

Why Be A Member Of The Church Of Christ?

BECAUSE IT IS SCRIPTURAL IN WORK

Spring 2012 Gospel Meeting

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

- ✘ What about the work of the church...?
 - + a. What does the Lord intend for His church to do in this world?
 - + b. Are we free to involve the church in whatever work we deem?

UNIVERSAL/LOCAL

- ✘ The church universal and the church local...
 - + The church universal: Matthew 16:18, 1Timothy 3:15, Acts 8:4
 - + The church local (1Corinthians 1:2, Acts 13:1) has organization (Philippians 1:1, Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5)

AUTHORITY

- ✘ THE NATURE OF AUTHORITY: TWO KINDS
 - + General Authority.
 - ✘ Inclusive: Includes choices of means and methods.
 - ✘ Judgment allowed in carrying out the authorized action.

AUTHORITY

- ✘ THE NATURE OF AUTHORITY: TWO KINDS (continued)
 - + Specific Authority.
 - ✘ Exclusive: Excludes everything except what has been specified.
 - ✘ Cannot add to or take from (Revelation 22:18-19).

AUTHORITY

- ✘ THE NATURE OF AUTHORITY: TWO KINDS (continued)
 - + These Two Kinds Of Authority Illustrated:
 - ✘ Everything authorized both general and specific in some respect.
 - ✘ cf. Ark - Genesis 6:14 - General (Build: tools, location); Specific (gopher wood, pitch, dimensions, etc.).

APPLYING AUTHORITY

- ✘ Playing Mechanical Instruments Of Music In Worship Is Excluded Because The NT Pattern Is Sing.
- ✘ Additional Organizations To Do The Work Of The Church Are Excluded Because The NT Pattern Is The Local Church!
- ✘ The NT pattern regarding work is; edification, evangelism, benevolence to saints only,
- ✘ All other works excluded & forbidden! - 2 John 9; 1 Corinthians 4:6; Galatians 1:8-9
- ✘ Because we must adhere to God's pattern! 2 Timothy 1:13; Philippians 3:17

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

– Look at; statements in scripture, the organization, the worship, and discipline of the church revealed in scripture, and these begin to tell us what the work of the church is!

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

We will see that the church works (functions) as a body on the local level, with three areas of work.

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

- ✘ Edification
 - + 1Corinthians 14:26
- ✘ Evangelism
 - + 1Thessalonians 1:7-8
- ✘ Benevolence to Saints only
 - + Acts 11:29-30

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

- ✘ How is the work of the church to be done?
- ✘ The Scriptures teach it is to be done by autonomous congregations on a local basis, with elders whose oversight is limited to their own congregation (Acts 14:23; 20:28; 1Peter 5:2). There is no biblical authority for joint or sponsoring church efforts with centralized control and oversight. The church today will be able to accomplish its work the same way it did in the first century, if it follows God's plan; a plan that has not changed.

EVANGELISM IN SCRIPTURE

- ✘ Preachers need to be sent that others may hear - Romans 10:11-15
- ✘ Just as the church in Antioch of Syria sent Barnabas and Saul - Acts 13:1-3

EVANGELISM IN SCRIPTURE

- ✘ Let us note examples in scripture:
 - + Churches of Macedonia
2Corinthians 11:8-9
 - + Church at Thessalonica
1Thessalonians 1:2-8
 - + Church at Philippi
Philippians 1:3-5, 2:25-30
 - + Church at Antioch
Acts 13:1-3 14:27-28

EVANGELISM IN SCRIPTURE

- ✘ **THE EARLY CHURCHES WERE INVOLVED IN EVANGELISM...**
 - + They sent out preachers to spread the Gospel
Acts 11:22
 - + They provided support for such preachers
Philippians 4:15-16

ORGANIZATION

- ✘ **WHICH ORGANIZATION IS AUTHORIZED?**
 - + The Church was the sending agency
 - + No missionary society or other human organization used as a sending agency
 - + No sponsoring church, missionary society or other human organization used as a funnel for funds.

EDIFICATION

A PRODUCT OF ORGANIZATION AND WORSHIP...

