

GOD'S WAY IN WORK OF THE CHURCH

Isa 55:6-12

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Can't tell many churches today from denomination on basis of programs of work in which they are involved
- B. "We live in a time when the church is viewed with disdain by the world, its purpose prostituted by the religious, and its nature misunderstood, even by those of whom it is composed."
(Ferrell Jenkins, The All-sufficient Church)
- C. Either Lord assigned His church a work to do or he hasn't
 1. If not, then church may do anything not immoral
 2. If He has, then that work is set forth in the N.T.
- D. Church not planned or brought into existence by man's wisdom
 1. God planned the church from all eternity Eph 3:10,11
 2. We become presumptuous like: Uzzah 2Sam 6:6,7; King Saul 1Sam 13:11,12; Uzziah 2Chron 26:16
- E. The church was bought with blood of Christ
 1. It is a kingdom of prophecy; the bride of Christ; the temple of God
 2. Must not degrade its mission by turning it into a glorified Country Club; Political Machine; Red Cross
- G. While these may perform needed service, the church has its own particular mission which, today, is being perverted

DISCUSSION:

I. REASON ITS MISSION IS PERVERTED

- A. Its work viewed as social rather than spiritual
 1. *"It's plain that Christ, in providing for formation of churches, recognized & sanctified the social principle. Church is a society - a social institution"* (Church Manual Designed for Baptist Churches J.M. Pendleton p.147)
 2. Paved way for involvement in unscriptural activities
 3. Recreation (physical); Retirement, Orphans, Unwed Mothers Homes (social); Colleges (educational)
 4. Spiritual purpose, nature & design not social. Jhn 18:36. Spiritual work. Any change is perversion
- B. Don't believe Gospel sufficient to draw Jhn 6:44-45
 1. believe social programs necessary to lure prospects
 2. They think: *"Unsaved & inactive members can be reached by sports programs, sports provide setting to enlist unreached in other activities where the gospel will be proclaimed"*
 3. Brethren adopted: *Ice-cream; \$5 under seat; family life centers youth retreats; ball teams; special lighting; special days; professional singers; Karate & gymnastics for Christ.* Have we outgrown our plea: "Speak Where Bible Speaks?"
- C. Confusion over distinction between Church & Individual
 1. Are told: "since church made up of Christians, what the Christian can do the church can do." Not True!

2. Citizen of AL, may contribute to a political party. State may not, it's unconstitutional. The church also has a constitution - The N. T.
3. Is it true that whatever an employee can do, the company can do. We know better!
4. Note instructions in Eph 4:28: this might include operating a bank, buying and selling property, etc Yet church may not engage in these. Only means of fund-raising is giving 1Cor 16:1,2
5. Individual may do many things the church may not do:
 - a. Fish, golf, hunt, etc. good and recreation needed, not business of church to buy clubs, dogs, tackle
 - b. Teaching secular subjects: science, math, home economics, vocational agriculture is good work, but it is not church work

II. THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

- A. With no axes to grind; kinfolks to please; pride to pamper or jobs to hold, we can easily find out what primary mission of church is: Eph 4:12 shows work to be three-fold: Perfecting the saints (teaching its own); Ministry (benevolence) and Edifying the body (teaching others)
- C. Edify itself (build itself up by strengthen members)
 1. A meeting where this was being done 1Cor 14:12, 17, 26
 2. Titus to set things in order - required teaching Tit 1:5
 3. In great commission Jesus told disciple to teach - baptize then teach the baptized Matt 28:18-20
- D. Benevolent work
 1. Jerusalem among themselves. Acts 2:44,45; 4:32-35; 6:1-4
 2. Antioch relieving brethren in Judea Acts 11:27-30
 3. Contribution from Macedonia & Achaia for poor saints in Jerusalem Rom 15:25-27; 1Cor 16:1-3; 2Cor 8 & 9
 4. Widows to be honored with support 1Tim 5:1-16
 5. No passage for a program of general benevolence
- B. Evangelistic work (teaching others the truth)
 1. Pillar and support of the truth 1Tim 3:15:
 2. Preacher's support Paul took "wages" 1Cor 9:6-14; 2Cor 11:8

CONCLUSION:

- A. Paul summed up the work of the church in Eph 4:12
 1. God gave gifts so saints might be perfected; do work of service; that body might be built up V 11
 2. We must be satisfied with God's way
 - a. Preach: individual & church (Matt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15,16 individual) - (Phil 1:5; 1Thess 1:8 congregational)
 - b. When work (benevolence & teaching) and worship is done in God's appointed way the church will be built up (edified)
- B. Whatever work of the church is, the church can do it
- C. Just because a thing seems to be right does not automatically make it scriptural Jer 10:23. For a thing to be lawful, it must be authorized by God's word