

The Work of the Church

Adapted from a series of lessons originally created by Don Wright.

LESSON ONE: The Church

Introduction:

The fact that there is division among churches of Christ is a sad reality. It means in practical terms that a Christian cannot conscientiously worship with or fellowship with all local churches of Christ. I wish that every local church of Christ was such that one could have complete confidence in worshipping in such a place. But the fact is there are some local churches that are not sound in the faith because they practice things for which they have no authority. One area in which this is especially clear is in the work God has designed the church to do. In this study we want to look at some of the issues relating to the work of the church that have divided brethren over the years. Also, it should be observed that many of the unscriptural practices that one might find in a local church of Christ that has gone astray, started with and are still very popular among denominational churches. Almost every, if not all, denominations today do things for which they simply do not have the scriptural authority and therefore the right to do. So, if you are a part of either a denomination or a local church of Christ that is doing things that are unscriptural and unauthorized, you should want to part company with that situation as soon as possible. Why? Because in your present situation, you are not abiding in the doctrine of Christ.

2 John 9-10

“Whosoever _____, and _____ not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the _____ of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this _____, receive him not into your house, _____ bid him God speed”.

Colossians 3:17

“And whatsoever ye do in _____ or _____, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him”.

Lesson:

I. What Is The Church?

- A. Before we can really focus on the work of the church, we need to know what the church is. So we begin this study by asking the question, “What is the church?” First, let me say that the church is something

that Jesus promised to build (Matthew 16:18). The word church is from the Greek word *EKKLESIA* (ek-klay-see'-ah) and means "the call out." It refers in a general sense to any assembly or congregation of people. This is how the word is used in Acts 7:38 and Acts 19:32. But Jesus wasn't talking about just any assembly or congregation of people because He didn't just say "I will build a church," but rather He said "I will build MY church." And that is the church that we are concerned with in this lesson. Not just a church. Not just any church, but the church that Jesus Christ built. The church that was called out by Jesus through the gospel of Christ and which is composed of those who have been built by, bought by, redeemed by and separated by the precious blood of Jesus. Now let's look closer at this.

1. The church is made up of those that have obeyed the gospel (Romans 1:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-6; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).

Rom 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the _____ of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that _____; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek".

2. The church is made up of those who have been born again (John 3:3-5).
3. The church is made up of those who have followed the Spirit revealed, incorruptible, indestructible and everlasting Word of God (1 Peter 1:23-25; Acts 2:36-41, 47).

B. The church of Christ is referred to in two ways in the Bible.

1. **The universal church (Matthew 16:18; Hebrews 12:23).**

In regard to the universal church, Jesus only built one (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18).

Eph 4:4 "There is _____ body, and _____ Spirit, even as ye are called in _____ hope of your calling".

The one church is not made up of churches, denominations, or institutions. The church is made up of Christians who have put on Christ in the waters of baptism. Listen carefully: the church is not made up of Baptist Christians, Lutheran Christians, Presbyterian Christians, Methodist Christians or Catholic Christians. The church is made up of CHRISTIANS, PERIOD!

2. **The local church (Acts 8:1; 9:31; 1 Corinthians 1:2).**

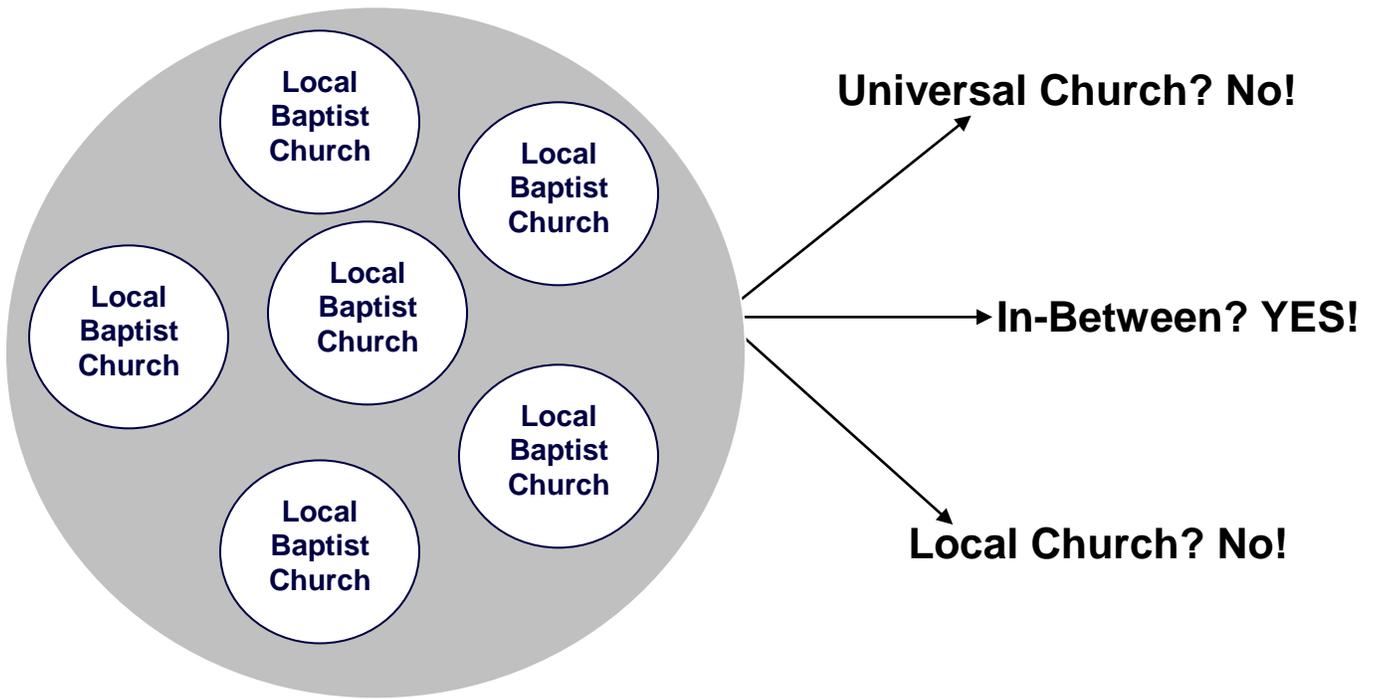
A local church is made up of individual Christians who have agreed to work together in a specific geographical location. In this series of studies, we are interested in the work of the church from this standpoint, that is, the work of the local church.

II. The Organization of The Local Church.

The structure of modern-day denominations greatly differ from any thing seen in the New Testament. They place men and councils into positions of authority in which they can make laws and rules to govern their various denominations. They have unscriptural and unauthorized connections one with another. They have an arrangement which consists of a church of churches, i.e., a collection of churches all under the control of one man or a group of men. This is an unscriptural arrangement that is foreign to the New Testament. Remember, the church is viewed in the New Testament in two ways—the local church and the universal church. Into which category would a denomination fall? Take note of this fact: anything that is smaller than the universal church or larger than the local church is unscriptural. This is the problem with denominationalism. It is admittedly smaller than the universal church, yet it is larger than the local church.

A Typical Denominational Church

Baptist Church



A church of churches

Now, let's see how that differs with the New Testament church. In the New Testament church, we find the following:

A. Christ is the head (Colossians 1:18).

Eph 1:22-23 "And hath put all things under his _____, and gave him to be the _____ over all things to the church,

Which is his _____, the fulness of him that filleth all in all".

B. Each local church is autonomous. The word autonomy means "*self governing or independent*". In modern denominations there is no "real" autonomy. Local churches have some independence, but they must ultimately answer to the leaders who governed the entire denomination.

C. Each church had elders, deacons and saints (Philippians 1:1).

Now, several points must be made here.

- 1. Not all churches had elders.** Men had to qualify to be elders (1 Timothy 3:1ff).
- 2. Elders of a congregation could only oversee the flock which is among them (1 Peter 5:2).** In the New Testament there was no such thing as a bishop being over more than one congregation. This is the rule today with denominational churches, but it is not according to the pattern of the New Testament and is therefore sinful.
- 3. There were always a plurality of elders in a local church, and each had equal authority (Acts 14:23; 20:17).**

Conclusion:

Now then, as we conclude the opening lesson of this series, we know what the church is and in what sense we will be referring to the church. We will be talking about the local church. Does the local church have a God-given, God sanctioned and God approved work to do? The answer is yes. And this will be the basis of this series. However, we are still not ready to look at the specific work that Jesus has given the church to do. First, we have to dismiss the notion that the work of the church is to involve itself in social, recreational and entertaining work. So, in the next lesson our emphasis will be on what the work of the church is not.

LESSON TWO: What The Work of the Church Is Not

Introduction:

The local church has been given a work to do. That work is simply this—evangelism, benevolence and edification. This is the three-fold work of the church (Ephesians 4:12).

Eph 4:12 “For the _____ of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the _____ of the body of Christ”.

We will begin looking at this in lesson three of this study. But the question that I want us to consider now is, “What makes something the work of the church?”

I. Something planned, provided and participated in by the LOCAL CHURCH.

Here I want to emphasize that in this series of lessons **WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT THE DISTRIBUTIVE WORK OR ACTIONS OF THE INDIVIDUAL, BUT RATHER THE COLLECTIVE WORK OF THE LOCAL CHURCH**. Many local churches of Christ have failed in abstaining from unauthorized practices because they have failed to see the distinction between the individual Christian and the church. Here are some examples of this:

“There are those who try to distinguish between the work of the church and the work of Christians, indicating one to be divine, the other human. This is fallacious reasoning. The church is composed of Christians; what the church does, Christians do; what Christians do, the church does, generally speaking. We cannot separate the Christian’s work from the work of the church” (**V.E. Howard, tract: Institutionalism Orphan Homes and Church Cooperation, p. 5**).