STATED IN SCRIPTURE

ORGANIZATION

- ✘ **A PRODUCT OF ORGANIZATION...**
 - + The local church when completely organized will have elders – Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5-9
 - + Their function is to feed and oversee the flock – Acts 20:28; 1Peter 5:1-2

ORGANIZATION

The word "feed", Greek word *poimainō*, means to nourish. The Eldership provides for the spiritual food for the souls of the congregation

ORGANIZATION

- ✘ For example, the Eldership "feeds" the Church, as it provides for:
 - + Bible classes for all, promoting spiritual growth and development – 2Peter 1:5-7
 - + Preaching that is from the "word," "reproves, rebukes, and exhorts," "is in season and out of season" – 2Timothy 4:2
 - + Training that provides for succession in the church, i.e. develops evangelists, elders, deacons, teachers – 2Timothy 2:2

REMEMBER...

- ✘ Ephesians 4:11-12 – Christ gave gifts to His Church which included elders for the purpose of edifying the body.
- ✘ The work of the Eldership includes edification of the Church.
- ✘ When the Eldership is doing its job, the Church is EDIFIED.

A PRODUCT OF WORSHIP

- ✘ Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 14:26...
 - + What we do in the assembly (worship) is to be done for edification.

A PRODUCT OF WORSHIP

- ✘ For example...
 - + Attendance – Hebrews 10:25, we are encouraged and strengthened by one another's presence
 - + Preaching – we grow in knowledge – 2Peter 1:5-7, our minds are renewed – Romans 12:2, when we hear the Word
 - + Singing – Colossians 3:16, we teach and admonish one another through the words in songs

WHAT IS AUTHORIZED?

- ✘ WHICH ORGANIZATION IS AUTHORIZED?
 - + To Edify The Saints – Local Church Specified – Acts 20:28-32.
 - + The local church is the NT pattern
 - + "Sunday School" organization is another kind of organization!

WHAT IS AUTHORIZED?

- ✘ EDIFICATION IS ALSO CONGREGATIONAL (Ways churches are to be edifying their members).
 - + Through Worship (Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Corinthians 14:26).
 - + Through Bible Teaching - cf. Acts 20:28, 32.
 - + Through Proper Discipline - Romans 16:17-18.
 - ✘ Removes those elements which destroy spiritual growth - 1 Corinthians 5:7.
 - + By Encouraging Participation In Good Works, Thereby Promoting Love and Concern For Others - 1 Thessalonians 5:14-15.

WHAT IS AUTHORIZED?

- ✘ EDIFICATION IS NOT ACHIEVED THROUGH...
 - +Recreational activities
 - +Social gatherings with meals
 - +Childcare
 - +Counseling programs
- ✘ THESE MATTERS ARE NOT THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

WHAT IS AUTHORIZED?

- ✘ BENEVOLENCE (PROVIDING FOR NEEDY SAINTS)
- ✘ THE EARLY CHURCH CARED FOR ITS MEMBERS...
 - +We see it in the church at Jerusalem for its own members – Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37, Chapter 6
 - +We see it in the church at Antioch for their brethren in Judea – Acts 11:27-30; Galatians 1:22
 - +We see in the churches of Macedonia and Achaia providing for their brethren in Jerusalem – 1Corinthians 16:1-; 2Corinthians 8:1-5; 2Corinthians 9; Romans 15:25-26 (Paul's third journey taking up collection for saints in Jerusalem Acts 26:20)

WHAT IS AUTHORIZED?

- ✘ Several Churches Sent Relief To One Church
 - + Separate requests to help – 2 Corinthians 8:10; 8:4 (Romans 15:25-26).
 - + Separate collection of funds – 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.
 - + Separate identity of funds existed (no "pooling") – 1 Corinthians 16:3.
 - + Separate decisions (by each church) of amount sent – 2 Corinthians 8:3, 10-11.

WHAT IS AUTHORIZED?

- ✘ Independent selection (by each church) of their messengers - 1 Corinthians 16:3-4.
 - +Some churches used the same messenger - 2 Corinthians 8:18-19, 23.
 - +Messengers were individuals, not churches.
- ✘ No pooling of funds, no convention of churches, no common oversight, funds were not sent through another church – NO SPONSORING CHURCH.
- ✘ Independent action of churches, concurrently achieved.

WHAT IS AUTHORIZED?

