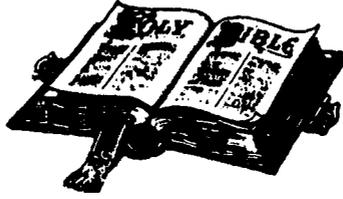


THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

Volume 33

AUGUST, 1996

Number 8

NO SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE FOR DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES

Many false claims are made by the advocates of denominational churches. Most of them (that I know about) claim to be following the teaching of Jesus Christ. A close examination will reveal that denominational churches do not follow the teachings of Jesus Christ. This is not to say that some of the teachings of Christ are not followed. But no denominational church follows all the teaching of Christ!

Without discussing specific teachings of denominational churches, I would like to point out the fact that there is no Scriptural authority for any denominational church. Consider the following.

1. There is **no Scriptural evidence** that Jesus Christ planned, designed or built any denominational church! However, Jesus Christ did build His church! It was according to the eternal purpose of God! (See Matthew 16:18; Eph. 3:10-11).

2. There is **no Scriptural evidence** that Jesus Christ is the foundation and chief corner stone of any denominational church! However, Jesus Christ is the foun-

ation and chief corner stone of His church! (See 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:19-22).

3. There is **no Scriptural evidence** that Jesus Christ is the head of any denominational church! However, Jesus Christ is the head of His body, the church! (See Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23).

4. There is **no Scriptural evidence** that a saved person was ever (or is ever) under any circumstance added to any denominational church by the Lord! However, we read in Acts 2:47: **"...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."** NOTE: It is obvious that the Lord added the saved to His one body, the church!

5. There is **no Scriptural evidence** that a person can be saved from past sins **by** being in a denominational church! However, there is ample **Scriptural evidence** that the church built by Jesus Christ is composed of the saved! (See Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 2:12-22; Eph. 4:4-6; 4:16; Heb. 12:23; etc.)

6. There is **no Scriptural evidence** that a person can be a faithful Christian **by** being in or

(Continued on page 4)

THE INSTRUCTOR

(USPS #581680)

Published monthly in the interest of truth and righteousness by the congregation of Christ, meeting at 4777 U.S. Highway 431, in Albertville, Alabama.

CARROL R. SUTTON
Editor

Send all questions, comments and criticisms to the **editor**, 4777 U.S. Highway 431, Albertville, Alabama 35950.

Second-class postage paid in
Albertville, AL 35950

Editorial ...

DO CHURCHES HAVE A SCRIPTURAL RIGHT TO PROVIDE ENTERTAINMENT, RECREATIONAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES? (No. 2)

In a previous article we began a study of the question: "Do churches have a Scriptural right to provide entertainment, recreational and social activities?" We showed by the Scriptures that the church is **authorized** to (1) **teach the truth** (cf. 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Thess. 1:8; Acts 13 and 14; 2 Cor. 11:8), (2) **edify** (build up, perfect) **the saints**, (cf. Eph. 4:18-16; Acts 9:31; 1 Cor. 14) and (3) **relieve destitute saints** (cf. Acts 2:34-35; 4:34-37; 6:1-7; 11:27-30; 1 Cor. 16:1-3; 2 Cor. 8 and 9; Romans 15:24-32; 1 Tim. 5:16). It was further shown that Christ is the head of the church and the church is subject to Christ (cf. Eph. 5:23-24). In view of this the church has no Scriptural right to act unless Jesus has authorized it to act! Since the church is "**the pillar and ground of the truth**" it must function, act and work within the bounds of truth!

The church is authorized (in the Scriptures) to perform every function and engage in every work that is a part of God's will. Let us now further consider

the question: "Do churches have a Scriptural right to provide entertainment, recreational and social activities?" In considering this question please note the following facts.

1. There is **NO precept** (either command or statement) in the Scriptures that **authorizes** the church (as a collectivity) to sponsor, arrange or provide the facilities for entertainment, recreation and social activities for the young people (or older ones)!

2. There is **NO necessary implication** in the Scriptures that churches are authorized to sponsor, arrange or provide entertainment, recreation and social activities for the young people (or senior citizens)!

3. There is **NO approved example** in the Scriptures where any church ever sponsored, arranged or provided entertainment, recreation or social activities for the young people (or for older people)!

4. In the absence of any **Scriptural authority** for churches to provide entertainment, recreation and social activities for the young people (or older people), we dare **NOT** encourage churches to engage in such! We must **NOT** allow our rationalizations to cause us to encourage practices that are without Scriptural authority!