“Actually we may say that whatever is the duty of the Christian is the duty of the congregation of Christians” (**Howard, op cit., p. 7, via Goodman, op cit, p. 3**).

“Consciously or otherwise we make a distinction between the church and Christians, and much of our reasoning is based upon this unproved assumption” (**O.H. Tallman, “Churches – individuals – Institutions,” The Gospel Guardian, Feb. 15, 1951, p. 8**).

The sentiment expressed in the above quotations is just flat out wrong. The distinction between the individual Christian and the church is not an unproved assumption, but rather it is a clear scriptural fact (Matthew 16:18:15-18).

1 Tim 5:16 “If any man or woman that _____ have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the _____ be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed”.

II. Something supported out of the treasury of the local church.

How is the church to raise money? The Bible tells us.

1 Cor 16:1-2. “Now concerning the _____ for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first _____ of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath _____ him, that there be no gatherings when I come”.

When one gives his or her money on the first day of the week, that money belongs to God from that point forward (Acts 5:1-4), and we can only do with it what has been authorized by the Word of God.

Let’s remember this: the church is a divine institution. The church is not something that was just thought up by man, it was in the mind of God from the beginning (Ephesians 3:10). When the church gets into things not authorized by God, who is it that is glorified? It’s not God because He has nothing to do with it. If God is to be glorified and His wisdom revealed, we must do what He has told us to do, how He has told us to do it, when He has told us to do it, and no more than that.

Lesson:

The problem in the religious world today is that folks think that the local church can do anything it wants so long as the end result is not bad. Therefore we find local churches doing many things that are unscriptural, unauthorized, and contrary to God’s pattern. Let’s take a quick look at what the work of the church is not:

I. Not to bring about a social reformation, nor to be a social institution involved in social activities.

The gospel is not a social gospel. There is an ever growing demand on the part of people to socialize the church by building fellowship halls, having social hours with refreshments and accommodating social functions of various kinds. Mr. Harry Golden, a Jewish writer, expressed the idea that many have concerning the church in Life magazine when he wrote:

“If I were faced today with the decision my ancestors faced – become a Christian or die – I would pick a church fast. There is nothing to offend me in the modern church. The minister gives a sermon on juvenile delinquency one week, reviews a movie next week, then

everyone goes downstairs and plays bingo. The first part of the church they build nowadays is the kitchen...”

This article was written in 1958, and it has continued to get worse. Paul condemned this socializing spirit 1 Corinthians 11:22 “What? have ye not _____ to _____ and to _____ in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I _____ you in this? I praise you not”.

Not only is it not the church’s work to get involved in these social functions, it is not its job to heal all of the physical ills of society either (1 Cor. 7:20-22).

II. Not to provide recreation (Ball teams, basketball courts, movies, etc.).

III. Not to provide secular education (build colleges, pre-schools, etc.).

It is not the work of the church to teach children their ABC’s and 123’s. Remember, when we get involved in a social gospel only man is glorified. I know of one church that has every kind of program under the sun in the church budget, including the following: *Christian Academy, Multi-Crisis Center, Behavior Modification, Drug Counseling, Family Counseling, Student at Risk Counseling, Juvenile Counseling, Grief Counseling, Prison Ministry, School Based Intervention, After School Care, Tutorial Assistance, Alternative Education, Value Training, bible Clubs, Mentoring Program, Listeners Program, Marriage Program, and G.E.D. Diplomas.*

IV. Not to go into the money raising business.

The only authorized method of raising money is by the first day of the week offering (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

Conclusion:

While most of these things have become very popular in religious circles, they are not a part of the work that God gave the church to do. It matters not how many local churches put these kinds of things in the churches budget. It makes no difference how many people view these things as good works for the church to engage in. They are additions to the pattern that God has set forth. They can only be accomplished by going beyond the Word of God and acting without authority. And remember, we must have Bible authority for all that we do (Colossians 3:17; Hebrews 8:1-5).

LESSON THREE: Evangelism

Introduction:

So far we have basically been dealing with some preliminary issues and haven't yet elaborated on the work of the church itself. Now we want to look specifically at what the work of the church is and begin examining each work individually. Before we do that though, we must review the important points we have made so far.

We have emphasized what makes something the work of a local church and we suggested two things.

- Something planned, provided and participated in by the local church.
- Something supported out of the treasury of the local church.

Then we looked at what the work of the church is not in which we suggested four things. It not the work of the church to:

- Bring about a social reformation, nor to be a social institution involved in social, civil or political activities
- Provide recreation and entertainment
- Provide secular education
- To go into the money raising business

Now then, having seen what the work of the church is not, what is the specific work that God has authorized the church to do?

Lesson:

I. What Is The Work of The Church?

In Ephesians 4:11, 12 we have the work of the church set forth. The work of the church is three-fold: *Evangelism*, *Benevolence*, and *Edification*. Now let's remember, the church is a divinely established and divinely organized institution Ephesians 2:10 "For we are his _____, created in Christ Jesus unto _____ works, which God hath before _____ that we should walk in them".

The church must be satisfied with doing what God authorized for her to do through His Word and nothing more.

II. Evangelism Is The Work of The Church.

The work of the church is an extension and continuation of the work of Christ. His mission was to seek and save the lost. That is still a work that the church must engage in today. Since individuals are saved by the gospel (Romans 1:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14), the work of the church is to preach the gospel (Acts 11:22-24; Philippians 4:15-17, 2:25; 2 Corinthians 11:8,9; 1 Thessalonians 1:7, 8). These are all wonderful examples of local churches engaging in the action of evangelism. They were all evangelistic minded. I like especially the last example of the brethren at Thessalonica. They didn't simply do evangelistic work by sending money to evangelist who were afar, they evangelized their own community by telling people they came into contact with about Jesus. I would to God that we would ever try to emulate the church in Thessalonica and be actively involved in telling people about Jesus. Why isn't the church growing in some places? One reason is because we are neglecting to do the work of the church. We are keeping the gospel to ourselves, and that is not going save anyone. The gospel is meant to be spread (Matthew 28:19-20). If we truly believe in the gospel and its ability to save, we won't keep it to ourselves (James 1:21; Psalms 19:7).

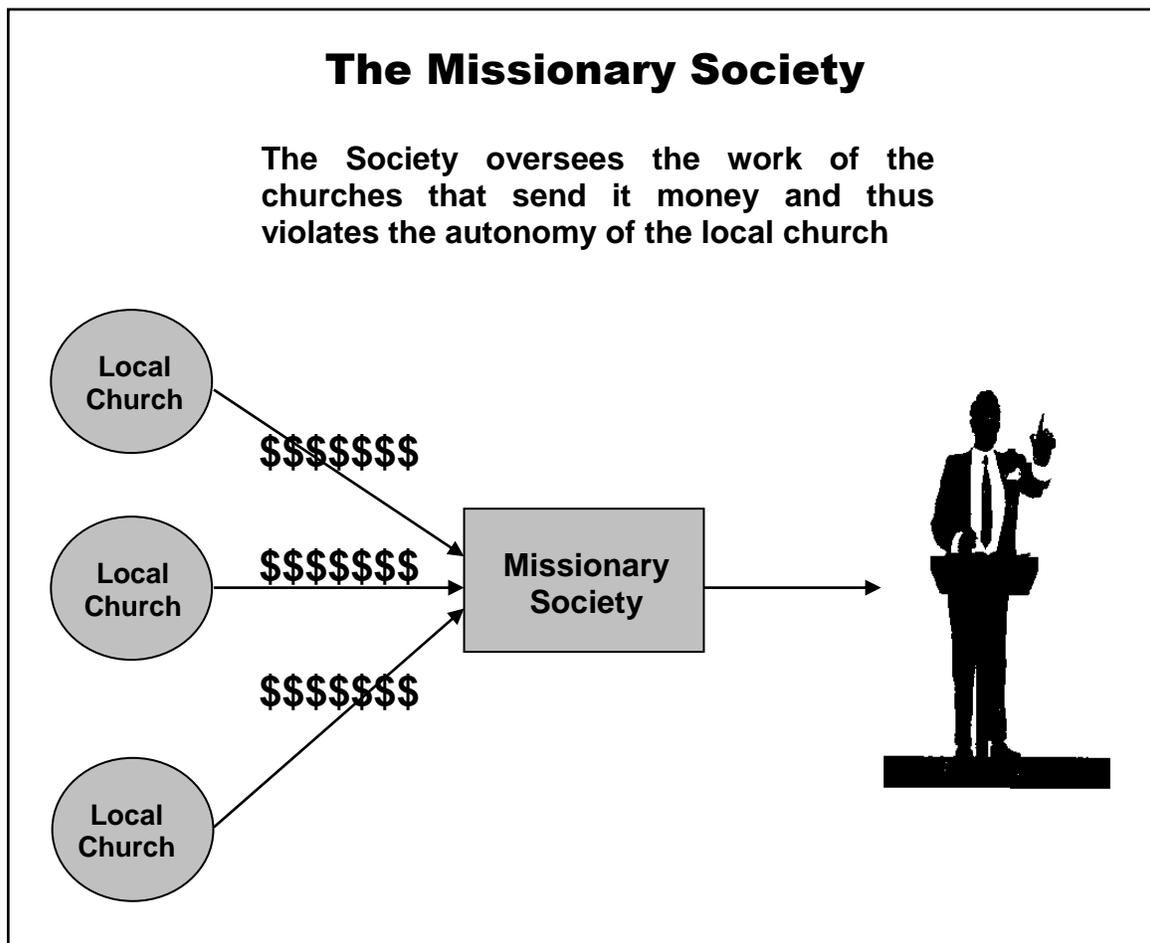
2 Cor 4:13 "We having the _____ spirit of faith, according as it is _____, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also _____, and therefore _____".

