



Glad Tidings

Romans 10:15

October 17, 2021

Big and Little Organizations

One of the first things that I learned when I first began preaching the gospel over thirty years ago was that any organization smaller or larger than the local

church was unscriptural. The church with its bishops, deacons and saints, through its collective treasury, was sufficient to do everything that God had commanded it. Back then, the issue involved the missionary society and the denominational Sunday School. Sending men to preach the gospel was not the issue, but for the local church to send funds to a missionary society to select, send, support and supervise "missionaries" involved an organization larger than the local church, was without scriptural precedent and had to be opposed. Bible classes, as a part of the local teaching program under elders, were not the issue. But to have a Sunday School which had an entity apart from the local church with officers, membership and a treasury was another organization; or for the various classes to have officers and a treasury, was an organization smaller than the local church and was unscriptural.

For the most part, those who were involved in these big and little organizations also used instrumental music, so they caused little problem among "us," especially the missionary society. Oh, there were a few churches which had collection in the Bible classes, and some classes had projects (generally benevolent), but, in most instances, the teaching done solved the problem, at least among the church with which I worked. I can remember only one church that had a collection in classes and that was

Scriptural Organization of the Church

"Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the [saints] in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the [bishops and deacons]"

Phil. 1:1 NKJV

with the little folks "to teach them to give," and the few pennies collected went in the collection plate. I would have preferred that not even this be done but that the children learn by giving during the worship hour just like everyone else. I saw danger in the practice.

But the battle lines changed to the edification society (schools) and then benevolent societies (orphan and old folks homes). What brethren could see in reference to the missionary society, they could not apply to the other two. So a large number of local churches that once stood opposed to an organization larger than the local church began to contribute to one, not seeming to realize that what was true of one organization separate and apart from the church through which the local church did her work was also true of any other such organization.

But what about the smaller organizations? It seems some never learn. Recently, I received a list of donors to an orphan home, among which there were individuals, churches and, you guessed it, Bible classes from local churches. Hence, local churches are giving to organizations larger than the local church; and organizations smaller than the local church (without going through the local treasury) giving to an organization larger than the local church.

Those who will be ignorant, let them be ignorant still, but for those who want to do the will of the Lord, let them be warned and build according to the pattern.

By Morris D. Norman

The Need for Authority

"When He entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, 'By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave you this authority?'" (Matthew 21:23)

That was a legitimate question. Acting by authority is essential to an orderly life on this planet—in government, in school, in the home, and in the church.

Moses instructed Israel: "You shall not do at all what we are doing here today, every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes" (Deuteronomy 12:8). One problem America faces today is the extremely high rate of incarceration. Why are so many in prison? Because they did not respect authority. They did what was right in their own eyes.

A church that pleases God must respect authority. We all know Colossians 3:17: "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the



Lord Jesus....” We know that “in the name of” has reference to authority. Thus our words (teaching) and deeds (practice) must be according to the authority that Christ had (Matthew 28:18).

There is no clearer statement of the need for authority than Matthew 7:21-23: “Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.'”

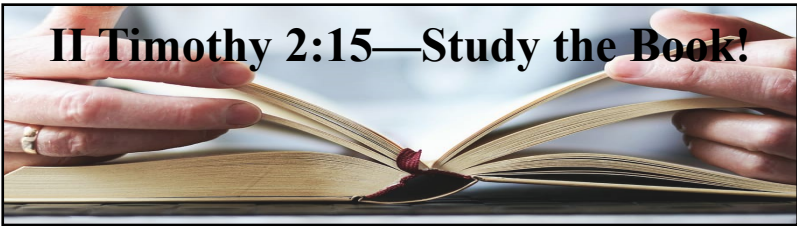
“Lawlessness” is from the Greek “anomia,” which is literally “without law,” and thus “without authority.” These people were engaged in “good works” and are represented as reasoning with God: “But Lord, look at all these good things we have done.” But God’s reply was, “You may have done what seemed good to you, but it was not according to my will.” If we are going to do the “will of the Father,” we need to follow the terms of the will—the New Testament.

Isaiah’s answer to the people of his day was, “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn” (8:20).

Sadly, many churches of Christ today are “doing whatever is right in their own eyes.” I have read and heard many strange statements justifying things that these churches are doing. A Texas church involved in a questionable practice justified it with these words: “But effectiveness must be the final justification...--positive results—must be the real reason” for what they were doing. Wouldn’t it be better to say, “The Word of God must be the final justification...”? If effectiveness is the final justification, then we must applaud the Catholics, for their practices have produced the largest “Christian” denomination in the world. “Positive results?” What about the Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses who seem to have great results in converting people?

An Oklahoma City church sponsored some area-wide effort, and evidently anticipated objections. Their Sunday bulletin said: “CONVERSATION IN HELL REGARDING CAMPAIGNING FOR CHRIST. Once upon a time Satan asked his helpers to propose ways and means of hindering the Campaign for Christ effort of the 25th and Geraldine Church of Christ..(One) said, ‘Let’s tell them to argue over the Scripturalness of this effort.’”

II Timothy 2:15—Study the Book!



GLAD TIDINGS

Are we to understand that questioning whether or not something is scriptural is a tactic of Satan right out of hell? What about I Thessalonians 5:21: “But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good.” We remember Paul’s commendation of the Bereans. “Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). We could also say they were “examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were Scriptural!”

“Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written...” (1 Corinthians 4:6). Church leaders in Jerusalem sent a letter to Antioch in an effort to correct a problem there: “Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment” (Acts 15:24). In other words, certain ones were teaching things “without authority.”

Balaam’s statement of principle is a good guide for us. “Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything contrary to the command of the LORD, either good or bad, of my own accord. What the LORD speaks, that I will speak” (Numbers 24:13).

In answering a lawyer’s question, Christ replied: “What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?” (Luke 10:26) May we ever strive to have “book, chapter and verse” for all we do.

By Jefferson David Tant

Order of Worship October 17, 2021

Song Leader—AM	Michael Young
Song Leader—PM	Derek Steen
Lord’s Table	Phillip Steen
Sermon—AM—Devin Barber	Sermon—PM—Devin Barber

Continue prayers for those on our list, and for the free course of the gospel.

1 John 5:14

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Marietta church of Christ

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Meeting times of the church

Sunday 09:00 am Bible Classes 10:00 am Worship 05:00 pm Evening Worship

Wednesday 7:00 pm Bible classes

Evangelist: Devin Barber

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Hebrews 10:24-25