

# What Do I Owe the Lost?

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from Bible Matters sources)

## Introduction:

- A. Prevailing denomination view of their duty to the world
  - 1. "We're all working together to progressively build up the kingdom of God in our lifetimes. God has given us the intelligence and conscience we need to create the kingdom among ourselves. We're partners with God." (2a-b, 3 from The Isthmus, "God's Will Be Done," December 20, 2002, pp. 15-16). They believe the mission of God for Christianity is to "make the world a better place."

## I. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE WORLD

- A. Primary relationship with the world
  - 1. Matt. 28:18-20 - we must be in the world to evangelize it
  - 2. Rom. 12:1-2 - we must not conform to the world
- B. Commands for individual Christians
  - 1. Gal. 6:10 - We are to endeavor to do good to all men
  - 2. Matt. 25:31-46 - Motivated in benevolence
  - 3. James 1:27 - Benevolence defines the Christian
- C. Examples for Christians
  - 1. Jesus - Throughout the gospels, He helps and comforts the poor
  - 2. Gal. 2:10 - Emphasis of Paul, Peter, John, James on assisting the poor
- D. Why this level of benevolence?
  - 1. Just for the betterment of our fellow men?
    - a. Benevolence is a manifestation of the love we ought to have for all men - Matt. 22:37-40
    - b. Should be done without expectation of benefit or reward
  - 2. In the Scriptures, benevolence is not the primary goal; evangelism is
    - a. Luke 19:10 - Jesus goal was to seek and save the lost
    - b. To feed our fellow man is good; to save his soul is better
  - 3. Our purpose in benevolence is to let Christ's light shine through us, hopefully convicting the sinner of the better way

## II. THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

- A. The Church represents the Kingdom of God on Earth - Rev. 1:6
- B. The Kingdom and the world contrasted - John 18:36; 1John 2:15-17
- C. The Responsibilities of the Church
  - 1. Is the church responsible for aiding those in the world?
  - 2. The church is responsible to fund evangelism - Phil. 4:14-17
  - 3. The church is to assist its own - 2Cor. 9:1, 12; 1Tim. 5:9-10, 16
- D. Why not unlimited benevolence?
  - 1. The Scriptures demonstrate that the church is not an earthly organization, but a heavenly one
  - 2. The church's main goal is to edify and encourage itself while funding its members in their efforts to evangelize

3. Simply put, the church does not have the authority, time, and resources to devote itself to any other action but what God commanded, so that it may be found acceptable and in subjection to its Head.

### **III. WHY THE CONCERN?**

- A. What is so wrong with the world that we may not use the church to give the lost some benevolence?
- B. Inherent problems with the world
  1. Man has sinned and continues to sin - Rom. 3:23
  2. Rom. 1:21-32 - men have systematically cultivated evil natures
  3. Men are focused on carnal things - John 6:26
    - a. Men will accept your food, but it will rarely move them to change their lives
  4. The material world will be destroyed - 2Peter 3:10-13
    - a. Nothing will be left on or of this planet; all of our "good works" will only be, at best, memories
    - b. Only the things done to save the lost will have any meaning in the world to come
    - c. Whether we had three square meals a day will mean nothing to us in heaven or in hell, only those things done or not done that put us there
- C. God has commanded us to invest our energies in the things that last, not those that perish
  1. We must focus on those things that are eternal, not fleeting - 2Cor. 4:18
  2. Therefore, let us work for the things that will lead to eternal comfort in heaven, not those things that temporarily satisfy on earth.