This is what the parable of the sower is all about (Matthew 13:1-20). Of several lessons in this parable, one is vital: "Behold, a sower went out to sow". This is "the parable of the sower" (Matthew 13:18), not just the hearers. For both His disciples and the multitudes, Jesus taught a basic lesson about His kingdom: its establishment and growth would be accomplished through teaching. Why? Because faith cometh by the word of God (Romans 10:13-17). LET'S PREACH THE WORD!

III. Evangelism Must Be Done Scripturally.

Remember, we need for Bible authority for all that we do (Colossians 3:17). We must follow the divine pattern that has been set forth by God, even in the area of evangelism (Hebrews 8:1-5). Over the years some churches have gone beyond this pattern of evangelism set forth in the New Testament, and have practiced evangelism in a way that has destroyed local autonomy. Oddly enough, this began among churches of Christ during the restoration period (1800-1850) at which time the church of Christ was the fastest growing church in the world. In the beginning of this period, men like Barton W. Stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and Walter Scott began to leave denominationalism and stand for the truth. The problem was

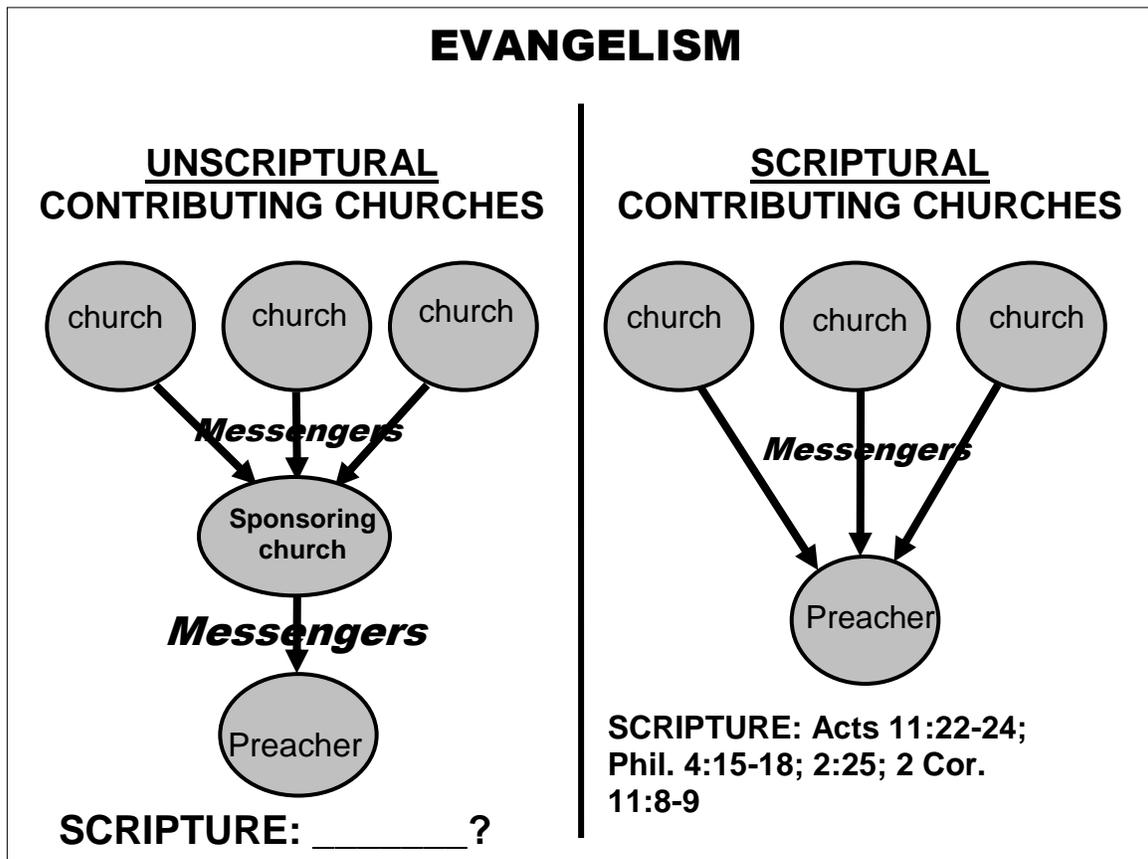
they brought some of their denominational ideas with them, one being their view that the universal church is made up of churches. So, in the 1830s “Cooperation Meetings” became popular and that eventually lead to the first institution established among churches of Christ—the American Christian Missionary Society, established in 1849 with Alexander Campbell as it’s first head. The Missionary Society violated the autonomy of local churches because the Society oversaw the work of local churches that only had the scriptural right to be overseen by its own elders. Local churches simply sent money to the society and the society choose preachers to preach the gospel and oversaw the work.



Those who opposed the unscriptural arrangement of the Missionary Society called themselves “conservatives”, whereas they were called “antis” by the advocates of the Society.

In the 1950's the Highland church of Christ in Abilene Texas began the Herald of Truth radio program. By the 1960's this program appeared on some 317 radio stations and even expanded to television, appearing on some 65 stations from coast to coast. This program was supported

financially by hundreds of local churches but the work was overseen by the elders of the Highland church. The result was that the elders of one local church were overseeing a portion of the work of several other congregations. Like the Missionary Society this arrangement violated the autonomy of the local church and thus was unscriptural (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2). The Highland church of Christ in that kind of arrangement becomes a sponsoring church. In the New Testament, however, there was no such thing as a sponsoring church. Each congregation did its own work in evangelism.



IV. God's Pattern On The Work of Evangelism.

God's pattern is the sum total of God's word on the subject. The pattern is given in the passages cited on the chart. Let's see what we find.

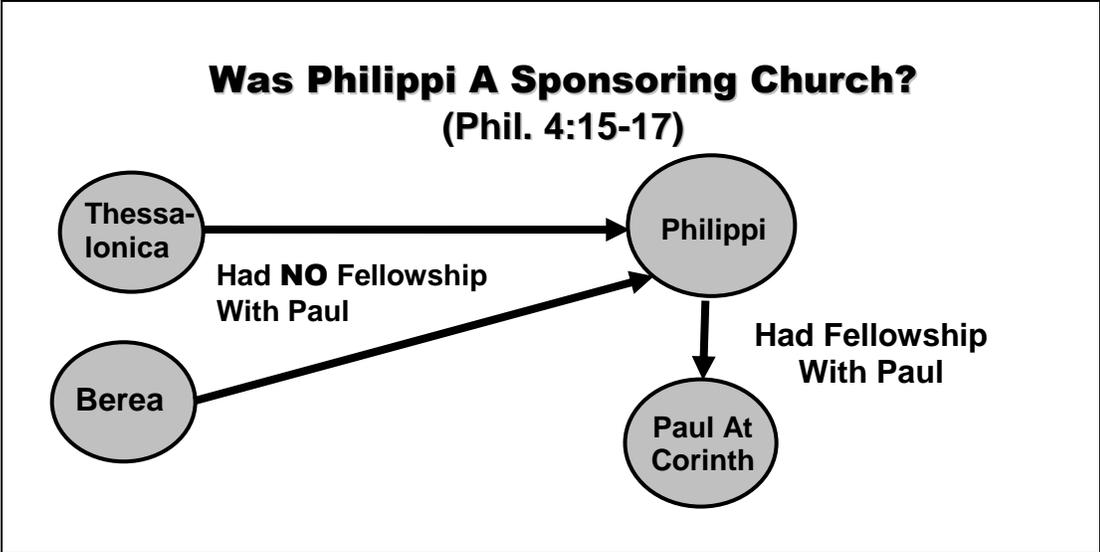
1. The supporting church or churches sent directly to the preacher
 Philippians 4:15 "Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the _____, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning _____ and _____, but

ye only”.

