

## **Six Facets of Biblical Stewardship**

1. The Stewardship of God's Word
2. The Stewardship of the Self
3. The Stewardship of God's Word in a Secular/Religious Society
- 4. The Stewardship of God's Word in the Political Arena**
5. The Stewardship of Earth's Resources and Beauties
6. The Stewardship of Material Goods

# **Stewardship of God's Word in the Political Arena**



[W]e have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel,  
even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts.

1 Thessalonians 2:4

It is difficult to live the life of a free people.

— Woodrow Wilson



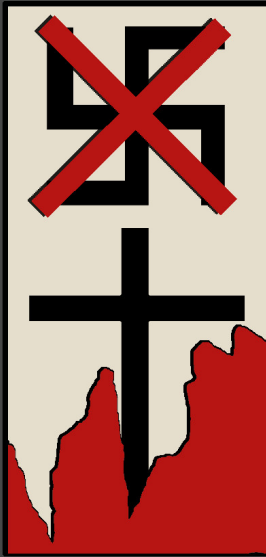




The *Barmen Declaration* of the Confessing Church in Germany in 1934

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* in 1963

Two biblically rooted, theologically framed, classic examples  
of speaking God's truth to the political state  
(all social institutions, especially the church, in the case of King's *Letter*.)



# Barmen Declaration

The Barmen Theological Declaration was crafted and adopted by an emerging "Confessing Church" in May 1934. The writing team included Reformed theologian Karl Barth and Lutheran theologian Hans Asmussen.



### **The Barmen Declaration includes six theses:**

1. The source of revelation is only the Word of God — Jesus Christ. Any other possible sources (earthly powers, for example) will not be accepted.
2. Jesus Christ is the only Lord of all aspects of personal life. There should be no other authority.
3. The message and order of the church should not be influenced by the current political convictions.
4. The church should not be ruled by a leader ("Führer"). There is no hierarchy in the church (Mt 20:25-28).
5. The state should not fulfill the task of the church and vice versa. State and church are both limited to their own business.
6. Therefore, the Barmen Declaration rejects (i) the subordination of the Church to the state (8.22–3) and (ii) the subordination of the Word and Spirit to the Church.



"We reject the false doctrine, as though the State, over and beyond its special commission, should and could become the single and totalitarian order of human life, thus fulfilling the Church's vocation as well."

"We reject the false doctrine, as though the Church, over and beyond its special commission, should and could appropriate the characteristics, the tasks, and the dignity of the State, thus itself becoming an organ of the State."


Dietrich Bonhoeffer gave threefold counsel regarding Christian responsibility to the state:

- 1) advocacy of just laws,
- 2) aid to victims of state injustice, and
- 3) civil disobedience when legal channels fail ("not just to bind up the wounds of the victims beneath the wheel but to seize the wheel itself").

See Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "The Church and the Jewish Question," in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works: Berlin 1932-1933*, ed. Larry L. Rasmussen, trans. Isabel Best and David Higgins (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 12:365.



Primary Source

 History



# Letter from Birmingham Jail

Author  
**Martin Luther King Jr.**

Year Published  
**1963**

Original Language  
**English**

## MAIN IDEAS

### Open Letter to an Intolerant Nation

Writing from his jail cell in April 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. responds eloquently to the eight white clergymen who denounced him and his method of nonviolent protest. His letter's bold appeal to both reason and emotion rallies King's supporters—and the nation—to campaign for equal opportunity and human dignity for all Americans.

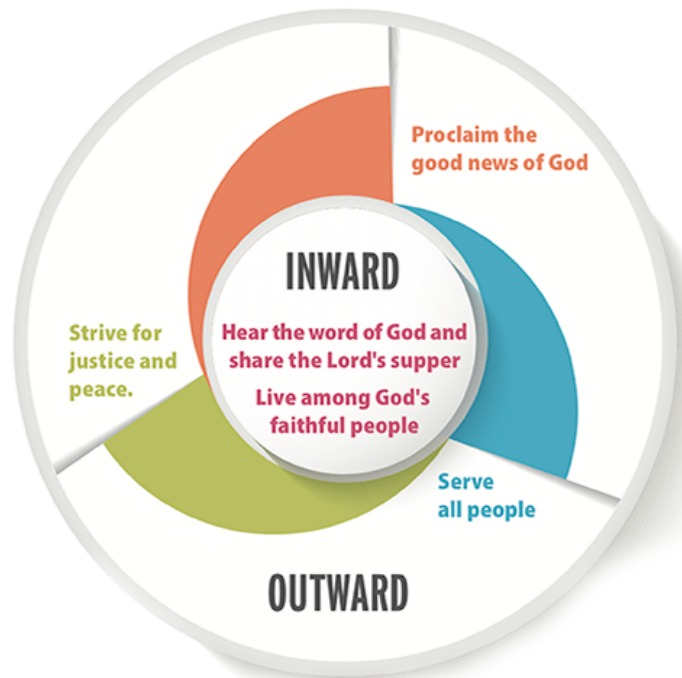
The Affirmation of Baptism provides five faith practices to integrate into our daily life. Receive each as a gift from God:

- **live** among God's faithful people
- **hear** the word of God and **share** in the Lord's supper
- **proclaim** the good news of God in Christ through word and deed
- **serve** all people following the example of Jesus
- **strive** for justice and peace in all the earth

(Affirmation of Baptism, Evangelical Lutheran Worship, p. 236)



# Unwrap the gifts of discipleship



Because the Gospel of Jesus Christ liberates us from sin, death, and evil, the church as the body of Christ is freed to “love the neighbor” (Matthew 22:36).

This includes all of us because *all* of the baptized are the church.



## LIVING OUR BAPTISM...Five gifts of discipleship

### Personal Inventory: Inward, Outward Gifts of Discipleship

When a baptized Christian affirms the faith (often called confirmation) the presiding minister addresses those making public affirmation of baptism and asks the question: Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

to live among God's faithful people,  
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,  
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,  
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,  
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

RESPONSE: We do, and ask God to help and guide us.  
(Evangelical Lutheran Worship, p. 236)

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And so begins a daily claiming and re-discovering of the God-given gifts of discipleship. These gifts overlap and are intertwined as one gift flows into another and into faithful living. But in reality,

How do you put your faith into practice?  
How do you daily practice your faith?

#### INWARD AND OUTWARD GIFTS

The five gifts of discipleship can be divided into two categories:

##### Inward Gifts of Discipleship: MY life is blessed!

Live among God's faithful people  
Hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper

##### Outward Gifts of Discipleship: MY life blesses others!

Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed  
Serve all people, following the example of Jesus  
Strive for justice and peace in all the earth

#### DISCERNMENT: Unwrapping the Gifts of Discipleship

Gifts can be transformative and bring unexpected changes. That is especially true as we are open to God-given gifts. Where is God's Spirit leading you? How might your life please God?

### INWARD

Hear the word of God  
and share the Lord's  
supper  
Live among God's  
faithful people

### OUTWARD

Proclaim the good news  
of God  
Serve all people  
Strive for justice and  
peace.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's Word, Our Faith

Personal Inventory: Inward, Outward Gifts of Discipleship, written by Robin McCullough-Bade  
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## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



A Social Statement

### THE CHURCH IN SOCIETY: A LUTHERAN PERSPECTIVE

*This social teaching statement was adopted by a more than two-thirds majority vote at the second biennial Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in Orlando, Florida, August 28-September 4, 1991.*

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is called to be a part of the ecumenical Church of Jesus Christ in the context in which God has placed it—a diverse, divided, and threatened global society on a beautiful, fragile planet. In faithfulness to its calling, this church is committed to defend human dignity, to stand with poor and powerless people, to advocate justice, to work for peace, and to care for the earth in the processes and structures of contemporary society.

This statement, *The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective*, sets forth affirmations and commitments to guide this church's participation in society. It seeks to be true to this church's mandate to confess and teach both Law and Gospel as the whole Word of the triune God. This church witnesses to the living God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who in love creates, judges, and preserves the world and redeems, sanctifies, and brings it to fulfillment in God's reign.

#### AFFIRMATIONS

##### The Gospel and the Church

The Church, the baptized people of God, is created by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel to proclaim and to follow God's crucified Messiah. As the gathering of children, youth, men, and women who hear, believe, and receive the living Christ in Word and Sacrament, the Church witnesses in word and deed to Jesus as Lord and Savior.

The proclamation of the Gospel as the good news of God's salvation given in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus distinguishes the Church from all other communities. The Gospel liberates from sin, death, and evil and motivates the Church to care for neighbor and the earth.

The witness of this church in society flows from its identity as a community that lives from and for the Gospel. Faith is active in love; love calls for justice in the relationships and structures of society. It is in grateful response to God's grace in



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