

Social Service or Social Action, which one is taught by Christ?

The church's primary ministry is to share the message of Jesus Christ as the One who was "wounded for our transgressions" and purchased our eternal redemption – but this does not mean that God's people are anti-socially minded. It is absurd to discuss whether or not the Christian has any social responsibility. Evangelical Christians have always helped alleviate suffering, established educational institutions, and promoted good health and sanitation practices. But these activities fall under the label of "social service," not "social action." Social "service" speaks of bringing relief for the victims of war, providing disaster aid, retirement and nursing homes, drug rehabilitation programs, and so forth. Christian love compels us to minister to the whole person – to be concerned with temporal as well as eternal needs. However, sometimes in our denominations, we place priority on "service" projects, whereas they really should be secondary. On the other hand, social "action" speaks of bringing political reform through the power of the state. It emphasizes antipoverty legislation, laws for open housing, anti-war measures, a reduction in armaments, supporting organized boycotts, and paying legal defense for political revolutionaries. Even some of the "new" evangelicals are saying that the church must become an action group that speaks out on political issues and lobbies for legislative action, in order to bring reform in society. For many church leaders, these enterprises become the primary ministry of the church. They are so preoccupied with civil affairs that there is little time for leading people to a personal faith in Jesus Christ. (Brethren Revival Fellowship (3/17/2018, Facebook))

What then is the real problem with Social Action? (By Dr. Rex Duff)

Can the Church of the Brethren or any denomination bring in the Kingdom by trying to reform society without transformation? The answer is NO!

The Bible is still true. The Bible declares in Romans 3:10-12, "As it is written: There is none righteous, no not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one" (NKJV).

The Bible also states in 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3, "For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape" (NKJV).

Even after Jesus returns and gives us a perfect environment for 1000 years, man still has a wicked heart, and at the end of the 1000 years, the number of lost "is as the sand of the sea". Notice what the Bible states about this in Revelation 20:7-9, "Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number **is as the sand of the sea**. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them" (NKJV).

For those who worship America and believe it is a godly nation the words of Isaiah 40:17 are appropriate, “All nations before Him are as nothing, And they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless” (NKJV). The Bible further states in Psalm 9:17, “The wicked shall be turned into hell, And all the nations that forget God” (NKJV).

For those who still think rehabilitation of America is possible without transformation maybe these words also from the Apostle Paul might be useful from 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12. The Bible declares, “The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (NKJV).

The future is very clear; all nations (including America) will follow the Anti-Christ. The only hope for America is transformation. One must be born again. One must receive Christ as both Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9). One must repent of his sins (turn from his sins to Christ, thus make a commitment) to be saved (Acts 3:19).

Why cannot liberal Pastors understand that Christians have a different citizenship? The Bible declares in Philippians 3:20, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (NKJV). The Bible declares in 2 Corinthians 5:20, “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God” (NKJV).

Pastors need to preach the gospel, not gun control in America’s public schools. Taking guns away from non-criminals still will not change black hearts. Working to disarm America still will not bring lost souls to Heaven. It is time for Revival in our churches. Let’s get back to weekend Revival meetings in our churches again and prayer meetings!

Social Action only promotes the programs of the Anti-Christ. Many of our churches are full of individuals who have never been born again, without hearing a gospel message from their own pulpit. Recently I heard that all Pacifists believed in social action, frankly this is not true. However, if you believe this statement, than be like this author, I am non-resistant. I do not get involved with politics because I am ambassador, and an ambassador stays out of politics when he represents another country. I represent Heaven, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Who do you represent?

(Dr. Rex Duff is a member of the Papago Buttes Church of the Brethren in Scottsdale, Arizona. He writes from his own opinion, not from the opinions of his home church. He holds a BA, MA, MHA, JD, and Doctor of Ministry degrees. He is receiving his M.Div. degree from Crown College at the end of June, 2018)