

dishonesty are wrong. It is God who says that truthfulness and faithfulness are right, and lying and perjury are wrong. It is God who says that contentment and satisfaction with God's provision and leading are right, and discontentment, lust, and greedy ambition are wrong!

And these things are right or wrong because God says they are, no matter who else says they are not!

This is one of the things that makes Christianity obnoxious to Secular Humanists: Christianity holds to absolute moral values and standards, whereas Secular Humanism does not. If Secular Humanists can only get Christians to drop their claim to absolute standards, then Humanists can put Christianity on an equal place with other world religions, and discard all of them!

What, then, is a Christian's responsibility? Although he does not have a right to impose his personal values and standards on non-Christians in a pluralistic society, yet he does have an obligation (and therefore a God-ordained right) to do what he can do to get others to adopt God's moral values, and to obey God's moral standards.

This brings us to a second question.

- D. If Christians in a pluralistic society have a right to help others in that society obey God's standards, is the exercise of that right of any value if morality can't be legislated anyway?

This question implies two basic criticisms. Non-Christians and some Christians are quick to quote the old cliché, "You can't legislate morality; therefore why try?" And some Christians are quick to point out, "No matter how much morality you impose on a person, you can't change his or her character. That can come only through the new birth. Once his character is transformed through regeneration, his conduct will change also. So why try the impossible?" Both these criticisms need response!

Let us take a hard look at the first criticism: the argument that since "you can't legislate morality," therefore we should not try to impose moral values on people by incorporating those values into laws.

If this cliché -- "you can't legislate morality" -- is taken to mean, "You can't make people who are bad on the inside into people who are good on the inside by passing laws with appropriate penalties," then there is a substantial amount of truth in it. But if this cliché is taken to mean, "You can't influence people to be good citizens rather than bad citizens by passing laws with appropriate penalties," then there is a substantial amount of error in it!

Behind this second understanding is the assumption that laws and appropriate penalties do not deter people from harming other people or encourage people to watch out for the external well-being of other people. But is this assumption really true?

To take some concrete examples, when drivers on interstate highways or turnpikes see signs warning them of radar or unmarked patrol cars or monetary penalties for speeding; or when drivers think about getting penalty points