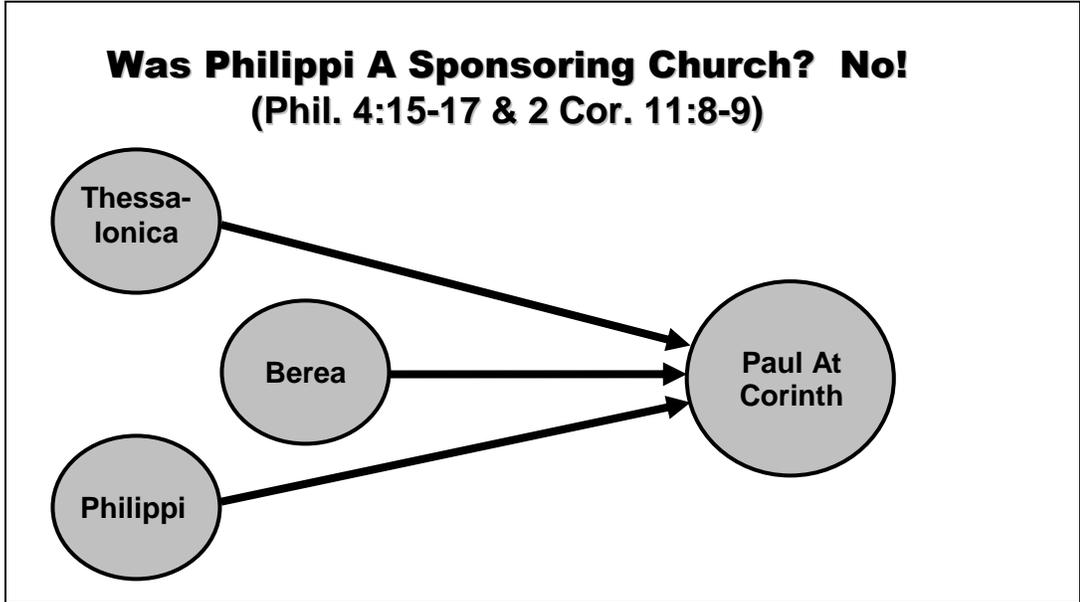
2. The supporting church or churches selected their own messenger or messengers by whom they sent the support (Philippians 2:25).
3. The preacher received the support from the hands of the messenger of the supporting church (2 Corinthians 11:8, 9; Philippians 4:16-18).
4. The preacher received that which was his own personal wages, and for his own need 2 Corinthians 11:8 “I robbed other _____, taking _____ of them, to do you _____”.
5. Sometimes one church supported the preacher, and sometimes more than one did so (2 Corinthians 11:8; Philippians 4:15).
6. No church ever sent to another church for the purpose of supporting the preaching of the gospel. Each supporting church sent directly to the preacher.

V. The Church at Philippi Was Not A Sponsoring Church!

It is sometimes argued that we do have a Bible example of a sponsoring church in the New Testament. Some brethren say that the church at Philippi was a sponsoring church. The argument goes like this: Paul said to the saints at Philippi, “...no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only” (Philippians 4:15). Then in 2 Corinthians 11:8 Paul said, “...I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.” The other churches were churches of Macedonia because Paul talks of brethren coming from Macedonia in 2 Corinthians 11:9. So the contention is that the churches of Macedonia sent money to the church at Philippi, and they sent money to Paul; hence, the church at Philippi was a sponsoring church. However, this theory would involve Paul in a most unfair situation. The word “*communicated*” in ver. 15 means, according to Thayer, “to come into communion or fellowship with.” Now, Paul says clearly that the Philippians were the only ones who communicated with him, i.e., they were the only ones to have fellowship with Paul in giving and receiving. Now notice how that would look if the church at Philippi was a sponsoring church (**chart taken from *Walking By Faith by Roy Cogdill***).



Would Paul have said that the churches in Thessalonica and Berea had no fellowship with him, even though they help him financially? I don't think so! Those brethren would have been mighty upset with Paul if he had said that after they had sent money to the church at Philippi for Paul's benefit. The truth is the statements Paul made in Philippians 4:15-17 and 2 Corinthians 11:8-9 are referring to two different time periods. In the beginning, when Paul was at Thessalonica and when he left Berea and headed to Athens only the brethren at Philippi sent him financial aid. However, some time later while Paul was at Corinth other churches help him as well. We don't have any direct references of the churches at Thessalonica or Berea sending money to Paul, but since the word "churches" is used in 2 Corinthians 11:8 we know that more than one church was involved.



There is no evidence whatsoever of the churches in Thessalonica and Berea sending money to the church at Philippi to give to Paul. That is a misuse of scripture done by brethren who are desperate to find scriptural evidence to justify their unscriptural practice of sponsoring churches.

Now, why is all this business of following the pattern important? First of all because God has always demanded that His people follow His instructions precisely (Genesis 4:1ff). Secondly, because once we allow a centralization of churches in one area such as evangelism, what's going to stop us from accepting a centralization of churches in other areas, and then finally all areas. And once we accept that, what are we but just another denomination composed of a church of churches.

VI. Congregational Activity in Evangelism Did Not Relieve Individual Christians From Responsibility To Evangelize (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 8:5; Acts 11:19, 20).

Conclusion:

Let's first make sure that we as a church are involved in the work of evangelism. And then let's also make sure that the work that we are doing is scriptural and in accordance with the pattern set forth on the pages of inspiration.

LESSON FOUR: Benevolence

Introduction:

In the last chapter we saw that the primary work of the church is evangelism. Evangelism has to do with spreading the good news of Jesus Christ and Him crucified to those who are lost. Remember now, when dealing with the work of the church, we are talking about what the local church can do with the Lord's money that is raised by the voluntary offering from saints on the first day of the week, as well as things that are planned, provided and participated in by the local church. We are not talking about the individual and what he or she can do, but with what the local church can do. The local church can and must engage in evangelism (Acts 11:22-24; Philippians 4:15-17, 2:25; 2 Corinthians 11:8-9; 1 Thessalonians 1:7-8).

In this lesson we want to look at another scriptural work Jesus gave the church to do. Let's remember that with benevolence, just like with evangelism, we must do all things according to the pattern (Hebrews 8:1-5). Yes, there is a divine pattern when it comes to the benevolent work of the church and that pattern must be followed. Now keep this in mind—what we think about the pattern is irrelevant. It doesn't matter if we like the pattern or not. It doesn't matter if we see the logic in the pattern or not. It doesn't matter how the majority of religious people feel about the pattern. We must do all things according to the pattern, PERIOD!

Lesson:

I. The Work of Benevolence.

A. The word *benevolence* means *a kindly act or a gift given out of generosity, especially a financial gift*. Now, what does the bible say about the local churches engaging in such activity (Acts 2:41-46; 4:32-35; 11:27-30; Romans 15:25-27; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9). All of these passages show us that a part of the work of the church is to help the needy. Here we must point out that in all of these passages we see the church helping needy saints. It is not the work of the church to help all of the poor of the world. Keep in mind we are not talking about the responsibility of the Christian, we are talking about the church. We will look at the individual Christian's responsibility in

just a moment, but now we need to emphasize the pattern set forth for the church.

The work of the church, that is what the church can do with the money it has gathered by saints on the first day of the week, is to help only those in the body of Christ. Why? Because that is the pattern. It's not my job to second guess the pattern that God has set forth. It is my job to follow the pattern. Now can we be sure that the pattern is for the church to help out of its treasury saints only? Yes. Remember this: in order to discover God's will on any subject, one must gather together the sum total of passages on that subject. When you have everything that God has said on the subject, you have the pattern. It is not enough to look at just one passage when God has said more in other places. No we must look at every thing that God has said on a given subject. Now, we have already listed all that God has said about the church doing benevolent work. Look at what the Bible says and remember...

The Sum Total of Passages On Any Subject Reveals God's Pattern!!!

Acts 2:44-46 – “all that believed.”

Acts 4:32-35 – “them that believed.”

Acts 11:27-30 – “send relief to unto the brethren.”

Romans 15:25 – “minister unto the saints.”

Romans 15:26 – “contribution for the poor saints.”

1 Corinthians 16:1 – “the collection for the saints.”

2 Corinthians 8:4 – “ministering to the saints.”

2 Corinthians 9:1 – “ministering to the saints.”

This is the pattern that we must follow. If we can deviate from the pattern here, why can't we deviate in other places? And if we can deviate from the pattern in one place, why can we deviate in two places, then, 200 places? And who is going to decide which pattern we can deviate from and which pattern we can't? Clearly we must stick with the Bible pattern on all subjects, including the subject

involving those whom we should include within the scope of church benevolence!

- B.** Let's use some Bible logic in determine the work of the church in this area.

Romans 10:17:

Faith comes by _____ the word of God.

The word of God says nothing about the church relieving the poor of the world.

Relieving the poor of the world is not of faith.

2 Timothy 3:16-17:

The scriptures _____ us unto all good _____.

The scriptures say nothing of the church relieving the poor of the world.

The church relieving the poor of the world not a good work.

1 Peter 4:11:

We must speak according to the _____ of God.

The oracles of God say nothing of the church relieving the poor of the world.

Saying the church should relieve the poor of the world is not speaking according to the oracles of God.

- C.** Some say that because the Bible doesn't say "saints only" the poor of the world can be relieved. If such were the case, however, we could justify just about anything (*e.g., musical instruments*).

BENEVOLENCE	
Doesn't Say "Saints Only"	
MUSIC IN THE N.T.	BENEVOLENCE IN THE N.T.
<u>SING</u> Matt. 26:30 Acts 16:25 Rom. 15:9 1 Cor. 14:15 Eph. 5:19 Col. 3:16 Heb. 2:12 Jas. 5:13	<u>SAINTS</u> Acts 2:41-45 Acts 4:32-35 Acts 11:27-30 Rom. 15:25-27 1 Cor. 16:1, 2 2 Cor. 8:&9
Sing Only?	Saints Only?

II. The Poor of The World.

- A. Does all this mean that the poor of the world should be ignored by Christians. *NO!* On an individual basis, Christians should and must help any who are in need (Galatians 6:10; James 1:27; Matthew 25:35-46; Luke 10:30-37). But the work of the church is to help needy saints. We should not forget that there is a difference between the individual saint and the church 1 Timothy 5:16 “If any man or woman that believeth have _____, let them relieve them, and let not the church be _____; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed”.

