Scripture: Romans 13 CoF art. 36
Singing: 260:1-6 – 223:1-3 – 126:1, 2, 5 – 4:1-5

Intro: Why an article about the civil government in a Confession of Faith?
A. Because state and church have distinct but mutually supportive roles

B. Mostly because of the historical reason of the Confession of Faith

The Biblical Teachings on Civil Government and our Duties towards her

A. Civil government God's divine institution: Ps. 75; Rom. 13:1; 1 Peter 2:13; Titus 3:1; Dan. 2:36-38; Prov. 8:15-16

B. Civil government is God's gift
1. His *good* gift (Gen. 1:28, 31)

2. His *gracious* gift (Gen. 8:21, 9:4-6)

3. God expects us to *thank and pray* for our governors: 1 Tim. 2:1-3
   a. why 'first of all' (or 'most important of all)

C. Civil government's carry God's *three-fold* sword (Rom. 13:3-4; Ps. 17:13)
1. The civil government is to called to ***preside*** (govern)
   a. our call is obedience: Rom. 13:1, 4; 1 Peter 2:13-25

   b. civil disobedience is allowed in one area: Acts 5:29

2. The civil government is called to ***protect*** all citizens including church
   a. no earthly government has authority to *dictate* consciences in the worship of God

   b. yet as God gave the church a *prophetic and priestly tongue,* so God gave the civil government a *kingly hand*

3. The civil government is to ***punish*** evil doers**:** Rom. 13:3-4; Num. 35:12
   a. Jesus does not allow personal & vengeful retaliation (Matt. 5:38)

   b. yet He does command judicial retribution Ex. 21:24; Lev, 24:20

   c. as God's representative, the civil government is the executor of God's justice
      - in all civil offenses (those that disadvantage neighbors)

      - in all criminal offenses (that harm and hurt neighbors)

Reflection:

A. How to honor unchristian or evil governments?
   1. God's command Rom. 13:4-7

   2. Micheal's example in 2 Peter 2:11 and Jude 8-9

   3. David's example in 1 Sam. 24:4-6

In the *Letter of Diognetus*, one of the earliest surviving examples apologetics, we can find the following description of the Christians in the Roman empire.

For Christians … dwell not somewhere in cities of their own, neither do they use some different language, nor practice an extraordinary kind of life. (…) But while they dwell in cities of Greeks and barbarians as the lot of each is cast, and follow the native customs in dress and food and the other arrangements of life, yet the constitution of their own citizenship, which they set forth, is marvelous, and confessedly contradicts expectation. They dwell in their own countries, but only as sojourners [travelers]; they bear their share in all things as citizens, and they endure all hardships as strangers. Every foreign country is a fatherland to them, and every fatherland is foreign. Their existence is on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the established laws, and they surpass the laws in their own lives. Christians have their abode in the world, and yet they are not of the world.

***