

Confession for Christians in Health Care

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In the April issue, Dr. Jay Adams challenged the medical community to formulate a confession of faith and practice. The following suggestion by Dr. Robert Maddox is offered as a partial response to this. Dr. Gary Crampton makes explanatory remarks.

1. We believe God is the Creator and Sustainer of life, and thus, Sovereign over all.
2. We believe Scripture is the written Word of God, the only rule of faith and life, including the practice of medicine.
3. We believe man is a creature, a living being made in the image of God. We are, therefore, to demonstrate concern for the life and welfare of man.
4. We believe that in Adam's fall, all his ordinary posterity received in themselves the penalty of death, and all the misery and sickness of this life.
5. We believe Christ's redemption of His own is complete; yet misery sickness and

death will persist until the final release of creation from its bondage.

6. We believe that God has given primary responsibility for health to the individual; that in marriage, the body of one spouse belongs to the other; and that the head of a household is responsible for those under his care.
7. We believe that the church, in its role as teacher and guardian of God's people, must instruct, counsel and exhort to such behavior as is conducive to better health, and must, after their due confession, pray for and anoint those who are sick.
8. We believe that the state has a limited role, though legitimate interest, in health, and to that end God has sanctioned the imposition of restrictive measures.
9. We believe that God had called us to serve Him in the mitigation of the effects of the fall on health, relieving misery, curing sickness and delaying death, as His agents of secondary cause.

10. We believe that our advice is our principal service to our patients, as they seek to be stewards of their bodies, though God has given various skills and medications to be used wisely for this purpose.

11. We believe that our lives should be examples of holiness and purity, as befitting our calling, and that all we do and say be for God's glory and the advancement of His kingdom.

1. We believe God is the Creator and Sustainer of life, and thus, Sovereign over all.

The God of the Bible is the One who has sovereignly decreed all things which will ever come to pass (Eph 1:11). He carries out these decrees by means of creation and providence. God created all that will ever be created in a period of 6 days (Gen. 1:1-31). He carries out these decrees by means of creation and providence. God created all that will ever be created in a period of 6 days (Gen. 1:1-31), after which he rested from His creative work on the 7th day (Gen. 2:1-3; Heb. 4:3b,4). By means of providence the Almighty sovereignly preserves and governs all of His creation and brings all things to their appointed end. Thus, we claim God as Sovereign -- no purpose of His can be thwarted (Job 42:2). He works all things after the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11).

2. We believe Scripture is the written Word of God, the only rule of faith and

life, including the practice of medicine.

The Bible (OT and NT) is God's infallible revelation of Himself to mankind, and his will for mankind. Scripture speaks to and equips us for every exigency and area of life, including medicine (II Tim. 3:16,17). The Bible is the only source of absolute truth in medicine. Thus, the Word of God is the foundation for the study of health. Anything that conflicts with the inerrant truth of Holy Writ must be rejected as fallacious. Therefore, all medical findings and practices are to be analyzed in light of Holy Scripture.

3. We believe man is a creature, a living being, made in the image of God. We are, therefore, to demonstrate concern for the life and welfare of man.

Man (male and female) was created on the 6th day of creation, in the image of God, with dominion over the creatures, to subdue the earth for the glory of God, under his Law (Gen. 1:26-28). Hence, man must be considered the crowning act of creating and the highest of all created beings. One can recognize in this truth the fact that man is very important to the Triune God of the Bible. Thus, man's life, health, and welfare are of great significance (Mk. 2:1-12; 5:25-34; Jas 5:13-16).

4. We believe that in Adam's fall, all his ordinary posterity received in themselves the penalty of death, and all the misery and sickness of this life.

Adam, as the first man, was the federal head, or representative, of all mankind.

Thus, when he fell into sin, in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:31-13), all mankind fell with him (Rom. 5:12-19; I Cor.15:22). That is, Adam's sin was imputed to the entire human race. The significance of the fall is cosmic in nature -- the whole creation was affected (Gen. 3:14-19). This includes death, sickness and misery, which are the result of sin.

5. We believe Christ's redemption of His own is complete; yet misery, sickness, and death will persist until the final release of creation from its bondage.

