

# **Religious Liberty**

## **Matthew 22:15-22**

### **What the state should NOT do**

The state is not the Lord of the conscience

The state should not favor any religious group

### **What the state should do**

The state should provide protection and freedom to the church

### **What the church should do**

Christians should obey the government

We should seek to influence the state toward the Christian ideal,  
which is a free church in a free state

### **What the church should NOT do**

Christians should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work



## *The 2000 Baptist Faith & Message*

### XVII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

*You can find the entire statement at  
[www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp](http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp)*



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