

## **CHARGE #1 AND SPECIFICATIONS**

**Preferred by the Presbytery of Southern California**

**against**

**The Rev. C. Lee Irons**

*June 1, 2002*

The Presbytery of Southern California of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church charges you, the Rev. C. Lee Irons, with publicly promoting and encouraging the practice of homosexuality, in violation of the seventh commandment.

This offense is not only in violation of the seventh commandment as it is contained in the Decalogue (Exodus 20:14) and elaborated elsewhere in Scripture (e.g., Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26, 27; 1 Timothy 1:10), but is also a violation of the injunctions of Scripture that call Christians to encourage good moral conduct in others (e.g., Titus 2:11-14; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Ephesians 5:3-12; and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Our secondary standards also give witness to this offense in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter XXIV.1 and XIX.5; the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, Q 138-139 and 92-99; and in the *Shorter Catechism*, Q 71 and 39-41.

This offence is serious enough to warrant a trial because it has seriously damaged the peace and public reputation of the church, and without remedial action it threatens to seriously compromise its purity. Particular areas of expressed concern:

- a. The advocacy of "same-sex marriage" as a "civil right" has brought scandal to the OPC and other Bible-believing Christians.
- b. The opinion that homosexuality is an unchosen "condition" has raised questions for some about Mr. Irons' ability to offer truly biblical counsel to those trapped in or struggling with homosexual sin or temptation.
- c. These teachings have caused members to leave Redeemer chapel for reasons of conscience.
- d. These opinions have given aid and comfort to the enemies of the cross of Christ (cf. e.g., Mr. Irons' financial support for the gay Roman Catholic journalist Andrew Sullivan [ [http://www.andrewsullivan.com/tipping\\_point.php](http://www.andrewsullivan.com/tipping_point.php) ], and the posting on the "Upper Register" website of an article by Walter Olson against Mr. Irons' Christian brethren).

## Specifications

1. On or about January 2, 2002, you posted a paper entitled, "A Conservative Christian Case for Civil Same-Sex Marriage," by Misty Irons on your "Upper Register" web page ([www.upper-register.com](http://www.upper-register.com)).

a. This paper maintains that, in the civil arena, Christians are free to advocate what is declared to be wicked perversion by the Word of God (i.e., homosexuality and same-sex marriage).

(1) The article promotes a pragmatic, "civil libertarian" political strategy, rather than the application of the principles of God's moral law to sin of homosexuality in our society.

The future of the Christian church in America lies with the preservation of civil liberties, not with the dogged pursuit of our Christian moral agenda to the annoyance of everyone else. (p. 1)

(2) It advocates that we do evil (licensing abomination) in order that good may come (mutual political support of civil liberties), arguing that a respect for people's civil liberties in this country "is absolutely essential for the church's survival in a pluralistic society." (p. 1)

b. The paper distinguishes homosexual attraction from homosexual sexual activity, and equates homosexuality with the attraction rather than the act. By claiming that homosexuality is an unchosen "condition," rather than a sin of the heart, the author contradicts the teaching of Scripture that both the desire and the act are sin.

(1) The author writes, "Am I saying that the civil rights argument rests on understanding homosexuality to be an unchosen condition? Absolutely." (p. 3)

(2) The author makes reference to the general trend of homosexual testimony as to "how in spite of every incentive, the desire for parental approval, the dream of someday having children, gaining acceptance in a small town community, escaping the threat of AIDS, people still could not change literally (as in the case of AIDS) to save their lives." (pp. 3-4) Conspicuous by its absence from that list of incentives is any reference to the power of the gospel.

c. The paper arbitrarily (i.e., apart from any biblical justification) distinguishes homosexual practice from what the author considers "perverse sexual choices"

(e.g., incest and bestiality).

