

THE CHAPEL POSITION ON MATTERS OF THE CONSCIENCE AND RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION

It is our best and humble understanding of Scripture that God guides individual Christians in amoral matters of the conscience, in such a way that it is best not to violate their conscience by what they do and do not do. As a matter of living out their faith, the Believer is to act in faith in all that they do. In other words, God encourages what the world calls 'conscientious objection' (in amoral matters), so that an individual lives with a clear conscience before God, avoiding engagement in behaviors that they understand to be sinful. To engage in the same, would be to sin before God.

Examples in Scripture include engaging in certain patterns of behavior in worship, and eating certain foods (i.e., taking things into one's body) in a state where one is 'filled with doubts' and in so doing, self-condemning to one's conscience.

But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Romans 14:23 (NIV)

To that end, if a provision is made for conscientious objection, so as to abstain from a behavior that a Christian feels like he/she, if they participate, would be sinning before God, then we affirm that in good submission to authority (as also prescribed by Scripture), that individual is justified in abstaining.

We also affirm, that this abstaining should NEVER be exercised as a matter of personal preference, political positioning, or any such superficial (in comparison to faith) inclinations of behavior. This 'religious exemption' must be reserved to matters of faith and sin before God.

The Christian conscientious objector should affirm in writing that to engage in a particular behavior would lead them into sin before God, and therefore, they engage the permitted religious exemption graciously provided by the appropriate authority.