<u>Civil government: part 3: Revolution, rebellion, and consent of the governed</u> B. (continued): Responsibilities of Christian citizen:

4. <u>Is it ever proper to attempt to overthrow existing government, or to attain freedom from existing government?</u> How can that be right in view of Romans 13:1-4?

a. One justification often used:

lower official protecting citizens from higher official see John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), 4.20.31:

But we must ... be very careful not to despise or violate that authority of magistrates ... which God has established ....

I am speaking all the while of private individuals. For if there are now any <u>magistrates of the people</u>, <u>appointed to restrain the willfulness of kings</u> ... I am so far from forbidding them to withstand, in accordance with their duty, the fierce licentiousness of kings, that, if they wink at kings who violently fall upon and assault the lowly common folk, I declare that their dissimulation involves nefarious perfidy

[nefarious: infamous by way of being extremely wicked]

[perfidy: deliberate breach of faith, calculated violation of trust, treachery],

because they dishonestly betray the freedom of the people, of which they know that they have been appointed protectors by God's ordinance.

(There were other similar Lutheran and Reformed statements.)

b. It is not wrong to try to change a government

- (1) one example: voting
- (2) God "appoints" or establishes leaders (Rom. 13:2)
  - -> but God works through human actions to "appoint" different leaders too
- (3) Examples in Scripture of leaders delivering their people from tyrants:

Moses & Exodus (Exod. 1-14) Judges (Judg. 1:16) Hebrews 11:32-34

c. A difference between an individual criminal breaking a law (Rom. 13 prohibits), and a legitimate lower government official seeking independence from or change in higher government

(American colonies vs. King George III of England)

(Israelites - Egypt/ Pharaoh)

d. Also a difference between individual law-breaker and a group of law-abiding citizens seeking to rid themselves of tyranny

Rom. 13 was not written about this second group.

(plots against Hitler; book of Judges in Bible - God raised up deliverers)

e. Note reasoning in Declaration of Independence

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are <u>endowed by</u> their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of <u>Happiness</u>. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, <u>deriving their just</u> powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes <u>destructive of these ends</u>, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new <u>Government</u> ...

f. Long list of complaints in Declaration of Independence:

King George III had violated laws, dissolved legislatures, revoked charters, etc., and had become a <u>tyrant</u>

- wrongfully depriving Americans of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"

g. Note that it was <u>as representatives of the individual colonies</u> that men signed the Declaration (lower government protecting its citizens from higher government)

h. Sum: I think the American Declaration of Independence, and the War of Independence, were justified, even necessary

ESV Romans 13:1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, 4 for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword (*machaira*) in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger (*ekdikos*) who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. 6 For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. 7 Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

BGT Romans 13:1 Pa/sa yuch. evxousi,aij u`perecou,saij u`potasse,sqw ouv ga.r e;stin evxousi,a eiv mh. u`po. qeou/( ai` de. ou=sai u`po. qeou/ tetagme,nai eivsi,n 2 w[ste o` avntitasso,menoj th/| evxousi,a| th/| tou/ qeou/ diatagh/| avnqe,sthken( oi` de. avnqesthko,tej e`autoi/j kri,ma lh,myontai 3 oi` ga.r a;rcontej ouvk eivsi.n fo,boj tw/| avgaqw/| e;rgw| avlla. tw/| kakw/| qe,leij de. mh. fobei/sqai th.n evxousi,an\ to. avgaqo.n poi,ei( kai. e[xeij e;painon evx auvth/j\ 4 qeou/ ga.r dia,kono,j evstin soi. eivj to. avgaqo,n eva.n de. to. kako.n poih/|j( fobou/\ ouv ga.r eivkh/| th.n ma,cairan forei/\ qeou/ ga.r dia,kono,j evstin e;kdikoj eivj ovrgh.n tw/| to. kako.n pra,ssonti 5 dio. avna,gkh u`pota,ssesqai( ouv mo,non dia. th.n ovrgh.n avlla. kai. dia. th.n sunei,dhsin 6 dia. tou/to ga.r kai. fo,rouj telei/te\ leitourgoi. ga.r qeou/ eivsin eivj auvto. tou/to proskarterou/ntej 7 avpo,dote pa/sin ta.j ovfeila,j( tw/| to.n fo,ron to.n fo,ron( tw/| to. te,loj to. te,loj( tw/| to.n fo,bon to.n fo,bon( tw/| th.n timh.n th.n timh,n

### [BDAG] e;kdikoj

• e;kdikoj, on (s. prec. two entries; trag. et al.; ins, pap, LXX; JosAs 28:3; SibOr 3, 365; Tat.) pert. to justice being done so as to rectify wrong done to another, *punishing*, subst. *one who punishes* (Plut., Mor. 509f; Herodian 2, 14, 3; 7, 4, 5; Sir 30:6; Wsd 12:12; 4 Macc 15:29) of God: (Appian, Bell. Civ. 2, 85 §360; Jos., Bell. 5, 377) e; peri. pa,ntwn tou,twn 1 Th 4:6. Of civil authority: dia,konoj e;kdikoj agent of punishment Ro 13:4.—e[wj e;lqh| e; until an avenger comes (for the murder of Zachariah) GJs 24:2.—DELG s.v. di,kh. M-M. TW.

