



# LAWMAKERS AND JUDGES

STUDIES IN THE DOCTRINES AND PRACTICES  
OF “NON-INSTITUTIONAL” CHURCHES OF CHRIST  
AND THEIR TEACHERS

BY JOHN WADDEY

*Best wishes in Christ*

*John Waddy*

## **DEDICATION:**

*To the memory of  
Thomas B. Warren, Roy Deaver,  
Guy N. Woods and Jim Massey,  
faithful men who led us  
through the turbulent conflict  
with the  
non-institutional brethren  
who sought to bind upon the church laws  
which God had not given*

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# INTRODUCTION

This book was born of necessity. Brethren from India, Nigeria, Ghana and the Philippines have written asking for help in dealing with factious men who had come in among them and were troubling the brethren. Preachers, presenting themselves as our brethren, were falsely accusing missionaries and supporting churches of being untrue to Christ. They were seeking to impose man-made rules and restrictions on the brethren. The issues were old and familiar. According to the interlopers, Christians cannot support or operate orphan homes to care for children. The church cannot provide benevolent assistant to non-Christians. Churches cannot cooperate in evangelism. The elders of one congregation cannot handle the funds contributed by others for a missionary serving abroad. Christians cannot enjoy a fellowship meal in the meeting place of the church. The World Bible School is an unscriptural organization and its workers are false teachers. Churches and brethren must conform to these conclusions or they are not pleasing to God and cannot be fellowshiped. **Because they are against** so many things that most brethren see as scriptural, they are often called “antis.” Paul wrote of people with their attitude saying, they were forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meat (I Tim. 4:3). Hence we sometimes refer to them as “**forbidding brethren.**” They prefer to identify themselves as “**Non-institutional.**” All of these terms have been used in this study, all referring to the same body of people.

This controversy was raging among our American congregations in 1955 when the author was united with Christ. Division was seen in many congregations. Capable preachers debated the questions raised by the forbidding brethren. An endless stream of articles, tracts and books were issued addressing the matter.

When it became evident that the aggressive minority was determined to capture and control the entire brotherhood, our brethren rejected them and refused to allow them into their congregations and schools. Unable to gain access to our members, they were left to go their own way and build their own brotherhood

Unable to effectively penetrate our walls here at home, they turned their attention to our mission outposts in foreign fields. They send their preachers, not so much to teach the lost and bring them to Christ, but to prey upon and recruit those young Christians our missionaries have won by hard work and sacrifice. With shameful, deceitful methods they lead away after them unknowing disciples.

To help our faithful preachers in those distant lands understand the beliefs and practices of the “non-institutional” recruiters and to provide them helpful biblical information to use in fortifying themselves and their brethren, I have prepared this small book.

I find no pleasure in devoting time, energy and resources to opposing folks who have so much in common with us. But necessity demands that it be done. I send forth this book with the prayer that those who describe themselves as “non-institutional” will one day soon be willing to extend to us that same liberty we gladly extend to them. We do not insist that they must support orphans’ homes. They can support their missionaries as they wish. We do not demand that they have fellowship halls in their buildings. They do not have to support or make use of the World Bible School and its excellent teaching materials. God made each congregation independent and autonomous. In such matters, the leaders of each congregation have much latitude in choosing the means and methods they will use to fulfill the Lord’s commands. But the non-institutional brethren are not so generous. They insist we must think and do things their way or else they make war on us and attempt to invade and snatch away our converts and congregations. They leave us no choice but to defend ourselves against their intrusions and to refuse them access to our congregations. Paul found it necessary to forewarn the elders of the church in Ephesus of false brethren who would arise from among them, “speaking perverse things and drawing away disciples after them” (Acts 20:10). So we write to warn our brethren who are being troubled by these sowers of discord.

**I wish to go on record that not all brethren associated with the Non-institutional brotherhood make war on us. Not all of them are negative and divisive. I personally know many who are not at all like that. Some of them are willing to extend the hand of fellowship without seeking to undermine and capture our brethren and congregations. We love and embrace them in fellowship. For their sake, I regret that I must write these lines. However, there are workers among them who make it necessary because of their divisive work. John Waddey**

# PART I: UNDERSTANDING THE MIND-SET OF FORBIDDING BRETHREN

## 1.

### AVOIDING THE DITCHES

The highway of holiness has dangerous ditches on both right and left hand sides. Whether we wreck on one side or the other is of little consequence. The results are fatal in either case. Moses warned Israel, "Ye shall walk in all the way which Jehovah your God hath commanded you, Ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left" (Deut. 5:32). From the earliest ages, God's people have been plagued with the extremes of liberalism and legalism. The great challenge of every Christian and congregation is to maintain a balanced position between these two perversions of God's way.