People who like having sex with family members or dumb animals are making perverse sexual choices. (p. 3)

But isn't there a big difference between a person who chooses incest or bestiality against the normal marriage options available to him, and a person who is only capable of being sexually attracted to someone of the same gender, so that without the right to enter into same-sex marriage he or she is left with no marriage option at all? (p. 3)

A civilized society ought to recognize that there is a big difference between homosexuality thus understood, and perverse and irresponsible sexual practices such as incest and bestiality. (p. 4)

d. Throughout this paper the author consistently demeans the efforts of Christians who bear witness to the sins of our culture using biblical moral standards. "We are so quick on the draw when it comes to whipping out our Bibles. Then we get trigger-happy, demolishing every protest with yet another verse that condemns homosexuality as a sin." (p. 3)

Words like "religious rhetoric," "doggedly," "annoyance," "smugly," "ad nauseum," "smearing," "half-truths," "trumpeting," and "drench them with our loving Christian compassion" are woven into this thesis in such a way as season it with an uncharitable sarcasm, rendering contemptible the efforts of those who both believe that homosexuality and same sex marriages are sin and minister the gospel grace of Christ to homosexuals in word and deed.

2. In a communication to Mr. Brian Janko, a member of Redeemer Chapel, you affirmed your substantial agreement with Mrs. Irons' paper:

I am comfortable saying that we are in fundamental agreement on the main issues. However, I do not formally endorse Misty's view of civil same-sex marriage in my capacity as the pastor of Redeemer or as an ordained minister in the OPC." (Email from Lee Irons to Brian Janko, dated 1-9-02, p. 4)

I am comfortable leaving [Mrs. Irons'] article as it is. However, as a compromise, I would be willing to put up alongside it an article that takes the opposite position, as long as it argues for the prohibition of civil same-sex marriage on other grounds besides the fact that homosexuality [sic] activity is defined as sin in Scripture..." (Ibid.).

3. In a subsequent meeting with Mr. & Mrs. Janko at their home, you made it clear to them that you strongly agreed with Mrs. Irons' position. (Testimony by Mr. & Mrs. Janko.)

4. On or about March 11, 2002, you removed Mrs. Irons' article (and a footnote reference to it in one of your articles), and posted and "A Note from Lee Irons on Misty's Article," explaining your removal of the article. This "disclaimer" does not take issue with the substance of the article in question, but rather justifies it as, in your opinion, "within the bounds of the Confession of the OPC."

As the owner and webmaster of The Upper Register, I posted Misty's article under the Theonomy page. Misty did not ask me to post her article on the website. I am responsible for all decisions regarding what is posted. The posting of articles other than my own on this website does not imply an unqualified endorsement by me personally, although it does suggest that I regard it as being consistent with the aims of the website. (p. 1)

...I felt that I could at least make the case that Misty's position, while a minority view, was within the bounds of the Confession of the OPC. (p. 2)

After weighing the responses and their various concerns, I removed the article from The Upper Register for the following reasons:

First, the terminology "same-sex civil unions" should have been used instead of "civil same-sex marriage." The term "civil marriage" in a political opinion piece is arguably not identical to the term "marriage" when used in theological discourse. Nevertheless, "same-sex civil unions" would have helped to avoid giving the misleading impression that these unions are in any way truly "marriage" as ordained by God at creation and renewed in common grace form after the fall. The advantage of "same-sex civil unions" is that it moves the discussion away from the perceived legitimization of the sexual activity that takes place within those unions, and directs attention instead to the state's recognition of certain legal benefits (e.g., joint property, inheritance rights, etc.).

Second, the article errs in calling upon the church to support the political position advocated in the article. This seems to suggest that the church, in her corporate capacity, is being called upon to make a public pronouncement on a social and political issue. The doctrine of the spirituality of the church was not properly safeguarded when Misty argued, in her opening sentence, "Since the church believes gay marriage is wrong for religious reasons, it is in the church's best interest to support gay marriage for civil rights reasons." As it stands, this statement transgresses the very "cultic boundary" between church and state that The Upper Register stands for.

Third, in the course of making her argument for same-sex civil marriage (or

unions), Misty raised the controversial issue of the nature of homosexuality. She distinguishes between an involuntary orientation (same-sex attraction) and homosexual activity, both of which are sinful. Misty believes that the concept of sexual orientation is an essential component of her argument. However, the debate over the nature of homosexuality, while worthy of discussion by the church, falls outside the scope of The Upper Register.