Hence, the church cannot do with its money everything that an individual Christian can do with his or her money.

- B. Now, some try to justify the church getting involved in helping all the poor by Galatians 6:10 and James 1:27. Their obvious mistake is that they are applying two passages that refer to individual action to the work that the local church does collectively (Galatians 6:1,3,4, 6,7,8). Clearly the us and we of verses 9 & 10 are referring to Christians acting on an individual basis. Now look at the context of James (James 1: 18-27). Again, it is clear that the command in ver. 27 is directed to individuals, and not to local churches.

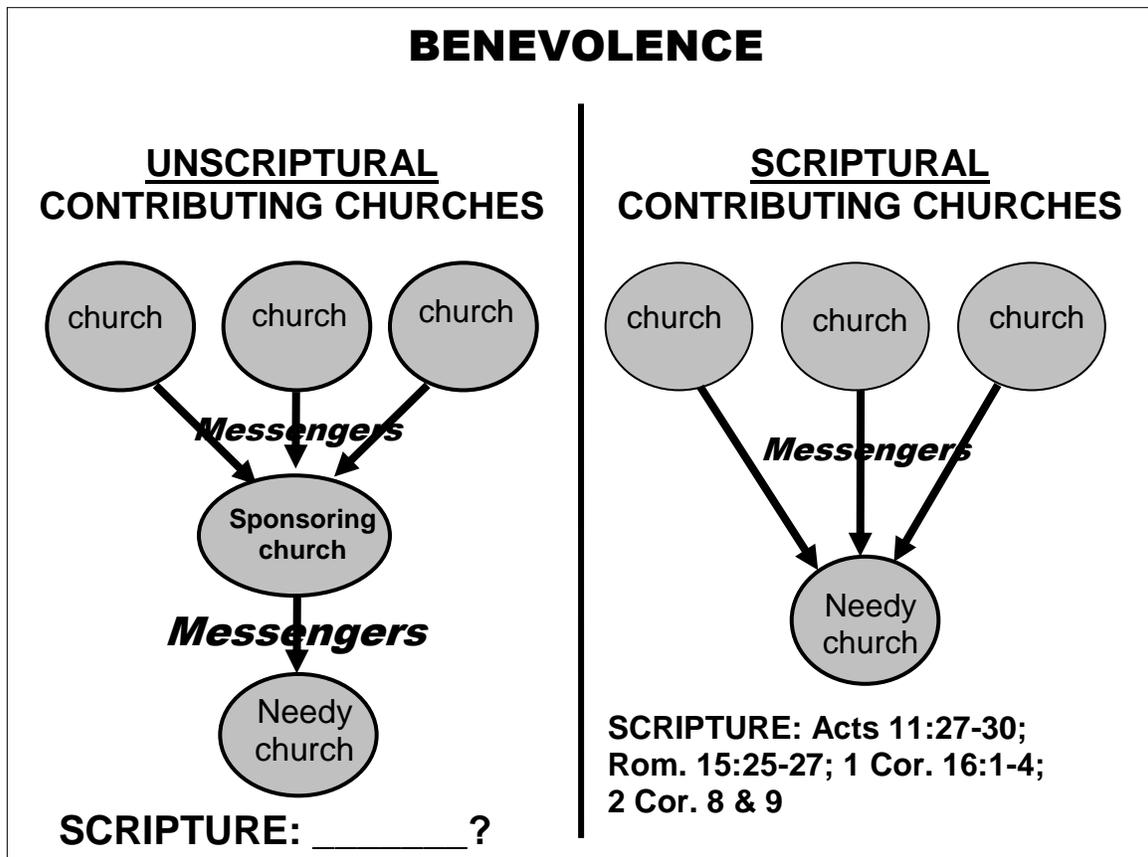
James 1:27 “Pure _____ and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and _____ in their affliction, and to keep himself _____ from the world”.

Churches or Individuals	
Gal. 6:1-10	Jas. 1:18-27
Ver. 1 – man	Ver. 19 – every man
Ver. 3 –man, he, himself	Ver. 20 – man
Ver. 4 – man	Ver. 23 – he, man
Ver. 6 – man	Ver. 24 – himself
Ver. 7 – man	Ver. 25 – man, his
Ver. 8 – he	Ver. 26 – man
Ver. 9 – us, we	Ver. 27 - himself
Ver. 10 – we, us	

To say that these passages refer to churches is to make the same mistake that denominational preachers make when they apply the branches of Jn. 15 to denominations instead of individuals.

III. Benevolence and the Sponsoring Church Arrangement.

Much like evangelism, some churches engage in benevolent work that destroys the autonomy of local churches. Again some have set up “sponsoring churches” to do the work of benevolence. Just as was the case with evangelism, the sponsoring church arrangement not only destroys local autonomy, it also indicates that the local church is not sufficient to do its own work. Furthermore, it too is a violation of the divine pattern set forth in the word of God.



When we search the scriptures, we find the following pattern in regard to benevolence:

1. The sending church was a church with superior ability (financially).
2. The receiving church was always in need.

3. The purpose was that there might be equality, a freedom for want 2 Corinthians 8:13,14 “For I mean not that other men be _____, and ye burdened

But by an equality, that now at this time your _____ may be a supply for their _____, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:”

4. The sending church selected its own messenger (1 Corinthians 16:3,4; 2 Corinthians 8:23).

Conclusion:

The work of the local church is important. We must do all that God has commanded us to do as a local church, but we must do no more. If we begin doing things for which we have no authority, we sin against God by going beyond His word. Let us be satisfied with doing just that which God has told us to do.

LESSON FIVE: Edification

Introduction:

So far in this syllabus we have discussed the work of evangelism and benevolence. In dealing with both of those works, we have emphasized that the work must be done scripturally and in keeping with the pattern that has been set forth in the Word of God (Hebrews 8:5).

In the denominational realm, people have concluded for years that it doesn't matter how we worship God, just as long as we worship Him somehow. Now there are those in the church who have concluded the same about the work of the church. It doesn't matter how we evangelized, as long as we do it. It doesn't matter how we engage in benevolent work, just as long as we do it. But the fallacy in that kind of thinking is that we serve a God Who has always demanded that His people follow His instructions carefully and accurately (Genesis 4:1ff; Leviticus 10:1-3). Now, when it comes to evangelism and benevolent work is there a pattern that must be followed? The answer is yes. And the pattern shows that the church never engaged in those things in such a way that violated the autonomy of the local church. Each church was an independent unit which was self-governing and that did its own work. Over the years local churches started to violate this pattern by setting up what we call sponsoring churches. This was a method in which many churches would send money to a sponsoring church and that sponsoring church would send money either to an evangelist or to a needy church. Now I want you to take note of the fact, that once a local church sends money to another local church to do a work, you have a situation where one church is overseeing a part of the work of another church. That is a violation of 1 Pet. 5:2. In the New Testament, the only time one church ever sent money to another church is when there was a benevolent need, and the reason for that was that there could be equality (2 Corinthians 8:8-14).

Now we want to turn our attention to the third work that Christ has given His church to do and that is edification. Paul said that Christ gave some apostles, and some prophets; and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers *for the perfecting of the saints* (Ephesians 4:12). The perfecting of the saints has to do with the edifying or building up of the local church. That this is the work of the church means that we can use God's money, i.e., the money that is gathered by the free-will offering of the saints upon the first day of the week, for the purpose of edification. This is what we want to look at in this lesson.

Lesson:

I. The Work of Edification.

In Ephesians 4:16 “From whom the _____ body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of _____ part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love”

We find that everyone in a local church should be involved in the edifying process. The church should be growing, not only numerically, but also spiritually (1 Thessalonians 5:11; 1 Corinthians 14:26).

II. The Assembling of The Saints To Worship God.

The primary source of edification for the saints of a local church is the weekly assembling of the saints Hebrews 10:24-25 “And let us _____ one another to _____ unto love and to _____ works: Not _____ the assembling of _____ together, as the _____ of some is; but _____ one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”.

Now what we find in the New Testament is the church engaging in five avenues of worship when they assembled themselves together.

A. Partaking the Lord’s Supper

Acts 20:7 “And upon the _____ day of the _____, when the _____ came together to break _____, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight”.

We do this every Lord’s day in order to remember Jesus and the sacrifice that He made for us on Calvary’s cross. The fact that this is done upon the first day of the week shows a weekly observance of the Lord’s Supper (*First month of the year would denote a yearly observance. First week of the month would denote a monthly observance. First day of the week denotes a weekly observance*). Also, this is one of the two acts of worship that are scripturally reserved for the first day of the week.

B. Preaching or teaching (Acts 20:7)

2 Tim 2:2 “And the things that thou hast _____ of me among many witnesses, the same _____ thou to faithful men, who shall be able to _____ others also”.

In this the Word of God is emphasized. The craze in the religious world today is social and recreational. Man thinks that a person has to be entertained in order to be build up spiritually. Nothing could be further from the truth. The fact of the matter is, the Word of God is the greatest source of edification that we have (Acts 20:32). Today we are blessed with having the written Word of God and we need to use it to our advantage in building up the local church. We need to strive to have the best Bible classes possible. As a preacher, I need to be focused on teaching and preaching the whole counsel of God so that the church can be built up. The elders must be focused on feeding the flock. Remember, faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

C. Praying Acts 2:42 “And they _____ stedfastly in the apostles' _____ and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers”.

Praying was something we find the church doing regularly (Acts 4:23-31; Acts 12:1-5).