Jesus Christ, the second and last Adam (I Cor. 15:45), came to redeem a fallen world. He came to reverse the cosmic effects of the fall (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:12-19). This was accomplished (positionally) in His death, burial, resurrection and ascension (Mt. 28:18; II Cor. 5:17; Col.1:20). Nevertheless, misery, sickness, and death will continue until the ushering in of the final estate of glory at the second advent of the Lord (Rom. 8:19-25). At that time all evil, and its fruit, will be removed from us forever (Rev. 21,22).

6. We believe that God has given primary responsibility for health to the individual; that in marriage, the body of one spouse belongs to the other; and that the head of the household is responsible for those under his care.

Each individual, made in God's image, is responsible to care for himself, both spiritually and physically (I Tim. 4:8; III Jn. 2; Eph. 5:28,29). He is to seek to improve his health in order to be more productive in

God's Kingdom (II Kings 5:1-14; Mk. 5:1-20). Likewise, he is to seek the welfare of others in their physical need (II Kings 7:3-20; Mk. 31-5). The special covenant of marriage gives one spouse unique responsibility, as well as privilege, for the body of the other (I Cor. 7:1-7). Likewise, the father, as head of the household, has been given special responsibility for the care of his family (Eph. 5:22 - 6:4; Col. 3:18-21).

7. We believe that the Church, in its role as teacher and guardian of God's people, must instruct, counsel and exhort to such behavior as is conducive to better health, and must, after their due confession, pray for and anoint those who are sick.

The church's function is that of carrying out the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ (Mt. 28:18-20). This includes: (a) Evangelism, and (b) Education of the people in the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). The latter is to include instruction with regard to physical, as well as spiritual, health care. Such instruction should be done "publicly" (from the pulpit) and "from house to house" (personal counsel, see Acts 20:20). The elders of the church are to play the major role in the oversight of the flock -- teaching, admonishing, exhorting, etc. Likewise, they are to be much involved in prayer and visitation of the sick and needy (Jas. 5:13-16). But all Christians are "competent to counsel" (Rom. 15:14) and need to be involved in this ongoing ministry.

8. We believe that the State has a limited role, though legitimate interest, in health,

and to that end God has sanctioned the imposition of restrictive measures.

The state, as minister and servant of God (Rom. 13:4-6), is to be involved in the oversight of the health care of its citizens. This role is to be limited in nature (Dt. 17:14-20; 1 Sam. 8:10-18). The watchcare of the state would include public health inspection of hospitals, restaurants, etc. (Lev. 13-15), and mandatory quarantine where necessary (Lev. 13-45, 46).

9. We believe that God has called us to serve Him in the mitigation of the effects of the fall on health, relieving misery, curing sickness and delaying death, as His agents of secondary cause.

The salvation of the Christian is holistic in nature; that is, it involves the whole man. The healing ministry of Christ, both physical and spiritual, makes this abundantly clear (Mk. 2:1-12; 5:25-34). The final state of man is body and soul (I Cor. 15:20-23); I The. 4:13-18) - holistic salvation. Thus, the Christian is to be much concerned for the present health care of mankind -- those made in God's image (Mt. 5:44; Lk. 10:30-37; Jas 5:13-16).

10. We believe that our advice is our principal service to our patients as they seek to be stewards of their bodies, though God has also given various skills and medications to be used wisely for this purpose.

The principal Christian service to mankind is that of counsel in the Word of God (Col.

1:28, 3:16). The Christian is to recognize that not all medical advice is sound/biblical; thus, one must know what God says about the issue (II Chr. 16:12). Likewise, God is the giver of gifts -- both within and outside of the church ministry (Rom. 12:3-8; I Cor. 7:17-24). Christians are called to serve in all godly vocations, including medicine. [Those so called must understand the limitations of our profession.]

11. We believe that our lives should be examples of holiness and purity, as befitting our calling, and that all we do and say be for God's glory and the advancement of His kingdom.

The Christian life is to be exemplary in the pursuit of holiness (II Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14; I Pet. 1:16). All of life is to be lived to glorify the True God of the Bible (I Cor. 10:31). The work of glorifying God is biblically defined as accomplishing the work He has given us to do -- the individual, church, state, medical profession, etc. (Jn. 17:4). Thus, the proper biblical advancement of medical practice is to be viewed as pleasing to the Deity.