

The Baptist Faith and Message

Article 15 – The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ.

In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.

Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

I. Our Social OBLIGATIONS

A. The MOTIVE for social reform

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society.

Jesus taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Matthew 6:10

1. In our SELF

D.L. Moody – Lord, send a revival to this circle.

London Times – What is wrong with society?

G.K. Chesterton – Dear sirs, I am. Sincerely Yours, G.K. Chesterton.

Before we can start looking outside at all the social ills that exist and begin offering solutions for their reform, we must take a long hard look in the mirror and ask how is the will of Christ being accomplished in my life.

You hypocrite! First remove the beam from your own eye, and then you will see clearly enough to remove the speck from your brother's eye." Matthew 7:5

2. In our SOCIETY

"Righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach to any people." Proverbs 14:34

We are to pray and act in such a way that as far as it depends on us, God's will would be done "on earth as it is in heaven."

B. The METHOD of social reform

Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ.

God has ordained that social reform be accomplished through the institution of the family and the institution of the church.

Article 17 on Religious Liberty – *The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work.*

1. The Home - Raise children in the nurture...(Eph. 6:1-4)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

2. The Church - pillar and support of truth (1 Timothy 3:15)

"The church of the living God – the pillar and support of the truth."

If all we do is pass legislation to outlaw certain sins, people will either violate those laws or create new ways to sin! IT IS A HEART ISSUE!

In one sense, there are no such things as social ills. There are only social symptoms.

In one sense, society does not have sickness any more than a thermometer has a fever or an x-ray machine has a broken bone.

The only way to bring God's will to a society is one heart at a time.

II. Our Scriptural OPPOSITIONS

A. Concerning RACISM

In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism

Psalm 101:5 – "Whoever slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy."

James 2:8-9 – "No man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father and with it we curse men who have been made in the likeness of God."

Revelation says heaven will be filled with every tribe, nation, language, and tongue.

B. Concerning GREED and SELFISHNESS

In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose...every form of greed, selfishness

1 Timothy 6:10 – "For the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil."

Exodus 20:17 – Thou shalt not covet

C. Concerning VICE

In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose...every form of...vice

What is a vice? Dictionary.com

1. An immoral or evil habit or practice
2. Immoral conduct
3. Sexual immorality, especially prostitution

Metro police have "vice" squads.

We could also place alcohol and drugs into this category.

D. Concerning SEXUAL immorality

In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose...all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography.

1. Adultery

Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 – Jesus said if a man puts away his wife (except for fornication) is committing adultery.

2. Homosexuality

This sin violates God's decree and God's design.

3. Pornography

Psalm 101:3 – *"I will set no unclean thing before my eyes."*

For most women, marital intimacy is 90% emotional. That's why a woman feels betrayed by pornography.

Your wife cannot compete with an airbrushed bimbo.

This is why we should oppose HBO, Cinemax, Raunchy pay-per-view.

E. Concerning the NEEDY

We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick.

Baptists have long operated a variety of children's homes.

LVBC gives away \$1,000's in benevolence each year.

James 2:15-16 – *"If a brother or a sister is without clothing and in need of daily food and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?"*

Baptists have long operated hospitals and clinics.

James 1:27 – this is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our god and Father to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

F. Concerning the SANCTITY of Human Life

We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.

Jeremiah 1:5 Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
And before you were born I consecrated you;

Psalms 139: 13 For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb.
14 I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.

Abortion...Reproductive technologies...Euthanasia

Notice, we should speak and we should contend.

III. Our Specific OPPORTUNITIES

Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

A. The places

Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole

Matthew 5:13-16 13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

1. Industry

Our places of employment...

Places where we spend our money...

Rather than a boycott, try a buy-cott!

2. Government

We should be informed and vote our conscience.

We do not check our citizenship at the door of the church.

3. Society

Everywhere you go!

B. The principles (*righteousness, truth, and love*)

under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love

Truth without love is legalism.

Love without truth is license.

Truth with love is liberty.

C. The participation

In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

We can work with pro-life Catholics on abortion.

We can work with pro-family moralists.

We can work with the unbelievers on disaster relief.

Example: When you have a leaky faucet do you want a preacher or a plumber? What about heart surgery?

As we consider our obligations, our oppositions, and our opportunities never forget...Jesus said, "You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world."