For these reasons, I wish to apologize for posting an article that contained such confusing language. It was not my intention to offend or scandalize any of my brothers or sisters in Christ. (p. 2)

**Documents:**

1. Misty Irons, "[A Conservative Christian Case for Civil Same-Sex Marriage.](http://www.musingson.com)" (www.musingson.com)
2. Lee Irons, Email to Brian Janko, dated 9 January, 2002
3. Lee Irons, "[A Note from Lee Irons on Misty's Article.](http://www.upper-register.com)" (www.upper-register.com)

**Witnesses:**

1. Mr. & Mrs. Brian Janko

## **CHARGE #2 AND SPECIFICATIONS**

**Preferred by the Presbytery of Southern California**

**Against**

**The Rev. C. Lee Irons**

*June 1, 2002 (Amended July 20, 2002)*

The Presbytery of Southern California of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church charges you, the Rev. C. Lee Irons, with violating your ordination vows by teaching, contrary to the Scriptures and the Westminster Standards, that the Decalogue is no longer binding on believers as the standard of holy living.

This offense is a violation of the Scriptures (cf. Psalm 1:1-2; Jeremiah 31:33-34; Ezekiel 36:26-28; Matthew 5:17-19; Luke 10:26-28; Romans 13:8-10; 1 Corinthians 7:19; Galatians 5:14; Ephesians 6:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 8:6-10; James 2:8-11; 1 John 3:4; Revelation 14:12).

It is also contrary to our subordinate standards:

WCF XIX:1. God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience...

WCF XIX:2. This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments...

WCF XIX.3. ...this law, commonly called moral...

WCF XIX:V. The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that, not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it. Neither doth Christ, in the gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.

WCF XIX:6. Although true believers be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified, or condemned; yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life informing them of the will of God, and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly...It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin: and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve; and what afflictions, in this life, they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of

obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof: although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works. So as, a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law; and, not under grace.

WCF XIX:7. Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely, and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done.

WCF XX:1. The liberty which Christ hath purchased for believers under the gospel consists in...their yielding obedience unto him, not out of slavish fear, but a childlike love and willing mind. All which were common also to believers under the law. But, under the new testament, the liberty of Christians is further enlarged, in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish church was subjected...

WSC 14: Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

WLC 24: Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature.

WSC 39-81 (esp. 40-42) and WLC 91-148 (esp. 91-98) must be understood to teach that the moral law, summarized in the Ten Commandments, still has commanding authority over the believer.

WLC 93: The moral law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding everyone to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience thereunto, in the frame and disposition of the whole man, soul and body, and in performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which he oweth to God and man: promising life upon the fulfilling, and threatening death upon the breach of it.

WLC 95: The moral law is of use to all men, to inform them of the holy nature and will of God, and of their duty, binding them to walk accordingly; to convince them of their disability to keep it, and of the sinful pollution of their nature, hearts, and lives; to humble them in the sense of their sin and misery, and thereby help them to a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and of the perfection of his obedience.

WLC 97: Although they that are regenerate, and believe in Christ, be delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, so as thereby they are neither justified nor condemned; yet, besides the general uses thereof common to them with all men, it is of special use, to show them how much they are bound to Christ for his fulfilling it, and enduring the curse thereof in their stead, and for their good; and

thereby to provoke them to more thankfulness, and to express the same in their greater care to conform themselves thereunto as the rule of their obedience.

WLC 99: For the right understanding of the ten commandments, these rules are to be observed:

1. That the law is perfect, and bindeth everyone to full conformity in the whole man unto the righteousness thereof, and unto entire obedience forever; so as to require the utmost perfection of every duty, and to forbid the least degree of every sin.
2. That it is spiritual, and so reaches the understanding, will, affections, and all other powers of the soul; as well as words, works, and gestures.
3. That one and the same thing, in divers respects, is required or forbidden in several commandments.
4. That as, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden; and, where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded: so, where a promise is annexed, the contrary threatening is included; and, where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included.
5. That what God forbids, is at no time to be done; What he commands, is always our duty; and yet every particular duty is not to be done at all times.
6. That under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded; together with all the causes, means, occasions, and appearances thereof, and provocations thereunto.
7. That what is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are bound, according to our places, to endeavor that it may be avoided or performed by others, according to the duty of their places.
8. That in what is commanded to others, we are bound, according to our places and callings, to be helpful to them; and to take heed of partaking with others in what is forbidden them.

This is an offense serious enough to warrant a trial in that it not only disturbs the peace, purity and unity of the church, but violates the system of doctrine contained in the Holy Scriptures as set forth in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms (BD, III.7.b. para.2; cf. XXIII.8(2) and (6), second and sixth ordination vows).

