

... the wanton torture of animals for sport, the bestial drunkenness of the populace, the human traffic in African negroes, the kidnapping of fellow-countrymen for exportation and sale as slaves ... the universal gambling obsession, the savagery of the prison system and penal code, the welter of immorality, the prostitution of the theatre, the growing prevalence of lawlessness, superstition and lewdness; ...

...the political bribery and corruption, the ecclesiastical arrogance and truculence, the shallow pretensions of Deism, the insincerity and debasement rampant in Church and State – such manifestations suggest that the British people were then perhaps deeply degraded and debauched as any people in Christendom.

(Wesley Bready)

About eleven hundred of them, we are informed, were confined in that little place, without anything to lie on but a little dirty straw, or anything to cover them but a few foul, thin rags, either by day or night, so that they died like rotten sheep. I was much affected, and preached in the evening on (Exodus XXIII. 9.) 'Thou shalt not oppress a stranger; for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.' Eighteen pounds were contributed immediately, which were made up to £24 the next day....

...With this we bought linen and woollen cloth, which were made up into shirts, waistcoats, and breeches. Some dozens of stockings were added; all which were carefully distributed where there was the greatest want. Presently after, the Corporation of Bristol sent a large quantity of mattresses and blankets. And it was not long before contributions were set on foot at London, and in various parts of the Kingdom....

(John Wesley's Journal Entry, 1759)

Suppose your *influence*, could prevent distilling by making it a *felony*, you would do more service to your country than any Prime Minister has done these 100 years. Your name would be precious to all true Englishmen as long as England continued as a nation. And what is infinitely more, a greater Monarch than King George would say to you: 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'

(Part of a letter from John Wesley to Prime Minister William Pitt, 6th September 1784)

# 1. The Christian and the Christian alone is the salt of the earth (5:13).

In the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, salt was primarily used as a preservative.

*. ...God intends the most powerful of all restraints within sinful society to be his own redeemed, regenerate and righteous people.*

(John Stott)

**2. The Christian and the Christian alone is  
the light of the world (5:13).**

We must not limit [good deeds to evangelism] however. 'Good works' are works of love as well as of faith. They express not only our loyalty to God, but our care for our fellows as well. Indeed, the primary meaning of 'works' must be practical, visible deeds of compassion. It is when people see these, Jesus said, that they will glorify God, for they embody the good news of his love which we proclaim. Without them our gospel loses its credibility and our God his honour.

(John Stott)

# **Christians have responsibility for social action and evangelism in society.**

1. Know the Biblical teaching and determine to be what you are in Christ.
2. Know the community in which you have been placed by God.

3. *Intentionally* seek to fulfil your function as salt and light:

Pray for those in your sphere of influence.

Always be ready to give a reason for the hope you profess.

Address practical needs: love your neighbor as yourself.

*... that they may see your good deeds and  
praise your Father in heaven.*

*Matthew 5:16*

Unless the church rediscovers its primary role as bridge builder, the incarnational power of the gospel will remain hidden, and the credibility necessary to reach a culture of cynical, experiential, and spiritually hungry souls will be lost....

...Even worse, the church's incomparable message of eternal and abundant life will be largely ignored. People will simply no longer listen to or attend churches that seem incapable of living out what is preached. Bridges of influence – tangible and evident through the lifestyles and good works of believers – are the only answer.

(Robert Lewis)