

Interrupting Silence: Speaking Out Against Injustice





OASIS Protocols for Breakout Rooms and General Discussion: A review

- Assign spokesperson/note taker at beginning of breakout session
- Ensure all participants have a chance to speak (if they want to speak)
- Be respectful in considering and giving feedback to new or different views
- When possible, a team member may be present in each breakout room to provide support



Class Focus

In this class we will explore the questions, “What is the Church’s role in relationship to society’s political, economic and social issues. What is the Church’s calling and responsibility when people are suffering because of injustice?”



Interrupting Silence: God's
Command to Speak Out
– Walter Brueggemann, 2018

Advocacy as Discipleship
– Blair Moorhead, 2012

Resources



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Classes

1. Introduction
2. Grounding our work by connecting with God and our faith community
3. The high cost of silence
4. Listening to those who cry out; the judge and the widow
5. True compassion for our neighbors
6. Ways we can take action

One position on the Church's relationship to the problems of society



Doctrine of the Spirituality of the Church:

The Church has no commission to construct society afresh . . . to change the forms of its political constitutions. The problems of our fallen state the church has no right to solve.

--James Henley Thornwell

One position on the Church's relationship to the problems of society



“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with **every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places**, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.

He destined us for **adoption as his children** through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.” (Ephesians 1: 3-6)

Discussion Questions



1. Can the church concern itself with its own “spirituality” so much that it fails in its mission to the world? Can the opposite happen – that it spends so much time trying to change the world that it loses its connection to God?
2. How comfortable are you with discussions of political and social issues in church, or with hearing about them from the pulpit?

Another position on the Church's relationship to the problems of society



“The church is not to meddle in politics, abusing its spiritual power for political ends . . .but that does not mean it should cease proclaiming the righteousness of the kingdom, with all of its social and political implications.

We have to understand that the spirituality doctrine not only permits the church to promote the justice and righteousness of the kingdom but *requires* it.”

--Matthew Tuininga

Another position on the Church's relationship to the problems of society



“For Presbyterians, justice work is an integral part of salvation work. In Jesus’ ministry, God is putting right everything that has gone wrong with the fallen, sinful creation. It is not just that God is remaking the “little corner of creation occupied by the Church.” Rather, God is re-creating and perfecting—“saving”—the entire world. Jesus is Lord, not just of the Church but of all creation.”

--Mark Achtemeier

The PCUSA position on the Church's relationship to the problems of society



*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.*

-- Micah 6:

*I hate, I despise your festivals and
I take no delight in your solemn assemblies ...
But let justice roll down like waters,
And righteousness like an ever-flowing
stream.*

— Amos 5:21, 24

The PCUSA position on the Church's relationship to the problems of society



*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to bring good
news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the
captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.
— Luke 4:18-19*

The PCUSA position on the Church's relationship to the problems of society



“Presbyterian Christians have always recognized that, along with our deliverance from the powers of death and sin, God’s restoration of the fallen world involves also *the healing of our corrupt and broken social relationships.*

God’s coming transformation of the world involves the healing of human institutions as well as the healing of human hearts.”

--Mark Achtemeier

Russian Priest Speaks Out on the War in Ukraine



“I don’t consider it possible to remain silent on this situation,” he said in an interview, speaking through an interpreter. “It wasn’t about politics,” he added. “It was about the Bible. ... **If I remain silent, I’m not a priest.**” . . .

Yet Burdin framed his actions as a requirement of his Christian faith.

“Your job is not to change, but to testify,” he wrote.

Discussion Questions



1. What are your thoughts about the idea that God's plan for salvation includes both redeeming souls and transforming the social order? How aware were you that both are an important part of the Reformed and Presbyterian tradition?
2. What is your reaction to Rev. Ioann Burdin's statement that if he remains silent, he is not a priest? Do you agree with his view that he can't remain silent and still be a priest? Explain.