D. Singing (Ephesians 5:19) Colossians 3:16 “Let the word of _____ dwell in you richly in all _____ teaching and admonishing one another in _____ and _____ and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your _____ to the Lord”.

Remember, all things must be done scripturally, and scripturally the saints in the first century sang. They didn't play a musical instrument, they sang. They didn't play and sing, they simply sang. That there were no instruments of music in the New Testament worship is a forgone conclusion.

1. American Encyclopedia: “Pope Vitalian introduced organs into some of the churches in Southern Europe about A.D. 670.
2. History of Music, pg, 54: “The church music was exclusively vocal” (Edward Dickson).
3. Evolution of Church Music, pg. 42: “All music employed in their service was vocal” (Frank L. Humpries).
4. Music in Western Civilization, pp. 53-54: “All our sources deal amply with the vocal music in the early church” (Paul H. Lang).

More importantly than these quotes is the fact that in all the scriptures that we find in the New Testament involving the church, all they did was sing. We must follow the pattern.

E. Giving (1 Corinthians 16:1, 2).

How did the church raise money? They did it by the free-will offering of the saints upon the first day of the week. Just like the Lord's Supper, this is an act of worship limited to the Lord's day.

Conclusion:

Let's make sure that we continue to do the work of the church in the area of edification. Let's build up this local church, and let's do it God's way.

LESSON SIX: Institutionalism

Introduction:

As we continue our series of lessons on the work of the church, we now come to the issue of institutionalism. I said when we started this study that there is indeed division among the people of God today. That's a sad but true reality. Some local churches of Christ are what we call institutional churches and some, like this one, are non-institutional. For the most part, fellowship between individuals in these two different kinds of local churches has long since ceased and the truth is there has been much animosity between the two groups over the years. Those who have been opposed to institutionalism have been called every thing from antis to radicals in the body of Christ. Those who have supported institutionalism have been labeled liberals and have been described as those who are immature in the faith and who have a denominational concept of Christianity. Thus, division was inevitable among brethren regarding this issue of institutionalism. In the 50's and 60's many debates among brethren were held and many churches were divided. As early as 1954, the then editor of the *Gospel Advocate* suggested that antis should be tagged with the yellow tag of quarantine. Preachers who opposed institutions doing the work of the church had meetings canceled and were often asked to leave by the local church which was supporting them. Referring to the division experienced by brethren at this time, Bill Humble had the following to say:

"The most serious issue that churches of Christ have faced in this century is church cooperation and 'institutionalism.' Led by Roy Cogdill, Yater Tant, and the *Gospel Guardian*, a substantial number of churches have some to oppose such cooperative programs of evangelism as the Herald of Truth and the homes for orphans and aged, as they are presently organized. During the past 15 years many debates have been held, churches have divided, and fellowship has been broken. This is the most serious division, numbers-wise, that churches of Christ have suffered. Whether the division is final, or whether it can be healed, is yet to be determined" (*Story of Restoration*, p. 74, *Bill Humble*).

Well, the division has never been healed, and it is quite unlikely that it ever will be. The truth is those who have supported institutions have over the years become more and more liberal minded so that there is now a division among them. There are now liberals and ultra liberals. The ultra liberals are those like Max Lacado, Rubel Shelly, Ed Fudge, and a host of others, who have simply taken the principles of liberal minded brethren to its predictable end. Listen carefully: whenever you have an attitude that says, "There is no pattern," there is going to raise up a generation that desires to do things that you may not want to do, but are basically defenseless to stop.

As one brother said, “you can’t open up the flood gates with one hand and try to stem the tide with the other.” This is what some of our liberal brethren are finding out right now.

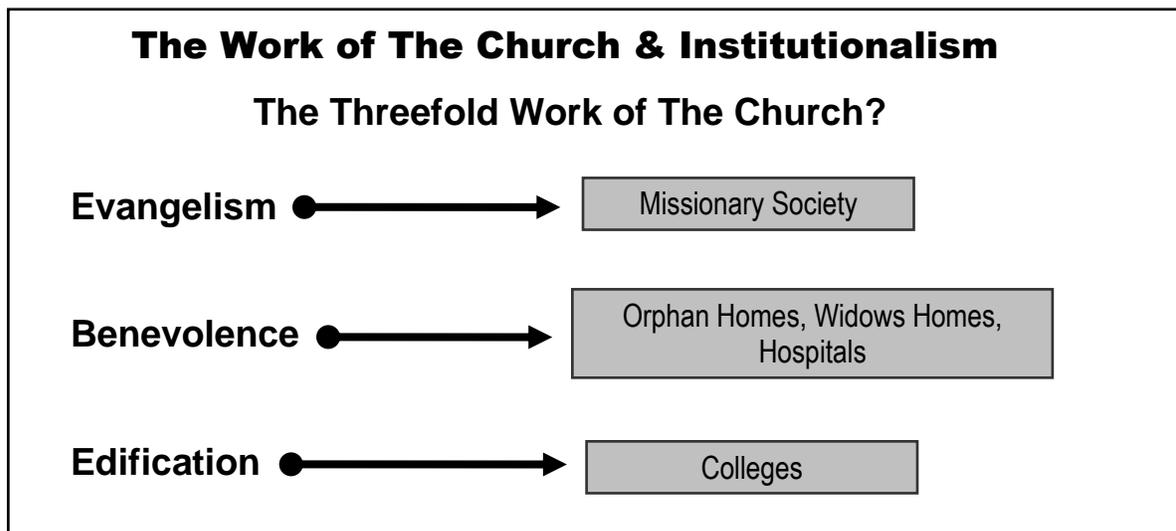
But now, what is institutionalism exactly and why do we oppose it so vigorously? Why is it that we consider those who approved of and participate in institutionalism as digressive brethren? These are some of the questions we want to answer in this lesson.

Lesson:

I. What Is Institutionalism?

Institutionalism is the practice of building and financially maintaining or subsidizing different institutions to do the work of the local church. I want you to get this now. This is the problem of institutionalism. It is not the **work** that they do, it is **who** is doing the work. We will have more on this in just a minute. But institutionalism has to do with building and maintaining institutions to do the work of the church.

Now, let’s remember what the work of the church is. The work of the church is to engage in evangelism, benevolence, and edification. Since that is the work of the church, brethren through the years have thought that it is okay for the church to build institutions as a matter of expediency to do that work. We are talking about missionary societies to do the work of evangelism. We are talking about orphan homes, widow homes and hospitals to do the work of benevolence. And we are talking about colleges to do the work of edification. These are the kind of institutions that we are talking about and that conservative brethren oppose.



II. What Is The Issue Among Us?

The issue is not should the church do this work. Of course it should! The issue is not “*how*” the church should do the work. How the church does it’s work of evangelism, benevolence, and edification is a matter of expediency. Well, if the issue is not whether or not the church should do the work or how the church should do the work, what is the issue? The issue is “*who*” should do the work under consideration. This is what divides us. Not how the work should be done, but who should do it. Institutional brethren believe that institutions like orphan homes and Christian colleges should do it. Thus, they build these institutions and put them in the church budget to maintain them. These institutions, in turn, do the work that God has given the local church to do. Non-institutional brethren believe that the only institution or organization that is authorized by the New Testament is the local church; thus, the local church should do it’s own work.

Now, many accusations have been made about those who oppose man-made institutions over the years. It has been implied, or at times stated directly, that we have our priorities mixed up. Often a preacher making such an accusation would hold up a bag of fertilizer from behind a pulpit and say that we believe we can fertilize the grass but not take care of orphans. This is a ploy to work on the emotions of people. That is not the issue! We have been accused of not believing in mission work. I cannot speak of all churches that oppose institutionalism, but places where I have preached supported preachers on foreign fields in the past and I’m sure will do it in the future. That is not the issue! We have been accused of not believing in preaching the gospel on TV or radio. That again is not true and is not the issue. The issue now is and always has been, *who is going to do the work God has assigned the church to do*. We say it must be the local church.

What is the local church? It is a group of people who have decided to work together in a specific geographical location. It is a unit composed of elders, deacons, and saints Philippians 1:1 “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the _____ in Christ Jesus which are at _____, with the _____ and _____”.

