

First Baptist Church of New Sweden, Maine, Statement on Conscience Issues in the Workplace or Educational Entity

This statement is a focused addition to the general Statement on Conscience. The purpose of this statement is to clearly apply the Biblical principles of conscience outlined in the general statement to specific issues within our current cultural context in the first half of the twenty-first century in the region of New England in the United States.

The leadership of First Baptist Church of New Sweden, Maine, defines the workplace to consist of being an employer, an employee, a contractor, a client, a company, governmental positions (political or bureaucratic), law enforcement personnel, or military personnel. We recognize that a company cannot itself be Christian in that only individuals may come to faith in Jesus Christ, but we use the expression, 'Christian company', as commonly used to refer to companies which have been founded by Christians who intend to run the company according to the parameters of the Word of God as an extension of the faith of the owners of the company. An educational entity is defined as a place which delivers instruction, training, certification, or licensing as a fulfillment of its mission and purpose or in partnership with such a facility or entity. Since conscience issues are rooted in the daily worship of the triune God revealed in the Bible, no mortal man or temporal system may restrict or deny the protection of the Biblically informed conscience.

General

1. We affirm that every authority on this earth is subjected to Jesus Christ, whether they recognize Jesus as their Lord or not. (Matthew 28:18; Psalm 110:1-2) This includes all who have any position of authority: governmental leaders and entities, educational leaders and entities, judicial leaders, religious leaders, law enforcement, military, employers and companies, supervisors, civic organizations, etc. Thus, every authority owes allegiance to Jesus Christ; is established to please (worship, praise, glorify) Jesus Christ; is defined regarding scope of authority, duties, and responsibilities by Jesus Christ; and will answer to Jesus Christ regarding their allegiance, their worship, and their fulfillment of their role as defined by Him.
2. We affirm that conscience issues may regard speech, action, participation, agreement, assent, non-action, nonparticipation, and silence.
3. We affirm that the foundation of a positive and productive work environment is a Christian work ethic that values all members of the workplace in a relationship of respect. A proper work ethic for both the company or employer or supervisor and the employee or contractor is a contract for agreed upon work to be accomplished for agreed upon remuneration. (Matthew 20:1-16) The complete upholding of the contract by a Christian in either role is founded upon pleasing the true Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. (Colossians 3:22 – 4:1)
4. We affirm that the roles within an educational environment are equally fulfilled in this same Christian work ethic founded upon the lordship of Jesus Christ.
5. We affirm that Christians are to define their ethics as employers, supervisors, owners, employees, contractors, clients, educators, or students based upon the Bible primarily and organizational codes of conduct secondarily.

Employer

1. We affirm that Christian employers and companies, in fulfilling their purpose for their business(es) as Christians in accord with their conscience, may require their employees, contractors, representatives, clients, and customers to agree to and abide by an established morality code (code of ethics) or statement of faith as a prerequisite for establishing a business relationship.
2. We affirm that Christians who take positions of authority within a workplace keep their rights to live according to conscience. In taking such leadership roles, Christians do not give up their responsibility to not offend their biblically based conscience. Moreover, Christians are to actively engage their conscience in their decision making and their fulfilling of their role in the workplace.
3. We affirm that Christian employers and companies are to abide by their biblically based conscience without partiality. Policies, procedures, statements of mission and vision, and statements of core values and beliefs should all be clearly determined and communicated (verbally and in writing) to all employees and contractors to provide clear expectations, thus providing for a truly God-glorifying work environment in alignment with the conscience beliefs of the employer or company. These are supported through impartial adherence, without regard of the position of the person (even the owner or employer) or the purported beliefs of the individual. (Deuteronomy 10:17; Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9) In such adherence, the biblical injunction to not lie, which binds all consciences, is upheld. (Leviticus 19:11-12)
4. We affirm that Christian employers and companies are required to hold to their positions of biblically based conscience no matter the authority that calls for offending the conscience of the employer or owner. The limits, responsibilities, duties, and powers of each authority remain intact whether addressed toward an individual or toward a workplace because a workplace is led by individuals. In other words, we affirm that the owner or employer, as a Christian individual, retains the full conscience rights of every Christian in all roles.

Employee (Client, Contractor, Military Personnel)

1. We affirm that Christian employees (*et al.*) retain their biblically based conscience rights in the workplace without exception.
2. We affirm that Christian employees best fulfill their conscience responsibilities through hard work, efficient use of time, sharing creative insights, and investment of their dedication in the work during their assigned time of work. This fulfills the clear admonition of Scripture to serve whole-heartedly unto the Lord Jesus. (Colossians 3:22-25) This is stated in the bounds that the work required in no way requires the employee to sin or to offend the employee's conscience.
3. We affirm that Christian employees retain authority over their own bodies – even in the workplace or the military – such that requirements upon their bodies (such as medical procedures) which do not directly relate to the fulfillment of the position may not be required by any authority. This includes governmental, licensing agency, law enforcement, military, medical, or employment authorities.

Education

1. The role of educator or instructor or trainer is similar in authority to the role of employer or supervisor.
2. The role of the student or trainee is similar to the employee.
3. The educator or trainer may also have the role of employee or contractor with the institution providing the education.
4. We affirm that Christians who are educators or trainers retain their rights to uphold their positions of biblically based conscience in their roles of teaching and training. We deny that a Christian educator or trainer may be required to teach, support, communicate, participate in or train in any aspect which offends the Christian educator's conscience.
5. We affirm that Christian educators may rightfully request reassignment if a training or course would require the offense of their conscience.
6. We affirm that Christian educators have the right and responsibility to engage in respectful academic dialogue regarding any issue of concern for conscience without fear of reprisal.
7. We affirm that Christian students retain their biblically based conscience rights. Students may not be required to participate in, receive training in, affirm, deny, ascent to, or remain silent regarding any aspect of the course or training which would offend their conscience.
8. We affirm that Christian students have the right and responsibility to respectfully engage in academic discussion and debate regarding any issue of concern for conscience. Christian students should have no fear of reprisal for such academic dialogue.
9. We affirm that both Christian educators and students retain authority over their own bodies – even in the workplace or the educational facility or internship/externship sites – such that requirements upon their bodies (such as medical procedures) which do not directly relate to the fulfillment of the position or training may not be required by any authority. This includes governmental, licensing agency, law enforcement, military, medical, educational, or employment authorities.

Current Conscience Concerns

As cultures change and shift, those specific areas of concern for Christians regarding sin and conscience shift. The standard is God's Word, the Bible, which does not shift, but the application of the Bible to the current culture fits the needs of the culture. Specific current issues in the workplace and educational field include without limitation:

1. Biblically defined marriage.
2. Biblically defined roles of men and women.
3. Biblically defined reconciliation of the nations, peoples, ethnicities, and cultures.
4. Biblically defined authority – Jesus Christ as Sovereign; Civil magistrate, family, and ecclesiastic realms assigned specific roles, responsibilities, and structure as servants (deacons) of Jesus Christ.
5. Biblically defined instilled value for each human, informing views upon impartiality in the justice system, euthanasia, care for the disabled, protection of humans in the womb, and environmental issues.