Note also *ekdikeo*, *ekdikesis*: both used often of carrying out of retributive justice, inflicting harm on one who has done wrong

ESV 1 Peter 2:13 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, 14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

BGT 1 Peter 2:13 ~Upota,ghte pa,sh| avnqrwpi,nh| kti,sei dia. to.n ku,rion( ei;te basilei/ w`j u`pere,conti( 14 ei;te h`gemo,sin w`j diV auvtou/ pempome,noij eivj evkdi,khsin kakopoiw/n e;painon de. avgaqopoiw/n

5. Is it true that governments should derive "their just powers from the consent of the governed"?

- a. Not obvious from any one verse of Scripture
- b. But principles are there
  - (1) <u>Equality</u>: all people in image of God and therefore equal before God (Gen. 1.27, Duet. 1:13)
    so why should anyone (like a king) think he has a right to govern others w/o their consent? why is he better than others? (rejection of a class of "royalty")
    - sense of "all men are created equal" strong in American colonies

(2) <u>PURPOSE</u> OF GOVERNMENT: if government is "God's servant <u>for your good</u>" (Rom. 13:4), then government exists <u>for good of the people</u>, not for good of the king, emperor, etc.
– shouldn't people have right to choose what kind of government will best do them good?

(3) <u>POSITIVE</u> EXAMPLES: examples in Scripture of people approving of their leaders

Exod 4:29-31 (Moses seeks assent of elders and people)

1 Sam. 7:5-6 (Samuel)

1 Sam. 10:24 (Saul - anointed by God in 10:1)

2 Sam. 2:4 (David - anointed by God in 1 Sam. 16:13)

1 Kgs. 1:39-40 (Solomon)

1 Kgs. 12:1 (Rehoboam - but people rejected him in 12:15-16)

Acts 6:3 (first deacons)

(4) <u>NEGATIVE</u> EXAMPLES: examples in Scripture of "tyrants" when power is not checked by need for consent of people

the Pharaohs in Egypt Nebuchadnezzar, other foreign kings Herod the Great (Matt. 2:16)

c. Mayflower Compact in 1620: Pilgrims formed a government by <u>consent</u> of the governed.

d. Much in Declaration of Independence about King George usurping governing powers of Colonies w/o their consent

e. Conclusion: I think governments in general should "derive their just powers from the consent of the governed"

f. In practice: leads to some kind of <u>democracy</u>, not monarchy or dictatorship

6. Is "liberty" a God-given right, like "life"? (see "life, liberty, pursuit of happiness" in Decl. of Independence); also "blessings of liberty" in Constitution)

a. Government is a gift from God, for our <u>good</u> (Rom. 13:4)

-> Therefore government should serve and help people, not enslave and hinder them.

- b. Government exists to serve <u>its people</u>; people do not exist to serve government or its officials. (but note the oppressive ways of a king in 1 Sam. 8:11-20)
- c. Human slavery, oppression: viewed negatively in Scripture (Israel in Egypt, etc.) Exod. 20:2; Lev. 25:10; Isa. 61:1; Lk. 4:18, Cor.3:17

d. We should not think that individual freedoms are "given" to us *by government* (freedom to choose religion, job, place to live, education, friends, how we use our time, money, etc. – the "pursuit of happiness" in 1000s of different ways): government doesn't "have" these to give!

(i) They are part of how *God* created us in his image (Gen. 1:27, and note many appeals to people to choose to obey God, as Gen. 2:17; Josh. 24:15; Matt. 11:28; Rev. 22:17).

(ii) Therefore they should be <u>protected</u> by government, and should be restricted by government only when necessary for the common <u>good</u>

e. Observation of natural world: there is an amazingly strong desire for freedom from tyranny in human <u>heart</u>.

f. What about "the pursuit of happiness"? (also in Declaration of Independence)

(1) What is the alternative? That people do not have the right to pursue their own happiness, but must do what best serves the king (or the royal family, the state religion, the army, the good of society, etc.)

(= modern totalitarian regimes)

(2) "Liberty" therefore includes liberty to pursue what makes you happy

music, sports, fishing, bowling, fitness, art, eating, religious activity, education, community organizations, family, job, etc., etc.

