

DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS AND THEOLOGICAL OPINIONS (DSTO)

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Guidelines on participation of pastors in protest marches

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The General Pastors Conference fraternally urges any pastor who feels conscience-bound to participate in any public march, demonstration, or similar activity in the cause of a political, moral, or social issue:

1. to consider seriously the full implications of his public association as a Lutheran minister with the sponsoring and participating bodies or individuals;
2. to ascertain as carefully as possible whether the stated aims and motives of the occasion are consistent with the real aims or the actual results which are likely to follow;
3. to be alert to aspects of his participation which might contradict or seriously compromise the task to which God has called him as a minister of the Church.

Since the pastorate is a public office and the pastor thus a representative figure, he is further urged:

1. to weigh whether his judgment of the issue is of such a nature that he is in conscience bound to resort to protest by public demonstration, rather than using other means available to him to make his stand known;
2. to make it as clear as possible whether he is acting primarily as a private citizen or as a representative of the Church (cf the doctrine of the two kingdoms);
3. to be prepared to justify his actions in the cause of controversial issues not only in terms of commitment to civil justice but above all in terms of his biblical and confessional commitment;
4. to inform his people or those to whom he is responsible, if time permits, of any intention to participate in a public protest action;
5. to discuss the specific matter with them as fully as possible, in order that his members may understand his motives.