**What is Legalism?** Legalism is an unwholesome attitude toward religion. It is a blind zeal for law with no thought for the spirit or intent of it. Paul was a minister of the "new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (II Cor. 3:6). Legalists have a greater concern for rules than for people. When Jesus healed the poor invalid at Bethesda, the legalistic Jews showed no sympathy for the man. Rather, they persecuted Jesus because he broke their uninspired rules about Sabbath keeping in so doing (John 5:1-18). He reminded them that, "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath..." (Mark 2:27). Legalists honor the law more than the Law-giver. Traditions are gradually elevated to equality with God's law in the legalistic mind. A legalist is obsessed with details and numerous insignificant matters, while casually overlooking serious matters of major importance. Pharisees who were legalists, were scrupulous to tithe even their garden herbs; mint, anise, and cummin. Yet they had little interest in weightier matters of the law such as justice, mercy and faith (Matt. 23:23). They majored in minors while minoring in major things. With the legalist, there is always the disposition to make additional rules to reinforce what they perceive to be God's law. The Pharisees of Jesus' day were classic legalists. They bound heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and laid them on men's shoulders; but they themselves would "not move them with their finger" (Mat. 23:4). James tells us that "One only is the lawgiver and judge, even he who is able to save and destroy" (4:12). When man sets himself up to criticize and judge his brother, he has ceased to be a doer of the law and is condemned.

**What is Liberalism?** It too is an mistaken attitude toward Christianity. The liberal has a low view of Scripture. More extreme liberals deny the miraculous element of the Bible. They question the full, complete inspiration of God's Word. Especially do they reject the Bible as the final authority in religious matters. In liberalism, there is always a willingness to place human wisdom above the revealed wisdom of God. Liberals feel that they can select the portions of the Bible which they choose to accept and follow. We are describing a frame of mind that does not feel obligated to do all that God says to do. We definitely have an element of liberalism in the Lord's church today. It is a movement away from doctrinal preaching. It substitutes subjectivism for objective Biblical authority. It shows a willingness to fellowship denominations. It compromises truth with error. It is unhappy with simple New Testament worship. This spirit has always found fertile ground in Christian Universities.. The Sadducees, of Christ's day, were liberals.

The departure of our "non-institutional" brethren in the 1950s did not end our problem with legalism. From then till now we have had a small but aggressive band of "ultraconservative" brethren who have conducted a subversive warfare on our brethren in foreign mission fields Like a thorn in the foot, this legalistic element have imposed a decided limp on our brotherhood.

Today, while we deal with the legalism on the right, we are faced with an even greater threat from a wave of liberalism on the left. This assault is originating primarily from those associated with our Christian Universities and their proteges. Most of them are men with high educational credentials and a following among the young adults of our churches and schools. They are having marked success in many of our large city churches that have younger memberships. While

few of these “liberal teachers” would openly question the miraculous events of the Bible, or the inspiration of the Word, by their words and deeds they demonstrate that they do not respect the authority of the Bible in regulating the faith and practice of the church. They are working to broaden our fellowship to include denominational bodies. They especially chaff at having to sing without instruments, choirs and soloists. They wish to move women into roles of public leadership. They think they have found a new way of interpreting the Bible that will allow them to do all of this and still claim to be New Testament Christians. If they cannot capture and lead our brotherhood into their liberal camp, their future will be with the Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ who have long trodden the same path.

Either of the ditches described herein will wreck and destroy a congregation. God’s way is the Biblical way that stands between these two extremes. May God grant us wisdom to clearly see his way and the courage to walk therein. Only by so doing can Churches of Christ survive the current crisis.

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## 2.

# AN EVER PRESENT DANGER FACING CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIANS

Peter tells us that Satan is as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (I Pet. 5:8). Paul reminds us that our adversary uses many wicked devices to ensnare us (II Cor. 2:11). Heading the list of those Satan hates and desires to destroy are conservative, Bible believing Christians. We stand squarely in his path of conquest and domination. We oppose his every effort to deceive Christians and lead them astray. We defend the church when he tries to corrupt and render her unfaithful to Christ. We counter every lie he advances and expose his devious ploys.

In our day, in America, the old Serpent is unable to utilize physical persecution. He tries to seduce us to sin, but the faithful child of God will resist such temptation with steadfast faith (I Pet. 5:9). He seeks to fill us with false pride, prompting us to judge ourselves by others instead of by the spotless Christ (II Cor. 10:12). He would like to allure us into false paths of knowledge and have us serve him by teaching the doctrines and commandments of men (Matt. 15:9). But as faithful servants of Christ, we will be diligent to show ourselves approved unto God by handling correctly the word of truth (II Tim. 2:15). By the knowledge of God’s Word we can spot every false way and hate it as the Devil’s doing (Ps. 119:128).