5. In Cor. 11:17-34 the saints at Corinth were abusing "the Lord's Supper". They were taking their "own supper" to the assembly and were eating and drinking. The apostle Paul condemned their actions! They were not observing "the Lord's Supper" properly. Paul did **not** instruct them to correct the situation by telling them that they could eat and drink (their own supper) in the assembly as long as they **properly**

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

DO CHURCHES HAVE A SCRIPTURAL RIGHT TO PROVIDE ENTERTAINMENT, RECREATIONAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES?

observed the Lord's Supper. He rebuked them by saying, **"What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?..."** Neither did Paul suggest that they could eat and drink in the assembly IF they would share with the poor. Since they were eating to satisfy their hunger, they were **not** eating the Lord's Supper. Paul **did not** tell them to share with the poor when they ate their "own supper" in the assembly! Paul told them that they has houses to eat and drink in to satisfy their hunger! He also suggested that their actions indicated that they despised the church!

They (the saints at Corinth) were NOT to assemble (as a church) to satisfy their hunger! Paul very plainly said: **"Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation."** NOTE: If they came together (as a church) to eat because they were hunger, they would be condemned! Their coming together to eat and drink would be "unto condemnation"! Obviously, the only eating they were to do when they come together (as a church) was the Lord's Supper!

6. In NOTES OF 1 CORINTHIANS, p. 231, Albert Barnes (a noted Presbyterian scholar) said: **"Do you know that the church of God is not designed to be a place of feasting and revelry; nor even a place where to partake of your ordinary meals? Can it be, that you will come to the place of public worship, and make them scenes of**

feasting and riot? Even on the supposition that there had been no disorder; no revelry; in intemperance; yet on every count it was grossly irregular and disorderly to make the place of public worship a place for festival entertainment."

7. Basically, this is NOT a question as whether a person may eat (or drink) something in a church building, but whether or not the church may sponsor, arrange and/or provide "food, fun and frolic" **as a church!** NOTE: We are not discussing what Christians **as individuals** may sponsor, arrange and provide.

The fact that a person may incidentally eat (or drink) something in a church building does not give the church authority (as a church) to gather for the purpose of eating and drinking. NOTE: The fact that I may incidentally tie my shoe in the church building if my shoe needs tying does not give the church authority to sponsor, arrange or provide a "shoe tying" event anywhere! Neither does it give the church authority to provide the facilities for a "shoe tying" service!

The fact that I may incidentally remove my coat in an assembly in a church building does not give the church authority to sponsor, arrange or provide the facilities for a "coat removing" service!

8. To see that we must NOT go beyond the Scriptures, please carefully read and study such passages as 2 John 9; Ephesians 5:10; 1 Peter 4:11; James 1:25; 1 Corinthians 4:6; 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and James 2:12.

No, churches do **not** have a Scriptural right to provide entertainment, recreational and social activities as many churches are doing.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 1)

NO SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE FOR DENOMINATIONAL CHURCHES

while being in a denominational church! However, there is ample evidence that a person can be a faithful Christian **by** and **while** being in the church that Jesus Christ built. (See Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 2:12-22; Eph. 5:23-27; etc.)

7. There is **no Scriptural evidence** that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of any denominational church! However, Jesus Christ is the Saviour of His church! (See Ephesians 5:23-27).

8. There is **no Scriptural evidence** that Jesus Christ shed one drop of His blood to purchase any denominational church!

However, Jesus Christ **did** purchase His church with His blood! (See Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25-26).

9. There is **no Scriptural evidence** that God is pleased with any denominational church! However, there is ample evidence that God is pleased with the one body, the church, that Christ purchased with His own blood, built, of which He is the foundation, chief corner stone, head and Saviour! (Cf. Mt. 15:13).

10. There is **no Scriptural evidence** that God is glorified in any denominational church! However, God is glorified in the church that Christ purchased and over which Christ reigns as supreme Head! (See Eph. 3:21).

(CRS)

CORRECTION: In the first paragraph of the editorial (The Instructor Vol. 33, No. 7) the first Scriptural reference should be 1 Cor. 10:7 instead of Cor. 19:7

GOSPEL MEETINGS
Hiram Hutto is to be at EAST ALBERTVILLE **Sept. 29 - Oct. 4, 1996.**
Come! Tell others!

- SENTENCE SERMONS -

What you are is far more valuable than what you have.
* * * * *

The kindness we plan for tomorrow doesn't count for today.
* * * * *

We most often desire the most that which we need the least.
* * * * *

In good times don't forget lessons learned in hard times.
* * * * *

We should be more concerned about what we **do** than what merely happens.

CHURCH OF CHRIST
4777 U.S. Highway 431
Albertville, Alabama 35950

Second-Class Postage