### **Specifications:**

1. That you have, on numerous occasions, publicly called into question the teaching of the Westminster Standards regarding the moral law.
  - a. "The will of God that is rooted in God's unchanging nature and in man's created nature as God's image. Traditionally this has been labeled 'the moral law.' The drawback of the traditional label is that it is then equated with the Decalogue. This can be seen, for example, in the first two paragraphs of chapter 19 of the Westminster Confession. Paragraph one says that the moral law was given to



Adam in the garden. Paragraph two then asserts, 'This law' (referring back to the law given to Adam) 'after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness, and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments.' This formulation effectively places the Decalogue in the garden, thus transforming the Decalogue into a creation ordinance, an expression of the timeless moral will of God binding all men in all ages. The authors of the Westminster Confession apparently ignored Paul's teaching that the Mosaic Law is binding only Jews (Rom. 2:12) and given chronologically after the fall (Rom. 5:13). Furthermore, having stated that the Decalogue is 'a perfect rule of righteousness,' the Westminster divines contradict themselves and teach that the Sabbath day has changed to the first day of the week after the resurrection of Christ." ("Three Covenantal Enshrinements of the Moral Will of God," p. 1)

b. "In my opinion, the traditional three-fold division of the Mosaic Law, as a method of determining what is still binding and what is not, is fundamentally flawed and needs major revision" ("Married to Another," p. 3)

c. "So the three-fold division of the Law is wrongheaded, but its fundamental concern to maintain that large swaths of the Mosaic Law reflect the moral will of God founded on God's righteous nature and man's identity as the image of God is valid. This moral will, however, must not be equated with the Decalogue, nor can it be defanged into a list of bare non-covenantal commands - 'the moral law not as covenant of works.' The core ethic of the Law *is* a covenant of works, to which the believer has died in Christ, and which Christ has fulfilled." (*Ibid.*, p. 5)

d. "I am concerned about our Reformed teaching on the Law, because our systematics must be conditioned by biblical theology, that is, by the covenantal, eschatological, and redemptive historical thrust of the Scripture. The New Testament does not divide the Mosaic Law into three categories (moral, ceremonial, and civil) and three uses, (*usus politicus*, *usus elenchticus*, and *usus normativus*). Not all scholastic distinctions and categories are bad, but in this case they have taken us further and further away from Scripture. There is a major gap between the abstract, systematic approach of the Reformed tradition, and the redemptive-historical, Christocentric approach to the Law of Jesus and the apostles. The New Testament consistently refers to the Law as a unit, and deals with it as a unit in light of the interpretive transformation effected by Christ's own teaching, and (most importantly) by his death and resurrection." (*Ibid.*, p. 9)

e. "Are we preaching our system or the living and active Word of Christ? These questions have significant practical implications. I believe that the third use of the Law in the Reformed tradition can easily drift toward legalism." (*Ibid.*)

f. "If the exegesis presented in this paper is correct, the statement that the Sabbath is 'a positive, moral and perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages' is not Scriptural. I am of the opinion that the Confession ought to be revised to bring it into line with the Scriptural teaching that the Sabbath is an eschatological sign

for the covenant community." ("The Sabbath as an Eschatological Sign of the Covenant," p. 13)

g. "Perhaps the gravest error in the divines' handling of the fourth commandment is that they seem to suggest that it doesn't make much difference whether the Sabbath is observed on Saturday or Sunday. The implication seems to be that while the day may have changed, the nature of the Sabbath itself has not. The change of day is a superficial matter of outward administration, thus blurring the sharp contrast between the works principle inherent in the old covenant Sabbath (work, then rest) and the faith principle inherent in the new covenant Lord's Day (rest, then work). In the Puritan view of the Sabbath there is nothing 'new' about the new covenant day of rest. It is just the same, old covenant Sabbath, shifted to Sunday. As one who has come to appreciate the redemptive historical nature of the Scriptures, I believe this approach is deficient. A proper redemptive historical consideration of this subject demands that we consider the significance of the change in terms of the epochal transition from the old covenant to the new, from a covenant of works to be kept by Israel, to the covenant of works to be fulfilled by Christ." (*Ibid.*, p. 14)

h. "I suspect that this non-eschatological view of the Sabbath is part of the reason why the authors of the Confession thought that the Sabbath was applicable to the unbeliever. If you begin by defining the Sabbath as a day set aside for the worship of God, it makes sense to argue that, since all men are obligated to worship God, they are obligated also to set aside the day in order to fulfill that duty. The medieval, theocratic notion of Christendom that the divines inherited from the magisterial reformers undoubtedly played a role in this thinking. (*Ibid.*, p. 14)

i. From the report of the Ministerial Oversight Committee to the Presbytery of Southern California (ISM, Feb. 2001) based on a meeting with Mr. Irons, which took place on November 17, 2000.

