

erroneous and scandalous, observing, in all cases, the rules contained in the Word of God. . . .

That all church power, whether exercised by the body in general or in the way of representation by delegated authority, is only ministerial and declarative; that is to say, that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners; that no church judicatory ought to pretend to make laws to bind the conscience in virtue of their own authority; and that all their decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God. . . .

2. The three functions of government as applied to the church

How do the three functions of government relate to the government of the church? when do these functions (protection, ensuring cooperation, direction) come into play?

a. The first function -- PROTECTION -- as applied to the church

Whenever a person disturbs the services of worship, or attacks someone in the church (verbally or physically), or steals money from the offering or the church safe, or accidentally or purposely knocks down the church sign, or teaches heresy to the young people, or vandalizes the sanctuary, the first function comes into play. Whenever someone harms or endangers the persons or property or doctrine or reputation of the church, the function of protection is called for.

With regard to the exercise of this first function of government in the church, It should be decided (before problems arise) which matters are to be handled by the church itself, and which are to be handled by the secular authorities. To this end, policies need to be formulated, publicly stated, and taught to the people, so that the persons responsible for taking care of these problems will know what to do in such situations. A suggested form for one such policy statement is as follows:

It shall be the policy of the Faith Church of Tipton to report to the appropriate law enforcement authorities all crimes against the persons or property of Faith Church.

b. The second function -- ENSURING COOPERATION -- as applied to the church

If some church members want Sunday school before the morning worship service and others want it afterward, how is the issue decided? Some may want two Sunday morning services while others want one. Some want the evening service to be canceled due to poor attendance; others want it continued (even though they don't attend themselves). Some want prayer meeting in the church building; others want cottage prayer meetings in various homes. Some want to use the church van for an adult spiritual retreat; others want it for a teenage swim party (but with a devotional, of