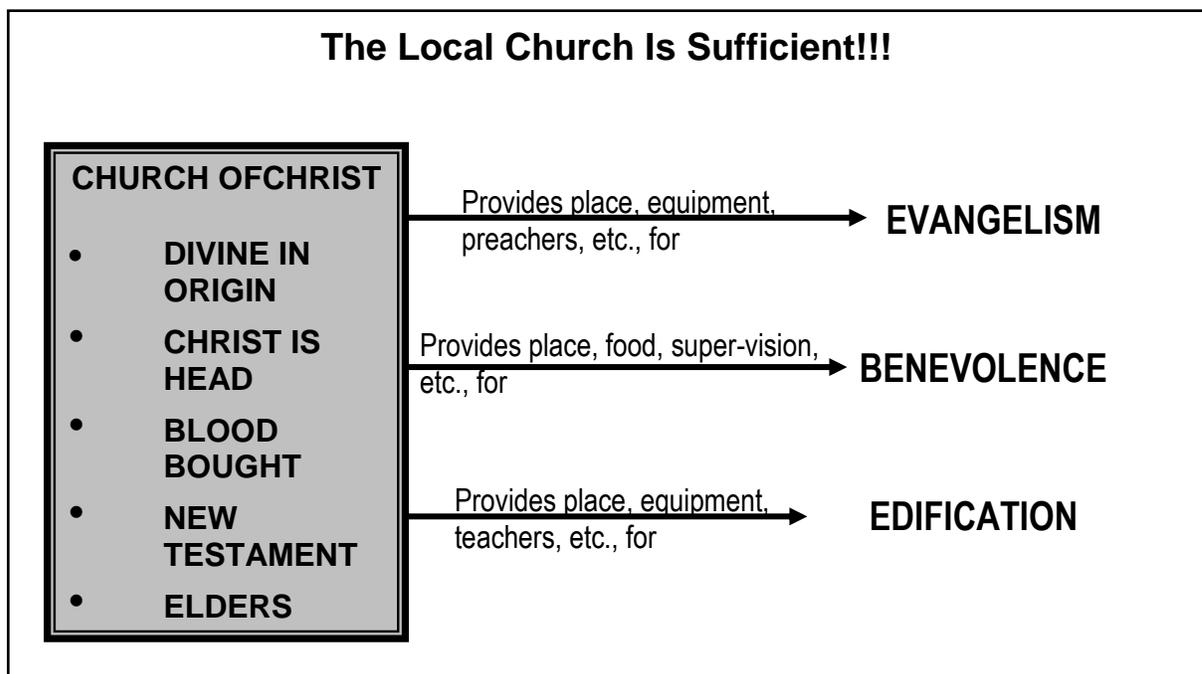
It is a group that has Jesus as it’s head (Ephesians 1:22, 23). The church is blood bought (Acts 20:28). The church is governed by the New Testament and the New Testament only (Acts 2:42). The local church is overseen by a plurality of elders (14:23; 1 Peter 5:2). This is the only organization of God’s people one reads about in the New Testament.

III. Is The Local Church Sufficient To Do Its Work?

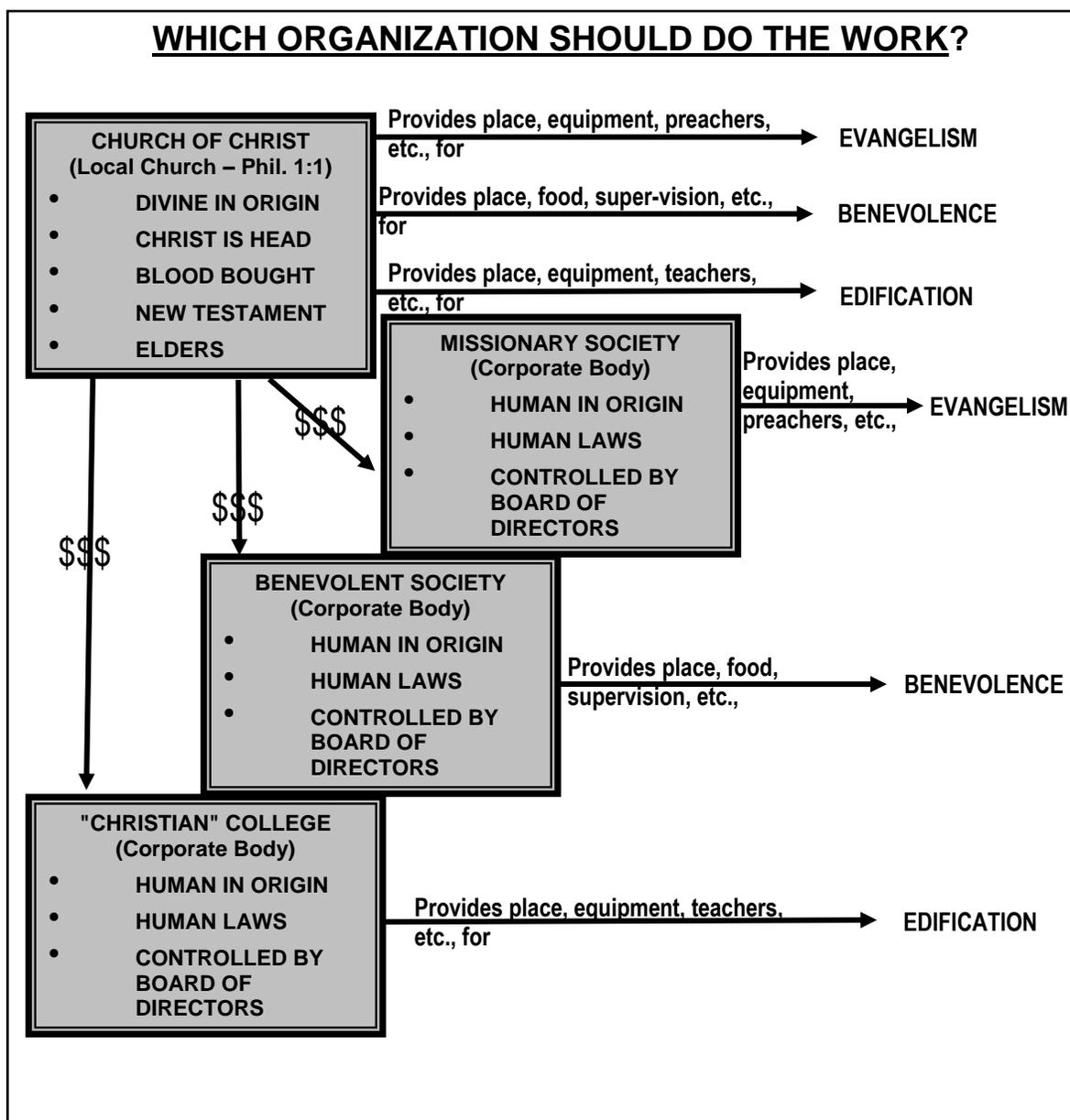
The real question is “can the church do the work that God has given it to do?” Institutional brethren say no. This has always been the case going

back to the Missionary Society. Before the Society was established, while Alexander Campbell was trying to solicit support for a brotherhood wide cooperative effort in evangelism, his thinking was that an individual must preach the gospel, but a local church can do what an individual cannot. And a group of congregations can do what one congregation cannot. Here is what he wrote: *“A church can do what an individual disciple cannot, and so can a district of churches do what a single congregation cannot”* (*Millennial Harbinger, Vol. II, No. 5 (May 1831), pg. 237*).

On Oct. 23, 1849 there was a convention held in Cincinnati concerning the Missionary Society. Alexander Campbell could not attend and W.K. Pendleton came in his stead. Later Pendleton wrote: “We met, not for the purpose of enacting ecclesiastic laws, not to interfere with the true and scriptural independence of the churches, but to consult about the best ways for giving efficiency to our power, and to devise such methods of cooperation, in the great work of converting and sanctifying the world, as our combined counsels, under the guidance of Providence, might suggest and approve. There are some duties of the church which a single congregation cannot, by her unaided strength, discharge. . .” (*Millennial Harbinger, Third Series, Vol. VI, o. 12 (Dec., 1849), pp. 689, 690*). These statements clearly show that some restoration leaders felt that a missionary society was necessary because the local church was too limited. It was insufficient. Nothing has changed. Those who advocate institutions to do the work of the church today are indicating by their actions the same thing, though they deny it. Again, I remind you of what the work of the church is — evangelism, edification, and benevolence. The local church can do all these things without help from an institution.



The above chart is meant to show that anything that God has commanded the church to do, it can do without the help of a man-made institution. Liberal minded brethren do not believe that this is so. They believe that the only way that the church can do all that God has commanded of her is to build and subsidize institution to do the work. Consider the contrasting chart below:



By this chart one should be able to see once again that the issue is not whether or not the work of evangelism, benevolence and edification should be done. Clearly it must! But the question is who should do it. There is only one right answer! The right answer is that the church should do the

work, not build institutions to do it for her and then send money out of the church treasury to the institution to maintain it.

IV. The Church Is Not A Home

It has been argued that the church has the responsibility to take care of widows and orphans. The passage that is used is James 1:27 “Pure religion and _____ before God and the Father is this, To visit the _____ and _____ in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world”.

The word *visit* here means “*to look upon or to look after; to relieve.*” Institutional brethren conclude that since the church has this responsibility, and since the church is not a home, it must provide a home. Well, it is agreed that the church can provide a home for the needy of the church. For example, the church can use an existing nursing home to care for its needy widows if the situation calls for it. The church can, in other words, buy a service from a nursing home. But that, as we have seen, is greatly different from building and subsidizing a nursing home. To build and subsidize a home one must establish an institution with board of directors as overseers who in return will provide a place of residency (**chart**). Another thing that is interesting about our brethren’s use of James 1:27 is how they shift the responsibility of the text. We have seen in a previous lesson that they try to shift the responsibility of the text from the individual to the church. But they go even further. Once they shift responsibility to the church, they then in turn try to shift responsibility to an institution (**chart**).

Conclusion:

Institutionalism --what is the issue? It is not whether the church should preach the gospel, help the needy, or edify the saints. It should, in fact we should say it must do those things because they are indeed the work God gave the church to do. The issue is not whether or not the church can buy services from institutions such as hospital, nursing homes, or even orphan homes in certain situations. It can! The issue is this. Can the church build institutions and then subsidize that institution by making contributions to it out of the treasury? Can the church pay another organization to do the work that God gave it to do? That is the issue! Our liberal institutional brethren say yes, but they can give no authority for such. We say no. The church must do its own work.

LESSON SEVEN: Expediencies

Introduction:

We have now come to our final lesson on the work of the church. We have covered several important things in this study.