(1) "He (Mr. Irons) stated that since the time of his ordination he has become aware of the words 'by a positive, moral and perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages' in Chapter XXI-7 and their reference, in context, to the Sabbath and that this discovery obliges him to declare a scruple with respect to this part of the Confession. He stated that he did not believe the Ten Commandments to be merely a condensation of the moral law, since numerous aspects of the Decalogue are directed specifically to the covenant community, (e.g. Exod. 20:2, 5-7, 7, 8-11, 12b), whereas the moral law is binding on all men.

(2) "He (Mr. Irons) further stated that he knew that his present position regarding Chapter XXI-7 had implications with respect to Chapter XIX, wherein paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 taken together, contradict his understanding."

j. "But the biggest weakness with the reformed approach is that it doesn't seem to fit with what you read in the New Testament. Nowhere in the New Testament, either in the teaching of Jesus or the Apostles, do they make this three-fold division of the law. Instead, the New Testament seems to view the law as a unit. The law is always referred to as "the law." And then the NT writers, following the lead of Jesus himself, which we'll look at in a minute, take that law as a unit and say that it must be interpreted redemptive-historically in light of its fulfillment in Christ." ("Is the Law Abolished?", p. 2)

2. That you have denied that the Decalogue, as a summary of the moral law, continues to have binding authority over the Christian.

a. "He is heaping up synonym upon synonym to say that it's not just a subset of the law that Christ abolished. But it is law, as law. The law viewed as a body of commandments and regulations. That is what Christ did away with. Paul seems to imply that the entirety of the Mosaic law in its character as commandment...in its character as an authority that has the power to regulate human behavior and conduct...has been rendered inoperative." ("Is the Law Abolished?", p. 3)

b. "We are no longer under the law. And that doesn't just mean that we're no longer under the law as a means of justification, because the law was never given as a means of justification. It means that we are freed from the law...we are released from its binding authority. To want to be under the law in its commanding authority is to want to go back to the Old Covenant period when God gave that law to his people to govern them in their childhood. The authoritative rules and regulations of the Mosaic law are for the immature. Those who understand the newness of the New Covenant, and their standing as mature sons in Christ, not infants, not slaves, but sons in Christ, do not need to be hand held by an external code." (*Ibid.*, p. 5)

c. "But in some cases, he is contrasting his teaching with the original revelation that God gave through Moses. Jesus places himself in a position of unheard of authority over the law. He is sovereignly above it. He is not under it merely as a scribe whose job is just to exegete it, to tell us what it means, to apply it. He is over it as a lawgiver and to give us a definitive revelation of God's will in the new age. He adopts a superior stance to the law as one who sovereignly reinterprets the law by his own person and work." (*Ibid.*, p. 6)

d. "You see, the idea here is this; that the Old Covenant revelation of law that God gave on Mount Sinai was a type and a shadow. It was a provisional righteousness. It was a provisional revelation of God's will." (*Ibid.*)

e. "The new Moses is here revealing the new law on the eschatological mountain. And thus, even though Jesus does not say that the law of Moses has been set aside and replaced by the law of Christ, that is the point he is trying to make." (*Ibid.*, p.

7)

f. "Having denied that the law has been abolished in that sense, both Jesus and Paul then clarify the sense in which the law remains in force. It remains in force not as law, not as commandment. But rather it remains in force in terms of the redemptive-historical reality that has dawned in the coming of the kingdom of Jesus Christ." (*Ibid.*)

g. "We are not under the law. Paul uses that phrase ten times in his writings. This means that we are free from the condemnation of the law and we are freed from the commanding authority of the law as the Old Covenant." (*Ibid.*)

h. "...the clear teaching of Scripture concerning the exclusively redemptive historical purpose of the Mosaic Law." ("Reformed Theocrats," p. 9).

