

November 20, 2022

The View

“Sirs, we wish to see Jesus.” — John 12:21

Welcome Visitors

Our goal at the Folsom church of Christ is to do everything according to God’s word, including respecting its silence.

We are not a denomination, not part of anything larger than this local church; we have no earthly “headquarters.”

The five elders oversee this church and, ultimately, we answer only to Christ. The comments you hear today are primarily for the benefit of our own members, as we examine Scripture and seek to be built up in our faith in Christ. If you don’t understand something, please do not hesitate to ask the preacher or one of the elders. We welcome and appreciate your comments and questions on any issue and especially if you see or hear anything that you feel does not correspond to God’s word. We are here to serve; please help us do that.

**Please fill out a visitor’s card and put it in the collection plate when is passed.
We do not solicit donations from visitors. See page 4 for more information.**

Schedule

The Lord’s Day

9:30 AM Bible Classes

Auditorium: “Timothy & Titus”

Room 15/16: Relationships: Love (agape)

Room 12: Young Adult Class: “Be ready to give an answer” (I Peter 3:15)

10:30 AM: Assembly

Preaching Today: David Posey

Sermon: “Love Your Bible!”

Livestream at 10:30 <https://tinyurl.com/5f2cbm3y>

Bible Class @ 5 PM — Praying the Psalms (Auditorium)

High School Class @ 5 PM @ David & Christie Posey’s home

Middle school class: monthly (contact Dan Stegall at 818-209-9810)

There are several on-going Bible classes in the homes of members. Check with David Posey or one of the other elders if you would like to join one of those classes.

Wednesday 7 PM @ Building

Bible classes for all ages

Auditorium: Letters to Timothy & Titus

Room 15/16: Relationships: Love

Room 12: Young Adults Class: “Be ready to give an answer” (I Peter 3:15)

Bible Facts

A review of a few of the points, most of which Mike Wilson shared in “How We Got the Bible”

The oldest surviving manuscript of any part of the New Testament is a papyrus fragment containing verses from John 18; scholars estimate the date to be as early as 125 AD. (Recall that the gospel of John was written around 95 AD).

Many early Christians, to discover the answer to a problem, would randomly open the Bible, read the first line their eye fell upon, and consider it a divine message for them. So popular was this practice, it had to be repeatedly condemned by church leaders.

The word “Bible” comes from the Greek word for “papyrus plant” (*biblos*), since the leaves of that plant were used for paper.

In the ancient and medieval worlds, some Christians memorized large portions of Scripture. Eusebius of Caesarea said he once met a blind Egyptian who “possessed whole books of the Holy Scriptures...in his heart.”

The cost of a Bible in the 1300s might easily amount to a priest’s whole yearly income.

The medieval church did not object to Bible translations; by the early 1500s, there were Bibles in most European languages. But the Catholic church opposed the work of John Wycliffe and William Tyndale because these translators held “radical” views.

When English Bibles were first published, people were fascinated with them. One Essex man recalled that “poor men bought the New Testament of Jesus Christ and on Sundays did sit reading in the lower end of the church, and many would flock about them to hear their reading.”

The Bible’s chapter divisions were created in the early 1200s by a lecturer at the University of Paris. Its current verse divisions were not fully developed until 1551.

Martin Luther translated the New Testament into German in a blitz of only 11 weeks.

Tyndale’s translation introduced many new words into the English language, such as *longsuffering*, *peace-maker*, *scapegoat*, *filthy lucre*, and even the word “beautiful.”

Tyndale’s first English New Testament, finished in 1525, had to be printed outside of England and then smuggled back inside barrels of flour and bolts of cloth. Catholic bishop Tunstall of London bought up most of Tyndale’s first edition in order to stamp out Tyndale’s “heresy” — but the proceeds only served to finance new editions!

When the King James Version was published in 1611, the Geneva Bible was by far the most popular English Bible. It was the Geneva translation, not the King James, that was used by William Shakespeare and the early American Puritans.

DAVID M. SCHOLER

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Parents: TikTok Warning

[I’m sure you’ve heard this before, but you can’t be too careful. “get off tik tok” is a thing on Twitter right now because it seems dangerous. There are multiple reports that TikTok, a social media app owned by a Chinese company, allows things to be posted on the American version that they don’t allow on the Chinese version. But there’s more. Below is an article by a young social media observer followed by a quote by a PhD.]

“TikTok can watch you. The app is designed to track your every move, and it has access to your microphone and camera. It knows where you are, and it knows what you’re doing. TikTok is a Chinese-owned social media app that allows users to create and share short videos with others. The app has been downloaded more than 1.5 billion times and is particularly popular among GenZers and millennials. TikTok has been banned in India and Pakistan due to concerns about the app’s privacy and security. In the United States, TikTok is under investigation by the Federal Trade Commission for possible violations of child privacy laws. Even if you’re not logged in, the app can track your location, what devices you use, and other data. But what happens to this data if you delete the app? TikTok says that it will delete your data if you delete the app. However, there is some evidence that the app may still be able to track you even after you’ve deleted it. A recent report found that TikTok was still collecting data on users who had deleted the app. This data included information on what devices they were using, their locations, and the websites they were visiting.”

Dr. Darren Hayes, Director of Cybersecurity and Assistant Professor at Pace University details the way that “the app uses permissions that allow the app developer (ByteDance) system access on the device. We are particularly concerned about the extraordinary amount of personal data being collected.”