There is however one device that our ancient Enemy has found to be very effective in snaring many a conservative follower of Christ. That is **ultra-conservatism**. That is conservatism carried to an extreme. Extremism is a common human weakness. It is seen in every field, but it is most glaring in the realm of religion.

For several reasons, the conservative Christian is vulnerable to this temptation.

- \* His love for Christ makes him willing to sacrifice things others hold dear. He is prepared to deny himself (Matt. 16:24).
- \* His respect for the Bible moves him to shun anything that can be made to appear contrary to its message.
- \* His fear of apostasy from the Word of God makes him naturally suspicious of any and all who suggest any thing different from his long-held views.
- \* The very meaning of conservatism is the conservation and preservation of those things he and his ancestors in the faith have long believed.
- \* His approach to life and his faith is that he would rather be safe than sorry. He tends to avoid all things liberal, staying as far away from them as possible, lest he fall into their snare.

In attacking the conservative Christian, old Satan avoids a frontal assault. In most cases that is doomed to failure. Rather, the shrewd adversary uses the conservative’s religious inclinations to destroy him. Remember the way to heaven is pictured as a road with dangerous ditches on either side. On the left is the ditch of liberalism, on the right the ditch of radical legalism. Knowing his fear of liberalism and things new and different, Satan allures, nudges, and pushes the unthinking conservative brother further and further to the right of the road. He keeps telling him “ You hate liberalism.

You are opposing and avoiding it.” Then one day the deceived conservative finds himself in the ditch on the right. He finds himself alienated from the brotherhood of Christ. He has gone from being a sound, useful conservative to being a radical opponent of other faithful Christians and congregations. He has become a factious man (Tit. 3:10) and a sower of discord among brethren (Prov. 6:16-19). Rather than preaching Christ, saving souls and building up the church he is now consumed with attacking his own brethren. Rather than loving the brotherhood (I Pet. 2:17) his actions are those of one who holds his brethren in disdain. His humility was lost along the way and now he is filled with arrogant pride as he imagines himself to be among the very few Christians who are faithful to the Master

The tragedy of this situation is, the brother who has fallen into the ditch of ultraconservative legalism rarely is able to recognize what has happened. Satan has succeeded in blinding him so that he imagines that he is being loyal to Christ and standing squarely on the Bible. While cruelly attacking the Lord’s people he thinks he is doing a service to Christ (John 16:2). Rather than proving himself to be a faithful servant of our Master, he has fallen into the camp of the numerous “antis” and factionists that have gone before him. The only contributions he will make to the Cause of Christ will be broken and splintered families and churches that divided because of his factious work and the multitude of lost souls who were so discouraged by his efforts that they fell back into sin.

May it be our daily prayer that we will always be true to the truth and with God’s help be able to avoid both the ditches to the left and right of the road to heaven (Deut. 5:32).

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### 3.

## A GLOSSARY OF WORDS AND TERMS RELATING TO NON- INSTITUTIONAL CHURCHES OF CHRIST

To understand any controversy, one must understand the terminology involved. This is certainly true when dealing with those who identify themselves as “Non-institutional Churches of Christ.”

1. “**Non**” tells us they do not have orphans’ homes or homes for the aged, nor do they allow others to do so.
2. “**Institutional**.” This is a pejorative term they use to describe those Churches of Christ who do not bow to their demands. “**Institutional**” congers up the false illusion of a giant organization that owns and controls those of its members and supporters. Of course no such “institution” exists in our brotherhood! Churches that support children’s homes and other organized benevolent works they brand as “institutional churches,” hoping that the uninformed will be frightened by the term, reject them and follow the “non-institutional” preacher.
3. “**Non-Institutional**” is the term of identity preferred by this particular splinter group.
4. “**Non-Cooperative**” Churches. This describes the non-institutional brethren. They believe that it is sinful for congregations of the Lord’s church to cooperate in evangelism and other good works for Christ.
5. “**Liberal**” This is an elastic term with no uniformly precise meaning. It is always used in a pejorative way. When non-institutional brethren use it to describe other Churches of Christ they mean those who will not subscribe to their peculiar doctrines. They use this term hoping to poison uninformed brethren against us. To the non-institutional folks we are liberal, to other splinter groups, the non-institutional folks are liberal.
6. “**Conservative**.” This term has a legitimate use. In Christianity, it describes a person who strives to conserve the faith as it was given by Christ. The conservative believes the Bible to be God’s Word and strives to teach it and live faithfully by it. He does not add to nor take from God’s Word. Non-institutional brethren use the term exclusively to refer to those who share their views.
7. “**Ultraconservative**.” This is a better term to describe the non-institutional brethren. They do believe the Bible and reject denominational churches and their doctrines. We have many point in common. But they are not content just to live by God’s Word. They feel that more laws and rules are needed to keep brethren in line. They forbid things God has not forbidden (I Tim. 4:3).