i. "If you are reading the Bible and you come across a commandment, you have to ask yourself, which covenant is this command functioning in? If you are not a party to that covenant, the stipulation does not bind you directly (e.g. if you are a Christian, you are not bound to any of the stipulations of the Mosaic Covenant). ("Three Covenantal Enshrinements of the Moral Will of God," p. 2)

## Documents:

1. Lee Irons, "[The Reformed Theocrats: A Biblical Theological Response](#)," 2002 (www.upper-register.com)
2. Lee Irons, "Is the Law Abolished?" (A sermon on Ephesians 2:15a), February 4, 2001.
3. Lee Irons, "[The Sabbath as an Eschatological Sign of the Covenant](#)," 2002 (www.upper-register.com)
4. Lee Irons, "[Married to Another](#)," February 28, 2002 (www.upper-register.com)
5. Lee Irons, "[Three Covenantal Enshrinements of the Moral Will of God](#)" (www.upper-register.com)
6. \_\_\_\_\_, "The Report of the Ministerial Oversight Committee" (dated January 1, 2001)
7. Lee Irons, "[A Note from Lee Irons on Misty's Article](#)," 2002 (www.upper-register.com)
8. Misty Irons, "[A Conservative Christian Case for Civil Same-Sex Marriage](#)," 2000 (www.musingson.com)

## CHARGE #3 AND SPECIFICATIONS

Preferred by the Presbytery of Southern California

Against

**The Rev. C. Lee Irons**

*July 20, 2002*

The Presbytery of Southern California of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church charges you, the Rev. C. Lee Irons, with violating your ordination vows by teaching, contrary to the Scriptures and the Westminster Standards, that civil government must be religiously neutral, and therefore not subject to the binding authority of God's special revelation in Scripture (including the Moral Law).

This offense is a violation of the Scriptures (cf. Rom. 13:1-4; Ps. 2:10-12; Isa. 2:1-4; Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:19b-21; Phil. 2:9-11; Deut. 4:5-8; Matt. 5:17-19; Rom. 2:14-16; Hebr. 2:2; Deut. 17:18-20; Prov. 16:10-12; 14:34; Deut. 9:4-5; Gen. 15:13-16; Deut. 18:9,12). It is also contrary to our subordinate standards (emphases added):

WCF XIX:1. *God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience...*

WCF XIX:2. *This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments...*

WCF XIX.3. *...this law, commonly called moral...*

WCF XIX.4. *To them also, as a body politic, he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the State of that people; not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require.*

WCF XIX:5. *The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that, not only in regard of the matter contained in it, but also in respect of the authority of God the Creator, who gave it. Neither doth Christ, in the gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen this obligation.*

WLC Q 93. *The moral law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding every one to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience thereunto, in the frame and disposition of the whole man, soul and body, and in performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which he oweth to God and man: promising life upon the fulfilling, and threatening death upon the breach of it.*

WLC Q 99, sub. 7. *That what is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are bound, according to our places to endeavour that it may be avoided or performed by others, according to the duty of their places.*

WSC Q 39. The *duty* which God requireth of *man*, is *obedience* to his revealed will.

WSC Q 40. The *rule* which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was *the moral law*.

WSC Q 41. The *moral law* is summarily comprehended in *the ten commandments*.

WCF XXII:2. The *name of God only* is that by which men ought to swear, and therein it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence... Yet, as in matters of weight and moment, an oath is warranted by the Word of God, under the new testament as well as under the old; so *a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority*, in such matters, *ought to be taken*.

WCF XXIII:1. God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates, *to be, under him*, over the people, *for his own glory*, and the public good...

WCF XXIII:2. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto: in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to *maintain piety*, justice, and peace, *according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth*...

WCF XXIII:3. ...as nursing fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to *protect the church of our common Lord*, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger.

WCF XXIV:4. Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity *forbidden by the Word*. Nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful *by any law of man* or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife.

WCF XXIV:6. Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage: yet, nothing but adultery, or such willful desertion *as can no way be remedied by the church*, or *civil magistrate*, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein, a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills, and discretion, in their own case.

This is an offense serious enough to warrant a trial in that it not only disturbs the peace, purity and unity of the church, but violates the system of doctrine contained in the Holy Scriptures as set forth in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms (BD, III.7.b. para.2; cf. XXIII.8(2) and (6), second and sixth ordination vows).