- ✘ WHICH ORGANIZATION IS AUTHORIZED?
 - +To Relieve Needy Saints – Local Church Specified - Acts 11:29-30; Romans 15:25-26
 - +The local church is the NT pattern
 - +Benevolence Corporation is another kind of organization!

WHAT IS AUTHORIZED?

- ✘ C. THERE WERE LIMITATIONS TO ITS BENEVOLENCE...
 - + In Paul's instructions to Timothy - 1Timothy 5:9-16
 - ✘ Widows with believing family members were not to be supported
 - ✘ Their own families should support them, that "the church not be burdened"
 - + Examples of church benevolence are limited to needy saints
 - ✘ *In every case of church benevolence, i.e., where money was taken from the church treasury, the recipients were SAINTS - cf. Romans 15:25-26; 1Corinthians 16:1-2; 2Corinthians 8:1-4; 9:1*

SO CALLED PROOF TEXTS

James 1:27
Galatians 6:10
2Corinthians 9:13

SO CALLED PROOF TEXTS

James 1:27
Verse 5 – “You”, Verse 6 – “him”, Verse 7 – “man”, etc.
Notice the use of the word “man” and personal pronouns throughout the entire chapter 1
The context of this chapter deals with the individual, not the congregation. The instruction throughout the chapter is to an individual, not a congregation.

SO CALLED PROOF TEXTS

- ✘ Galatians 6
- ✘ (verses 1-3). There is neither a congregation nor benevolence in these verses. Rather, the individual Christian is to help his brother who has sinned. The help given is not physical; rather spiritual.
- ✘ (verses 4-5). Each man is to carry his own load, fulfill his own responsibilities before God. Then he can rejoice because he is an obedient servant. Again, no reference to a congregation nor to benevolence in these verses

SO CALLED PROOF TEXTS

- ✘ Galatians 6
- ✘ (verse 6). There is nothing about congregational action or benevolence here. Nor is this verse teaching that the taught ought to monetarily support the teacher. Rather, Paul is teaching that the taught should jointly participate in all the truth taught by the teacher. So instead of fellowship of money from the taught to the teacher, it is fellowship of the taught and the teacher in the practice of the things taught. Paul was not trying to teach the Galatians a lesson on supporting the preacher; rather, he was trying to teach them a lesson in living the gospel he preached. He was encouraging them not to have fellowship in the teaching of the gospel perverters among them, but to have fellowship in the teaching of truth

SO CALLED PROOF TEXTS

- ✘ Galatians 6
- ✘ (verses 7-9). There is nothing about either congregational action or benevolence here. Verses 7-9 are just as individual in application as will be the judgment. The lesson is that each man is to walk after the spirit and not after the flesh. To do so is to reap everlasting life; to fail to do so is to reap corruption

SO CALLED PROOF TEXTS

- ✘ Galatians 6
- ✘ (verse 10). This entire passage is as individual in application as will be the judgment. The instruction all the way through these 10 verses is to a man - not to a congregation. There is nothing about physical relief in the entire context, but there is much about spiritual help. I would not be able to render physical assistance (benevolence) to a rich man; but if he will give me the opportunity, I can do the good of this verse unto him, though I be penniless! I can teach him the gospel that is able to save his soul. Thus, the good of the verse has to do with spiritual things and not with benevolence

SO CALLED PROOF TEXTS

- ✦ **2Corinthians 9:13**
- ✦ The passage is interpreted to mean that the Corinthian collection went to help needy Christians - "unto them", and "unto all" - all of mankind.
- ✦ We must first notice how the little word "all" is used in Scripture. It is limited by its context.
- ✦ Luke 24:9
- ✦ Acts 4:33

CONCLUSION

The church is made up of blood bought people (Acts 20:28; Revelation 5:9-10; Colossians 1:13-14), and Christ's blood was shed for a higher cause than to establish a social club, civic organization, or recreational facility. In Romans 14:17, though the context is speaking of the principles of conscience, it is plain to see from the apostle's statement what the nature of the church is. "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."

CONCLUSION

- ✦ Christ died for our sins, the church he purchased with his blood is about *eternal salvation.*
- ✦ The church is not: an agent for economic change on this earth, an agent for political change on this earth, an agent for social change on this earth.