

WHAT THE WORK OF THE CHURCH IS NOT by James Hahn

In this article, we wish to call attention to those things which are **not** authorized by God as the work of the church.

1) Political Issues. Even though there are issues such as abortion, homosexuality, etc. that we must oppose and teach against, we must recognize it is not the work of the church to develop or carry out a political agenda. These issues may be political issues for some, but as the people of God we deal with them the same way we deal with other sins; by teaching the word of God and seeking a change of heart in those who hear.

2) Secular Education. I am sure all agree that proper education of a secular nature is good and beneficial. However, it is not the work of the church to build, support, or maintain schools or colleges to provide such education. This is the responsibility of the home, rather than the church. Paul acknowledged that there are responsibilities to be fulfilled by individuals, "and let not the church be charged" (1 Tim. 5:16). This could be applied to each of the things discussed in this article.

3) Social Activities. It is good for brethren to get together and enjoy one another's association. However, we need to remember: "What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" (1 Cor. 11:22). It is not the work of the church to provide for social meals and gatherings. If we wish to save souls, we must use that which will accomplish such. Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). To resort to gimmicks and carnal attractions is not only without authority, but also demonstrates a lack of faith in God and His will.

4) Recreation and Entertainment. Wholesome recreation and entertainment has its place, but it is not the work of the church to provide such. In recent years, it seems that many are more desirous of turning the church into a country club or health spa than "letting the church be the church." As a result of this thinking, we see churches sponsoring ball teams, building gymnasiums and sponsoring various forms of entertainment. I have received announcements of "clowns for Jesus," magicians, puppeteers, body builders or singing groups all being used by churches to reach the masses. The one thing lacking in these announcements is the Scripture that would authorize the church to provide such.

Paul tells us that God has provided all that is necessary "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12). Note the parallel between Ephesians 4:11-12 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The inspired Scriptures are all we need. We need to put our faith in God and His word, and not in the schemes and gimmicks of men that appeal to the flesh.