8. **“Faction and factious.”** A factious person stirs up controversy and confusion among brethren. He is divisive. If he cannot prevail and have his way, he will divide a congregation and lead away those who fall under his influence. Paul tells us to reject factious men (Tit. 3:10). A faction is a group of Christians that are agitating and troubling the Lord’s church over issues they have created. They can be within one congregation or scattered among the brotherhood. A faction, like a denomination, is a part of the whole. Non-institutional brethren are a troublesome faction within the Church of Christ.

9. **“Anti”** is a strong term sometime used to describe non-institutional brethren. It means “to be against.” All Christians are against sin, but an “anti” fights against faithful brethren, congregations and the scripturally sound good works they are doing. He not only disagrees with us, he is at war with all those who think differently than himself. He does not consider them true, faithful children of God. The use of this term to describe a man is never complimentary.

10. **“Legalism and Legalistic.”** Legalism is defined as “excessive conformity to the law or to a religious or moral code” (Webster). A religious legalist reflects an excessive conformity to God’s law and is determined to bind his way of thinking and acting upon his brethren. We, like the legalist, seek to obey God’s word in all things. He, however, includes his peculiar, mistaken interpretations of Scripture and the rules that he has added to God’s Word.

11. **“Radical and Radicalism.”** A radical is a person marked by a considerable departure from the usual or traditional; extreme: tending or disposed to make extreme changes in existing views...” (Webster). This is good description of the leaders of the non-institutional movement. We hasten to concede that not every member of the non-institutional churches is radical.

12. **“Forbidding brethren.”** Paul described such men in I Timothy 4:3. They were forbidding to marry and to eat meats, neither of which God had forbidden. This term we have used frequently to describe those who oppose the scriptural means and methods we use to spread the gospel and care for suffering humanity.

With these terms understood, we can better understand the message and the actions of the Non-institutional preachers.

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## 4.

# ANATOMY OF A FORBIDDING BROTHER

Every generation produces a variety of Christians who are a constant source of irritation and hurt to the church. These misinformed brethren are distinguished by their strong, unyielding opposition to some idea or practice which is in the realm of opinion. So strongly do they hold to their views that they ultimately break fellowship with the main stream of the church and form a splinter body where everyone thinks and does as they do. We call them “anti brethren” because their negative views lead them to be against commonly accepted practices which the majority of brethren see as scriptural. They appear in many varieties: For example, some are against Bible classes, others are against women teachers. Some are against multiple communion cups, others are against located preachers. Some are against orphan homes, against church cooperation, against eating in the church building, against Christian schools, against World Bible School etc.. We see the same attitude displayed by the Pharisees and by the Judaizing Christians of Paul’s day. This “negative” spirit or mentality is always with us. The particular issues may differ but all are of the same family, genus and kind.

Having a keen interest in the history of the church and having confronted different kinds of antis, the author has noted the following attributes that tend to show up in most of those who espouse some anti cause. It is conceded that not everyone will necessarily have all of these, but there is a pattern that does emerge.

\* They are alarmists, fearing that the church is apostatizing. This is true of all legalists, from the anti-located preacher brother to the brother who is against eating in the church building. They are trying to save the church from this imagined apostasy. They are quite willing to destroy the church to save it from their imagined apostasy.

\* Most all forbidding brethren **suffer from spiritual false pride**. They think very highly of their knowledge, spirituality and loyalty to God, while discounting the same in other brethren who do not see things their way (Rom. 12:3). Like Elijah, they think of themselves as the only faithful brethren that are left. They forget that God always has his seven thousand faithful servants, his remnant (1 Kings 19:10, 18).

\* They always suffer from a **legalistic attitude toward their religion**. They are more interested in their rules than in the souls of men. We have a good example of this in John 5:1-18. The Jews cared nothing for the poor sick man Jesus had healed. They persecuted Jesus because he had broken their rules about the Sabbath Day. Many antis would rather see a person not obey the gospel than to obey, and be part of a congregation that did not share their anti view of things. To them a Church of Christ, not of their narrow circle, is a worthless false religion.

