical, historic, and Reformed tradition, the current 2014-term Council of Officers of the Reformation Party have drafted and signed a covenant reaffirming our commitment to the promotion of submission to the Lord Jesus Christ as King of nations among all nations, and we encourage all those who share this commitment to express their unity with us in this endeavor by adding their own signature to the covenant. The covenant is as follows:

“For the advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we pledge by God's grace to seek, according to our several places and callings, that our nation and all other nations covenant with God to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ, adopting the biblical doctrines, worship, discipline, and government outlined in the original Westminster Standards, supporting the church which maintains these, and seeking to assist and defend all those that enter into this (or similar) pledge and covenant.”

We, the members of the 2014 Council of Officers, and all others who will join with us in signing this covenant, do so as a means of making a sacred vow before God, in reliance on his grace, to obey his command to spread his Word to the nations and to work as God's fellow laborers (1 Corinthians 3:9) towards the goal of the full conversion of all the nations to Jesus Christ, in their civil as well as in all other capacities. We are assured that our labor to this end is not in vain, as God has promised to be with us as we go out to "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). God has promised to give all nations into the hands of his Son (Psalm 2), and the day will come when "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the LORD's: and he is the governor among the nations (Psalm 22:27-28)." "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14).

This tract is published and distributed by the Reformation Party (www.reformationparty.org) to encourage explicitly reformed Christian politics so that civil governments “kiss the Son” by upholding God’s moral law summarized in the Ten Commandments. Such Reformation Party Tracts are available for free print out and distribution from www.reformationparty.org/rp/tracts.php.