**Specification:** You have written as follows:

a. "The Mosaic Law, then, was not given to provide a blueprint for all the civil governments of the world, but to provide the historical, covenantal context for the incarnation of Christ who was 'born under the Law' in order to bring it to its perfect fulfillment (Matt. 5:17). As Paul says, Christ is 'the *telos* [goal, fulfillment, terminus, completion] of the Law' (Rom. 10:4). If Paul is correct about the exclusively redemptive historical purpose of the Law as teleologically terminating in Christ, and if 'the Law is good if one uses it lawfully' (I Tim. 1:8), then Bahnsen's claim that 'civil magistrates in all ages and places' are obligated to enforce the terms of the Mosaic Law is an unlawful use of the Law. ("Reformed Theocrats: A Biblical Theological Response," p. 11).

b. "Having established the distinction between God's holy theocratic kingdom and the common grace institution of civil government, Kline then draws the logical conclusion that there is a 'cultic boundary' separating the two spheres that may not be violated. The cultic boundary may be defined as follows. Any and all cultic activity - e.g., religious instruction, public confessions of faith in God or any alleged deity, cultic rituals such as sacrifice, the building of temples for the gods - has no place in the common grace state. ...the state must be religiously neutral, that is, confessing allegiance neither to the God of the covenant people nor to the gods of the unbelievers." ("Reformed Theocrats," p. 13)

c. "Respect for the cultic boundary...would demand that the church adopt a civil libertarian position calling for the removal of civil confessions of faith in the public arena, e.g., 'in God we trust,' 'God bless America,' 'one nation under God,' and the public posting of the ten commandments. It would also mean that in policy debates on subjects like abortion and same-sex union, Christians must abandon appeals to Scripture and employ publicly accessible arguments grounded in religiously neutral, secular objective. (Endnote 51 - "One obvious secular objective that should be the starting point for discussion is the protection of the civil liberties/rights of all citizens - both the born and the unborn, irrespective of sexual orientation, religious allegiance, and ethnic or racial origin. To see how the political principles espoused in this essay might be applied with regard to the debate over homosexuality, see Misty Irons, "A Conservative Christian Case for Civil Same-Sex Marriage.")" ("Reformed Theocrats," pp. 13,22)

d. "The church must resist the impulse to have the ethical standards of God's covenantal revelation in Scripture legislatively enforced in the civil sphere. Only when the church honors the cultic boundary between the common grace institution of the state and holy kingdom of God, does the church truly honor the Lordship of Jesus Christ, for as Lord over all creation, including the civil sphere, he himself is the one who has ordained that cultic boundary (Matt. 22:21; John 18:36)." ("Reformed Theocrats," p. 13)

e. "The state was ordained and established by God, and he designed that institution...in order to provide for a pragmatic cooperation between believers and unbelievers for the achievement of certain temporal ends such as physical



safety, rule of law, criminal justice, and self-defense. In order to fulfill these common purposes, the state must be religiously neutral, that is, confessing allegiance neither to the God of the covenant people nor to the gods of the unbelievers." ("Reformed Theocrats," p. 15).

f. "I reasoned, if the OPC officially repudiates the theocratic notion that the civil magistrate ought to enforce the first two commandments, on what ground could the church argue that the civil enforcement of the seventh commandment is an essential point of doctrine?" ("A Note from Lee Irons on Misty's Article," p. 1)

g. "...the magistrate's duty is here [WCF XXIII:3] defined as having special reference to the protection of all of its citizens, regardless of religious confession or lack thereof, against 'indignity, violence, abuse, or injury.'

The above interpretation of the American revisions might be debated at certain points, but I felt that I could at least make the case that Misty's position, while a minority view was within the bounds of the Confession of the OPC." ("A Note from Lee Irons on Misty's Article" p. 2)

#### **Documents:**

1. Lee Irons, ["The Reformed Theocrats: A Biblical Theological Response,"](http://www.upper-register.com) 2002 (www.upper-register.com)
2. Lee Irons, ["A Note from Lee Irons on Misty's Article,"](http://www.upper-register.com) 2002 (www.upper-register.com)
3. Misty Irons, ["A Conservative Christian Case for Civil Same-Sex Marriage,"](http://www.musingson.com) 2000 (www.musingson.com)