First, we emphasized what makes something the work of the church. The work of the church has to do with that which is planned, provided, participated in and or paid for by the church. At that time we pointed out that we are not discussing in this study what the individual can do, but rather what the local church can do, and that there is a difference between the individual Christian and the church (1 Timothy 5:16).

Second, we emphasized what the scriptural work of the church is and is not. It is not to heal all of the social ills of the church. The work of the church is not social in nature, but rather it is spiritual. It is not to engage in and finance recreation and entertainment. The work of the church is not to teach secular education, nor is it to get involved in business. What then is the work of the church?

We have found from scripture that the work of the church is threefold Ephesians 4:12 “For the _____ of the saints, for the work of the _____, for the _____ of the body of _____”

The threefold work of the church is *evangelism, benevolence and edification*. This is all we have the authority to do. We have emphasized that we must have Bible authority for all that we do (Colossians 3:17). We also emphasized that we must follow the divine pattern in carrying out the work of the church (Hebrews 8:5). What is the pattern?

In evangelism we found that churches always sent funds directly to the preacher (no sponsoring churches in the N.T.). We also found that no church ever sent money to another local church to do the work of evangelism. Each local church did its own work.

In benevolence we found that churches sent money directly to local churches that were in need (no sponsoring churches). We also noticed that according to the pattern, no church with superior financial ability ever received funds from a church that was financially inferior.

Finally, in lesson six we dealt with the matter of institutionalism. We pointed out that institutionalism has to do with building and financially maintaining man-made institutions to do the work of the church. There is no Bible authority for such action; instead the church is to do what God has commanded it to do. We emphasized that the issue in institutionalism is not whether or not the church should do its work. IT SHOULD. The issue is not how the church should do its work, but the issue is WHO should do it. Listen to this prominent gospel preacher on the issue of who should do the work of the church in the area of benevolence:

The ship of Zion has floundered more than once on the sand-bar of institutionalism. The tendency to organize is characteristic of the age. This writer has ever been unable to appreciate the logic of those who affect to see grave danger in the missionary society but scruple not to form organizations for the purpose of caring for orphans, and teaching young men to be gospel preachers. Of course it is right for the church to care for the fatherless and widows in their affliction, but the work should be done by and through the church with the elders having the oversight thereof. (Guy N. Woods, ACC Lectures, 1939, p.54).

Oddly enough, by the mid 20th century this preacher was in favor of institutions doing the work of the church. He preached something different in the 1950s than he did in the 1930s, but the truth is he was right in the 30s and that is where we stand now.

Now then, in this final lesson we want to discuss the issue of expediencies. Many brethren have tried to justify unauthorized practices by putting those practices into the category of an expediency. Now, since some of the things that we do fall into this category, we need to know what an expediency is.

Lesson:

I. What Is An Expediency?

Thayer says that the word “expedient” means, “*To help, or to be profitable.*” Vines says it means, “*to be profitable or advantageous.*” When we talk about “expediencies,” then, we are talking about things that are helpful to us in carrying out God’s revealed will. Now listen to me: we are not talking about aids that help us in carrying out things that are not a part of God’s will; we are talking about aids that help us in keeping the commandments of God.

II. Rules To Remember About Expediencies.

A. An Expediency Must Be Lawful

1 Corinthians 6:12 “All things are _____ unto me, but all things are not _____: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the _____ of any”.

If a thing doesn't come within the scope of that which is authorized, it is unlawful and therefore sinful. If we preach something that has not been revealed by divine truth, or practice something outside the realm of revelation, we sin against God (2 John 9). Now, something that is sinful can never be expedient. Remember, an expediency is something profitable, but it is never profitable to sin against God. Can you think of a sin that is profitable or advantageous to the soul? Of course not. Thus, anything that is expedient must first be lawful, that is, it must be authorized by God. Now, we must take the time here to discuss what makes something authorized.

1. How To Establish Bible Authority.

- a. **Direct command or statement** 1 Corinthians 11:23 “For I have _____ of the Lord that which also I _____ unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same _____ in which he was betrayed took _____.”
- b. **Approved or apostolic example** Acts 20:7 “And upon the first _____ of the week, when the _____ came together to break bread, Paul _____ unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight”.
- c. **Necessary Inference or implication (Acts 20:7).**

2. Two Kinds of Bible Authority.

- a. **Specific** Genesis 6:14 “Make thee an ark of _____ wood; rooms shalt thou make in the _____, and shalt pitch it within and _____ with pitch”.
- b. **Generic** – tools used in making the ark.

Now then, anything that doesn't fit within the realm of authority is not expedient. If you can't fit a practice into a direct command, approved example or necessary inference it is not expedient.

B. An Expediency Must Be A Non-essential.

An expediency is something that is profitable, but not necessary. Expediencies involve choices that are expressions of generic authority. When God specifies something, there is no choice. We must comply to the specifications of God or be guilty of sin. For instance, baptism is profitable, but only if we follow God's specifications. Can we say that sprinkling is an expedient way of carrying out God's command to be baptized? No, because God specifies that baptism is a burial (Romans 6:4). Sprinkling is not an expediency, it is an addition to what God said to do. On the other hand, a baptistery is an expediency, i.e., an authorized non-essential that can aid us in keeping God's command to baptize.

C. An Expediency Must Edify (1 Corinthians 10:23).

If God commands us to do something a certain way, we must do it regardless of how people feel about it. But if we are dealing with an expediency, i.e., something that is a matter of choice involving human wisdom or judgment, and the practice of it destroys what God would have us build up (*the local church*) by causing division, that thing ceases to be expedient.

D. An Expediency Must Not Offend (1 Corinthians 10:32-33; 8:7-13; Romans 14:14-16).

For the most part this rule applies to individual actions, not congregational action. First of all the text of these passages is individual in nature. Secondly, if broadly applied to the collective action of the local church, it would allow one or two brethren to hold the church hostage to their scruples, virtually paralyzing the local church (e.g., overhead, gospel meetings, separate classes for teaching, etc.). However, some good judgment is in order here. A local church would not want to do something, even if it is permissible, if half the congregation is going to object or be offended. A practice that divides the church can not be said to be profitable.

III. Making Application of Expediencies And Bible Authority.

God commanded Noah to make an ark. Wood would be essential to keeping the command. Gopher wood is specified. While the size of the logs, the shape of the logs and the tools he used would all be expediencies, another type of wood would be an addition.

God commanded disciples to go and teach. A message would be essential in keeping the command. The gospel is the specified message. While the method of teaching or the means of going would be expediencies, another message would be an addition.

God commanded disciples to sing. **Spiritual songs** would be **essential** in keeping the command. **Singing** is specified kind of music. While the different songs, song book, song leaders, etc. would be expediencies, **playing** an instrument (another type of music) would be an **addition**.

God commanded disciples to partake of the Lord's Supper. The **elements** would be essential in keeping the command. **Bread & fruit of the vine** are specified. While the table, plate and containers would be expediencies, **another element** (cake, ice cream & Pepsi) would be an **addition**.

God commanded the church to work. The **local church** (proper organization) would be essential. **Evangelism, Benevolence, & Edification** are specified. While different means may be expedient, another organization (human institutions) would be an **addition**.

God commanded the church to work. The **local church** (proper organization) would be essential. **Evangelism, Benevolence, & Edification** are specified. While different means may be expedient, another work (recreation, entertainment, secular education) would be an **addition**.

Conclusion:

Let's not try to justify unlawful things by simply saying they are expedient. All additions are sinful (2 John 9). Let's do the work of the church. Let's do only the work of the church no more or no less. Let's make sure that we do the work, and not build human institutions to do it for us.

And finally, let's not compromise our convictions by extending the right hand of fellowship to churches that are doing things that are unauthorized, unscriptural and therefore sinful (2 John 10-11). Let's remember the admonition of Paul not to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11). Nothing good comes from a soft, unity in diversity approach to truth. I want to close with a statement made by Jesse P. Sewell in the 1950 Harding College Lectureship, Searcy, Arkansas, under the subject "Biographical Sketches," pages 74 and 75:

"Now I will tell this incident in the life of Brother J.W. McGarvey. In January, 1902 or 1903, I was preaching for the Pearl and Bryan Streets Church in Dallas. Brother McGarvey, an old man at the time, was invited to speak at the Central Christian Church in Dallas. We had three men in the Pearl and Bryan Church who had graduated from the College of the Bible in Lexington, under Brother McGarvey, and they were great admirers of him. They suggested that we invite Brother McGarvey to preach at Pearl and Bryan that night. We did so. I was just a boy of 24 or 25 then. I was sitting by the side of this great old man on the front seat, waiting for the service to

begin. As we sat there talking, Brother McGarvey said to me: "Brother Sewell, I want to say something to you, if you'll accept it in the spirit in which I mean it." I told him I'd appreciate anything he had to say to me. He said about these words, "You are on the right road, and whatever you do, don't ever let anybody persuade you that you can successfully combat error by fellowshipping it and going along with it. I have tried. I believed at the start that was the only way to do it. I've never held membership in a congregation that uses instrumental music. I have, however, accepted invitations to preach without distinction between churches that used it and churches that didn't. I've gone along with their papers and magazines and things of that sort. During all these years I have taught the truth as the New Testament teaches it to every young preacher who has passed through the College of the Bible. Yet, I do not know of more than six of these men who are preaching the truth today." He said, "It won't work."