

KENTUCKY COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
COMMISSION ON JUSTICE MINISTRIES
Christian Principles in an Election Year
Approved by the 57th Annual Assembly, October 29, 2004

Our Christian faith compels us to address the world through the lens of our relationship to God and to one another. Public discourse is enhanced as we engage civic leaders on the values and ethics affirmed by our faith. At the same time, religious liberty and the integrity of our democracy will be protected as candidates refrain from using faith-based organizations and institutions for partisan gain. We offer these ten principles to those seeking to accept the responsibility that comes with holding public office.

1. War is contrary to the will of God. While the use of violent force may, at times, be a necessity of last resort, Christ pronounces his blessing on the peacemakers. We look for political leaders who will make peace with justice a top priority and who will actively seek nonviolent solutions to conflict.

2. God calls us to live in communities shaped by peace and cooperation. We reject policies that abandon large segments of our inner city and rural populations to hopelessness. We look for political leaders who will re-build our communities and bring an end to the cycles of violence and killing.

3. God created us for each other, and thus our security depends on the well-being of our global neighbors. We look for political leaders for whom a foreign policy based on cooperation and global justice is an urgent concern.

4. God calls us to be advocates for those who are most vulnerable in our society. We look for political leaders who yearn for economic justice and who will seek to reduce the growing disparity between rich and poor.

5. Each human being is created in the image of God and is of infinite worth. We look for political leaders who actively promote racial justice and equal opportunity for everyone.

6. The earth belongs to God and is intrinsically good. We look for political leaders who recognize the earth's goodness, champion environmental justice, and uphold our responsibility to be stewards of God's creation.

7. Christians have a biblical mandate to welcome strangers. We look for political leaders who will pursue fair immigration policies and speak out against xenophobia.

8. Those who follow Christ are called to heal the sick. We look for political leaders who will support adequate, affordable and accessible health care for all.

9. Because of the transforming power of God's grace, all humans are called to be in right relationship with each other. We look for political leaders who seek a restorative, not retributive, approach to the criminal justice system and the individuals within it.

10. Providing enriched learning environments for all of God's children is a moral imperative. We look for political leaders who will advocate for equal educational opportunity and abundant funding for children's services.

Finally, our religious tradition admonishes us not to bear false witness against our neighbor and to love our enemies. We ask that the campaigns of political candidates and the coverage of the media in this election season be conducted according to principles of fairness, honesty and integrity.