

Answering The Religious Errors Of Our Family, Friends, and Neighbors 1
“The Church Can Take Money From Its Treasure And
Support A Human Institution!”
Lesson 38

INTRO:

- A. This statement has served to divide the Lord’s church all over the country and the world.
- B. It’s a statement that has everything to do with authority?
 - 1. What has God authorized?
 - 2. What do the Scriptures teach?
- C. A very important question is: How do we determine what God authorizes?
- D. Acts 15 gives the pattern used in the early church’s determining whether God had authorized circumcision to be bound upon the Gentiles who were becoming Christians.
 - 1. Direct Command or Statement - **Acts 15:13-2’**
 - 2. Approved Apostolic Example - **Acts 15:12**
 - 3. Necessary Inference/Conclusion - **Acts 15:7-11”**
- E. We see an application of all this in our determining today what God has authorized in observance of the Lord’s Supper:
 - 1. Direct Command or Statement To Observe - **1 Corinthians 11:23-25**
 - 2. Approved Apostolic Example As To The Time To Observe - **Acts 20:7**
 - 3. Necessary Inference/Conclusion As To How Often To Observe - **Acts 20:7**
- F. Let us define the words that we are using:
 - 1. “Institution” - “an organization, establishment, foundation, society, or the like, devoted to the promotion of a particular cause or program, especially one of a public, educational, or charitable character:” (**dictionary.com**)
 - a. There are two kinds of institutions:
 - 1) Human
 - 2) Divine
 - 2. “Institutionalism” refers to taking money from the church’s treasury to support (building/maintaining) human institutions such as missionary societies in the work of evangelism and/or orphan homes in the work of benevolence.

I. WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES TEACH?

- A. **Philippines 4:15-16**
 - 1. These verses teaches the church sent funds directly to the preacher.
 - a. This is an approved apostolic example.
 - 2. There was no human missionary organization or sponsoring church arrangement that stood between the church at Philippi and the apostle Paul.
 - 3. **QUESTION:** Where are the Scriptures that would authorize the church sending money to a human institution or to another church in supporting the work of preaching the gospel?

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B. Acts 2; 4; 6; 11:27-30

1. In the church’s work of benevolence it is not a matter of how the work is to be done (the place, the provisions, and the personnel) but rather who is charged with the responsibility of doing the work.
2. The Scriptures show in Acts 2, 4, and 6 the local church took care of its own needy.
3. The occasion in Acts 11:27-30 saw a need of such magnitude that the local church was not able to solely supply the need.
 - a. Then, and only then did, churches in other places assisted by sending their money to the elders of the congregation in need.
4. **QUESTION:** Where are the Scriptures that would authorize a local church to turn over the work of benevolence to another institution to decide the place, provisions, and personnel, and the local church merely contribute money from its treasury to support that institution?

C. Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-2

1. The work of an elder is to oversee the “*flock*” from which they have been chosen “*among*”.
 - a. In other words, the local church.
2. **QUESTION:** Where are the Scriptures for elders overseeing any work other than that which is “*among you*”?

D. Ephesians 4:11-16

1. These verse show how the church is **ALL-SUFFICIENT** to do the work the Lord has assigned it to do.
2. God has provided through the Scriptures all the information and organization necessary to accomplish what the local church is to do.
3. The many churches that are supporting human institutions are showing proof they do not believe in the all-sufficiency of the church - God’s divine institution!
4. As the Designer and Builder, don’t you think God and Christ has given us everything necessary to do the work They intend the church to do?
5. To allow or make use of another organization is to say the church is not sufficient and thus elevates the wisdom of man over the wisdom of God! (**Ephesians 3:10** “*to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,*”)

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CONCLUSION:

- A. Since we've been studying about the encroachment of human institutions into the work God has assigned strictly for the church to perform, someone may be asking for examples of such human institutions.
- B. Here are but a few of the more popular ones and there are many others:
 - 1. Herald Of Truth (Radio/TV) - Sponsored by church in Brownsville, TX
 - 2. Biblical Viewpoints (TV) - Sponsored by church in Elizebethan, TN
 - 3. Getting To Know Your Bible (Radio/TV) - Sponsored by church in Summerdale, AL.
 - 4. Tennessee Children's Home (Formerly Tennessee Orphan Home) - Columbia, TN
 - 5. Childhaven Orphan Home - Cullman, AL
 - 6. Potter Orphan Home - Bowling Green, KY
- C. The Lord's church was immensely successful in the first century without other agencies/institutions in spreading the gospel.
 - 1. So successful that Paul was able to make the statement he did in **Colossians 1:23**.
- D. The Lord's church was immensely successful in the first century without other agencies/institutions in its work of benevolence.
 - 1. So successful that we read the statement in **Acts 4:34-35**.