-> this liberty should be protected by government, not taken away

g. Conclusion: I think "liberty" should be seen as

a God-given right

h. Application to current situations in Afghanistan, Iraq (John 8:44)

7. Should government "promote the general welfare"? (seek to bring benefit to its people generally)? Rom. 13:4 (for your good)

1 Pet. 2:14 (reward for those who do good)

-> so why not??

-> but this power must be used <u>cautiously</u>:

- government intervention often does more harm than good

- individual freedom is a huge benefit that is earned at great price and too seldom defended, easily eroded for some "good" (exx. train whistles; NYC elevators)

8. Comments on American government at this time in history

a. The freedoms we have were won at great <u>price</u> Founding Fathers

Armed forces War of Independence Civil War WW I WW II

many other wars

b. Our freedoms give us an unusual <u>responsibility</u> in the history of the world

(1) No religious persecution (and <u>cannot</u> be, acc. to Constitution)

- (2) Free press
- (3) Free market (in large part, though many restrictions)
- (4) Free elections

(5) A governmental system that is <u>self-correcting</u> (based on fundamental theory of <u>limitations on</u> <u>power</u> for any person or group)

Internally: 3 branches of government w/ checks and balances, and w/ bicameral legislative branch

- (1) Legislative branch: makes laws (is supreme in UK, etc.)
- (2) Executive branch: enforces laws (is supreme in dictatorships)
- (3) Judicial: interprets laws

-> I think the greatest struggle in the US in this generation is over restricting the powers of the <u>judicial</u> branch (through appointing non-activist <u>judges</u>): will the "checks and balances" mechanism still work?

<u>Externally</u>: other power structures bring <u>restraint</u> to power of central government state governments local governments press (newspaper, TV, radio, books, journals, Internet) churches freedom to assemble, and to form associations political parties, trade unions, professional organizations, special interest groups, thousands of other associations army separate from local police forces right of citizens to bear arms (2<sup>nd</sup> amendment)

- c. In 2003, an additional factor seen clearly, unique in history of world: Military power vastly greater than any other nation, and not in hands of a evil<u>dictator</u>
- d. This gives us a great responsibility to use these privileges wisely and well
- e. How to protect this system, make it work well?

vote be informed donate \$ or time as able (many gave lives for this country!) serve on jury duty write letters pray serve in government if God calls you

f. Why do all this?

Matthew 22:39 You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Romans 13:9 The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

### First Amendment to U.S. Constitution

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances

# The Mayflower Compact

In the name of God Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the Loyal subjects of our dread Soveraigne Lord King James, by the grace of God, of great Britaine, Franc, & Ireland King, defender of the faith, &c. Having undertaken, for the glorie of God, and advancement of the christian faith and honour of our king & countrie, a voyage to plant the first colonie in the Northerne parts of Virginia. <u>Do by these presents</u> solemnly and mutualy in the presence of God, and one of another, <u>covenant, & combine ourselves togeather into a civill body politick; for our better ordering, & preservation & furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by vertue hearof to enacte, constitute, and frame such just & equal Lawes, ordinances, Acts, constitutions, & offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete & convenient for the generall good of the colonie: unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness wherof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Codd the 11 of November, in the year of the raigne of our soveraigne Lord King James of England, France, & Ireland the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fiftie fourth. Ano: Dom. 1620.</u>

# Declaration of Independence

## In Congress July 4, 1776, The Unanimous Declaration of The Thirteen United States of America

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life. Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, having its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. Such has been the patient suffrance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good ....

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within ....

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers ....

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures ....

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizen taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands ....

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attention to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connection and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Connecticut: Samuel Huntington, Roger Sherman, William Williams, Oliver Wolcott

Delaware: Thomas McKean, George Read, Caesar Rodney

Georgia: Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, George Walton

Maryland: Charles Carroll, Samuel Chase, William Paca, Thomas Stone

Massachusetts: John Adams, Samuel Adams, Elbridge Gerry, John Hancock, Robert Treat Paine

New Hampshire: Josiah Bartlett, Matthew Thornton, William Whipple

New Jersey: Abraham Clark, John Hart, Francis Hopkinson, Richard Stockton, John Witherspoon

New York: William Floyd, Francis Lewis, Philip Livingston, Lewis Morris

North Carolina: Joseph Hewes, William Hooper, John Penn

Pennsylvania: George Clymer, Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris, John Morton, George Ross, Benjamin Rush, Jason Smith, George Taylor, James Wilson

Rhode Island: William Ellery, Stephen Hopkins

South Carolina: Thomas Heyward, Jr., Thomas Lynch, Jr., Arthur Middleton, Edward Rutledge

Virginia: Carter Braxton, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Jefferson, Francis Lightfoot Lee, Richard Henry Lee, Thomas Nelson, Jr., George Wythe