I. Political Dissent – Mediatorial Kingship of Christ
   A. Texts like Psalm 2:10-12, Ephesians 1:19-23, and Matthew 28:18-20
   B. Interpretation of Romans 13 was at the heart of the issue.
   C. The line of reasoning on which the RPCNA based the requirement of political dissent. If any of these numbered statements is found to be untrue, all the conclusions which follow are reversed.
      1. Jesus Christ possesses all authority in heaven and in earth.
      2. Civil government ought to acknowledge the authority of Jesus Christ.
      3. The govt of the U.S.A. does not acknowledge the authority of Jesus Christ in the Constitution.
      4. An oath to support and defend the Constitution implies the oath-taker’s acceptance of the unscriptural principles of the Constitution. Therefore, it is sinful to take an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States.
      5. Office-holders are required to take an oath to support and defend the Constitution. Therefore, it is sinful to hold office under the Constitution.
      6. A voter is morally responsible for any act required of a candidate as a condition of holding office. Therefore, it is sinful to vote for candidates for public office.
      7. The Church must forbid its members to commit sinful acts. Therefore, the Church must forbid its members to take an oath to support and defend the Constitution, or to hold office under the Constitution, or to vote for candidates for public office.

II. History of Political Dissent in the RPCNA

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<th>Date</th>
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| 1782   | U.S. Constitution James McKinney   | McKinney established the basis of U.S. political dissent\(^1\)  
1) The secular nature of the U.S. Constitution – It did not regard the moral law of God.  
2) The toleration of religious error – the Constitution provided shelter and protection of heretical and anti-Christian religions. |
| 1803   | Samuel B. Wylie                    | The Two Sons of Oil – The first comprehensive statement of the American principle of political dissent. Five statements were given to summarize the principle of political dissent\(^2\).                                                |
| 1807   | RPCNA Testimony                    | Reformation Principles Exhibited  
• Christ’s Headship – Mediatorial Kingship of Christ  
• Civil Government – In the RPCNA, political dissent worked out in the refusal to be part of the social compact which gave the government its authority. |
| 1812   | Alexander McLeod                   | “War Sermons” – McLeod was a leading pastor of the RPCNA in NYC. Because of the RPCNA position of political dissent, NYC was concerned that the Covenanters were sympathizers of the British forces. McLeod’s War Sermons called the Covenanters to pray for the destruction of the British forces because the British constitution was more wicked than the U.S. |
| 1861-1865 | Civil War                        | RPCNA in Catch 22:  
• The immoral government was involved in a war that the RPCNA deeply believed to be right.\(^3\)                                                                                                           |

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\(^2\) Carson, 18.

\(^3\) Carson, 58.
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<td></td>
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<td>• RPCNA held that it was not right to support the Constitution by oath or military service. In 1863, the RPCNA approved an oath for Union soldiers to serve in the military but make a distinction between loyalty to the country and The Constitution. In 1865, the RPCNA reaffirmed the position of political dissent, but approved an exception for those who served in Union Army. Without this exception, there would have been many discipline cases throughout the church.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>Covenant of 1871</td>
<td><strong>Section 3:</strong> “We will pray and labor for the peace and welfare of our country, and for its reformation by a constitutional recognition of God as the source of all power, of Jesus Christ as the Ruler of Nations, of the Holy Scriptures as the supreme rule, and of the true Christian religion; and we will continue to refuse to incorporate by any act, with the political body, until this blessed reformation has been secured.”</td>
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<td>1890-1891</td>
<td>“East End Platform”</td>
<td>Three ministers in Pittsburgh elevated that the problem of membership for new believers who are not yet convinced or able to understand political dissent.</td>
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<td>1918</td>
<td>“Teachers Oath”</td>
<td>NYC required teachers to take an oath of allegiance to the Constitution during WWI. The RPCNA responded by providing a loyalty oath with an exception that did not deny Jesus Christ’s mediatorial kingship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1939-1967</td>
<td>Explanatory Declaration</td>
<td>The E.D. was instituted in an attempt to get the Supreme Court rule if the oath to the U.S. Constitution required absolute allegiance to the Constitution. The RPCNA Synod Oath Committee sought cases where Covenanters could take the oath to the U.S. Constitution with the E.D. so that the Supreme Court rule on the nature of the oath. Many used the E.D. with success, and no cases were taken to the Supreme Court.</td>
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| 1967       | Political Dissent ended on a technicality. | Dr. Wayne Spear wrote the committee report  
• The report clearly stated the argument for dissent.  
• Two critical points in the argument were identified  
  o #4 said that oath to the Constitution required acceptance of unscriptural parts of the Constitution.  
  o #6 said that a voter is morally responsible for any act required by an office holder, i.e. an unlawful oath to support and defend the constitution.  
• Item #4 had not been validated by the Supreme Court.  
• **Political dissent was made a matter of Christian Liberty.** |
| 1967 to present | Present RPCNA Voting principles. | RP Testimony 23.15 -- *The Christian, when such action involves no disloyalty to Christ, ought to be involved in the selection of and to vote for civil rulers who fear God, love truth and justice, hate evil, and are publicly committed to Scriptural principles of civil government. (Ex 18:21, Dt 16:18, 2 Sam 3:3, Rom 13:3)* |