Disney??

You surely have heard by now that Disney is no longer a family-friendly entertainment company. This hurts: I went to Disneyland the first year it opened in 1955. Since I’ve lived in southern California for extended periods, I have been to Disneyland many, many times over the years. We could always count on it being a great place to bring your family and once they branched out into making movies you knew they would be clean and expletive-free. But now this:

Disney’s animated film *Strange World* is set to hit theaters on November 23, but it has already attracted controversy. The film follows a nuclear family of explorers who are on the hunt of a lifetime for an elusive creature. Seems tame enough, but parents will want to know that there is side plot about a same-sex romance between two teenagers in the movie. Same-sex attraction has appeared in several Disney properties as of late, but the element of an openly gay teenager in an animated film is a Disney first. [*Cultural Translator*, November 11, 2022].

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The Work of the Church (I): Edification

BY DAVID POSEY

“The only work of the church is edification.”

In 2015 I was in Pasadena, Texas, and heard Dee Bowman make the above statement in a Bible class. I had come to this conclusion myself sometime before, but I hadn't heard anyone else say it just like that.

The New Testament is clear that edification or “building up” is the work of the church. See Romans 14:19; Ephesians 4:11-16; I Thessalonians 5:11. But, in the past, when asked “what is the work of the church?” the pat answer was “EEB”: edification, evangelism and benevolence. But does that bear scrutiny?

Before we explore this, we need to clarify the term “church.” The Greek word, *ecclesia*, simply means “assembly”; see Acts 19). When referring to an assembly or group of disciples, it is used three ways:

(1) The “universal” body of believers, wherever they may be, living or dead. This is the body that God “adds” to the church when we are baptized (Acts 2:41). God controls who is in this body and only God knows for sure who is in that body. (2) The local church, under the oversight of the elders. (3) “Distributively,” which describes individual saints who are doing the work Christ day-in, day-out (we never stop being “members” of the church). Some of what we’ve taught that the local church should be doing belongs under the heading of what the church *distributively or individually* should be doing.

To say something is “the work of the (local) church” is to say “this is the church’s job description.” I take that to mean it’s something every church should be actively involved in. My point is not, by any means, to say evangelism and benevolence are unimportant. But are they things that every church should be doing separate from edification? Let’s look at evangelism and benevolence from that perspective.

“Evangelism” is teaching the gospel to the lost through public proclamation or personal teaching (some call it “witness” or “testimony”). To the degree that we are doing that in our preaching and in our classes, then we can say it is work that the local church is doing. But it is not separate from edification.

If we say we “evangelize” through the support of preachers in other parts of the world, what about churches that do not have the funds to do that? Are they failing to do the “work of a church”? And are we supporting these men to preach only to the lost? The men we support are preaching primarily to people who are already Christians. In other words, they are edifying the saints.

Evangelism (teaching the gospel to the lost) is important but is the *individual* work of all Christians? Paul said to Timothy: “*You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.*” (II Timothy 2:1-2).

We, as “faithful” people, have a responsibility to seek and teach the lost whenever and wherever we have opportunity. I don’t see a command or example of a local church “doing evangelism” as we typically think of it. There is no clear command

in Scripture that tells us, as a church, to go out and teach the gospel to the lost. So, we appeal to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and there is much to learn and apply from those three verses. But Jesus gave that *command* to his apostles, not to us and I don’t see an equivalent command given to any local church.

Making evangelism a “work of the church” complicates it unnecessarily. Churches get distracted with time-consuming evangelism “programs,” programs that come and go without long-term success. Meanwhile, the local church is not being edified because if you focus on one thing, you are not focusing on something else. II Timothy 2:2 seems to teach that if the saints in a local church are truly edified then evangelism — teaching others — will be a natural outgrowth of that.

“... the work of the church is to love each other, to assemble, worship and edify. . . Benevolence and evangelism are important but they flow from edification.”

To summarize, evangelism is important but I don’t see it as a “work of the local church.” It is the work of every individual Christian who is being edified (taught) and realizes the precious gift of grace of God through

Christ — and *cannot keep silent*. They work within their circle of family and friends, influencing them and hoping to teach them with the opportunity comes.

The other “work” most often assigned to the church is “benevolence.” But if benevolence is a work of the church then any church not presently engaged in benevolence would not be doing “the work of the church.” It’s more biblical to view benevolence, when opportunities arise to help, as an expression of love and a means of edification. The New Testament texts that we appeal to for giving (I Corinthians 16:1-3; II Corinthians 8 & 9) were written to encourage individuals to help fellow Christians who were in trouble.

This may be a matter of semantics, and a bit nuanced, but it’s important to be sure that we are accurate in our view of everything we do. If benevolence is a “work of the church” that seems to impose an obligation on all churches. Another issue is that if benevolence is a work of the collective (the church) individual members may feel they are not obligated to be “benevolent” except through the church treasury. The more biblical approach is to urge individual Christians to be cheerful givers, gracious and ready to help both in their “Sunday” giving and when special circumstances arise.

It’s clear that the main theme in the letters written to churches and individuals in the New Testament is edification. So, instead of using the old EEB model, it seems more accurate to say the work of the church is to love each other, to assemble, worship and edify. That is a platform easy to prove and sustain. Benevolence and evangelism are important but they flow from edification.