

Ecumenical Ministries *of* Oregon

Statement of Social Principles

Preamble

This Statement of Social Principles describes the basis on which Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) fulfills its mission in public life. This document is created to aid in understanding the basis on which EMO makes decisions and takes action in regard to public policy.

Basic Principles

As an organization of many Judeo-Christian religious traditions and faiths, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon reflects and promotes many religious understandings. However, we recognize and value each of EMO's member traditions and stated social views. Among these are a belief in the authority of scripture, Holy Spirit, church tradition, and the ongoing moral and ethical work of people of faith both within and beyond our religious traditions.

We affirm the value of love, the respect of all life, and the value of every human being. To these ends, we seek to join with a wide variety of individuals and groups, religious and secular, in working toward common goals, among these are compassion and forgiveness in all relationships, religious freedom, and justice for all. We affirm an inclusive community for nurturing the shared life of humankind.

We are committed to a vision of a world free from suffering, injustice, violence, racism, sexual prejudice and exploitation. We affirm compassion, non-violence, social justice, and working in constructive and creative ways to achieve a better world. Thus, we commit ourselves to a society in which all persons are free to live together in peace and harmony.

We recognize the need to consider prayerfully, advocate and strive diligently, and act decisively but with humility. We also value the need to work cooperatively toward consensus.

Recognizing that while society in Oregon and the world at large is undergoing major cultural, social, and economic changes; EMO draws strength and inspiration from its Judeo-Christian heritage as it responds to the needs of a changing world. Past assumptions, old divisions, and former understandings of our world and ourselves, demand re-examination in light of present understanding and future goals. EMO is committed to the task of continuing to grow in its understanding and transform the world for the common good.

Introduction to Social Concerns

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon through its Board, committees, and staff, is called upon to consider all manner of specific social and ethical issues. Many of these issues are taken up by EMO and made a central part of its work. Social concerns, by their nature, change as society changes. Thus, the following represent those concerns, which have remained central to EMO over the years, and represent a major portion of its work today.

Human Rights

Our religious traditions call for a continuing affirmation of human rights for all people. As society changes, human needs change, and our understanding of human rights continues to expand.

Scripture leads us to affirm that human rights include the rights to faith, hope, love, and life. In the world today, human rights include those outlined in our Federal and State Constitutions, and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, such as freedoms of speech, press, personal liberty, and religion. We also affirm human rights defined in Scripture including the right to faith, hope, love, and life. Finally, we acknowledge and defend those human rights placed in jeopardy by hatred, greed, and discrimination in current society. These include rights to universal education, basic health care, equal opportunity, honorable employment, a free and independent media, an equitable system of justice, a safe and supportive natural environment, to live without fear, and basic human dignity. Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon is committed to work to establish and maintain these basic human rights.

Economic Justice

As globalism and world trade continue to increase the economic and social interdependence of people, the need for new models of economic justice for all people of the world grows stronger and more relevant. Fair and ethical understandings between employers and employees, producers and consumers, and the responsibilities of those who guide and direct the economy are all major areas of concern for Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. The principle of justice requires that we establish social systems, which encourage, enable, and empower people to fully develop and use their capabilities to meet their personal needs and to contribute to the social welfare.

Environmental Justice

The world environment is a gift of God, and its indiscriminate destruction is a threat to all people. Our religious traditions affirm the sacred in all creation, and our role as stewards of the earth. As we grow closer and more numerous, the need to understand, sustain, preserve, and protect the world's land, air, water, energy, and life becomes ever more critical. Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon supports environmental and economic policies and protections that hold the world's living systems as a sacred trust. EMO supports policies that create economies of social and environmental sustainability for all.

Involvement in Government

EMO believes that the demands of the Gospel and our understanding of our diverse religious traditions call us to participate in civic life. Our faith traditions give us a unique and important perspective to offer the community in deliberations on civic, legislative, and governmental matters. Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon believes that every person should be given the opportunity to be informed about the policies and processes of his/her government at every level. Thus EMO seeks to offer to the people of Oregon opportunities for civic education, political activism, and information on the significant political issues of the day. Through education, understanding of the political process, and knowledge of the issues, EMO seeks to empower the citizens of Oregon to fulfill their role in the political process.