\* Legalism is evident when ones concept of religion is **primarily a code of negatives and prohibitions**. True Christianity is not only against sin and error, but it is also for truth and righteousness. There is a spiritual balance seen in the teaching of Christ and the Apostles that is not seen in the anti brother. He is all for keeping brethren unspotted from the world, but visiting the fatherless and widow is of much less concern (Jas. 1:27).

\* This negativism always **results in a lack of vital love and concern for fellow-men** and even fellow-saints. The legalistic Jewish priest and the Levite felt no pang of conscience when they observed their wounded brother in the ditch. They passed on the other side of the road (Luke 10:30-37). So the brother who has the anti heart can forbid the church to help the needy infant because it is not a saint...as well as all other non-baptized persons and feel very proud of his righteousness. Instructions to do good to all men (Gal. 6:10) are brushed aside with a wave of the hand by such teachers.

\* This type of Christian is **addicted to "mote hunting."** No brother can be received and fully trusted. Everyone is constantly under suspicion. They can rationalize glaring faults in their own lives while attacking every imagined fault of their brethren, especially those who are not of their own party (Compare Matt. 7:1-5).

\* Those afflicted with this spiritual ailment **have trouble distinguishing between traditions and cultural practices in the church and God-given biblical principles**. Some would argue that they have no human customs and traditions attached to their faith. They never stop to consider church buildings, song leaders, invitation hymns, times of service, arrangement of the scriptural items of worship and a hundred other such items. Some of these customs, hallowed by long usage, are made into binding laws over which fellowship would be broken. Thus when multiple cups were introduced, the one drinking cup used in communion in the old days was made a law by anti-minded people. Some even taught it to be as vital to communion as the scriptural elements of bread and fruit of the vine.

\* Forbidding brethren are **strongly opinionated**. Their view is indisputably right. They demand to be heard and all are expected to accept their views or prepare for battle. There is no room for liberty in matters of opinion as our Restoration pioneers taught. **Everything** is a matter of absolute right or wrong. Thus it is "my way or no way!" They seem to feel that the Christian principles of grace and liberty are too dangerous and must be restricted (See. Gal. 2:4; 5:13). Surely such men think more highly of themselves than they ought to think (Rom. 12:3).

\* This negative philosophy **affects their method of Bible study**. Rather than study the Bible to understand what God intended, being obsessed with their peculiar hobby, they study the Scriptures to prove their point. Context is often ignored while verses are commandeered to serve as proof-texts against the opposition. This is then reflected in their preaching, and writing, for an opportunity to refer to the their precious issues is never passed by.

\* Brethren of this mind-set **love to forbid the church from practicing some good work or some method of doing God's will**. It matters not to them that God has not prohibited it. Paul predicted that when men fell away from the faith they would forbid things which God had allowed (1 Tim. 4:1-3). This verse aptly describes all antis, i.e., they are forbidding brethren. They delight in making and imposing rules on other saints and then judging and condemning those who do not conform. James soundly condemns this spirit in chapter 4:11-12 of his book. Paul refused to submit to such law-making brethren (Gal. 2:3-5).

\* When a man is of this "forbidding" mind set he very likely will, sooner or later, be involved in a factious strife

**within the church.** We have witnessed the larger, break-away, forbidding groups, but even if a man does not follow such a large movement, he sooner or later will feel obligated to separate himself from brethren over some favorite rule of his. Paul wrote, "There must also be factions among you" (I Cor. 11:19). Judaizing brethren could not stand by and see Paul's work among the Gentiles without some effort to circumscribe it! Legalists never view factions as a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20). Their agitations are glorified as noble actions to save the church from departures.

\* **Few forbidding brethren are evangelistic.** They are so consumed with their "issues" they haven't time to seek out and teach lost sinners the gospel. They must concentrate on saving the brotherhood from what they term heresy. Mission work is rarely found among them for similar reasons. Also, they seem to have a hard time finding the interest to invest money in mere soul-saving ventures. Funds are generally expended in attacking non-conforming brethren through radio broadcasts and journals. Rather than evangelize, they work as parasites. They compass land and sea to draw away one member from a congregation which they term liberal. If possible, they will capture a whole church and turn it to their view. Those who do not willingly accept the new view will be driven out. They feel very proud to capture buildings built by other brethren whom they despise. Ethics in such matters are of small account.

\* They are **heartless towards mission work done by brethren whom they do not fellowship.** They will subvert, rend and tear their churches with no concern for the babes in Christ. They would rather see a congregation, or a mission effort destroyed rather than allow it to exist without accepting their views. This is true also of congregations here in the states.

\* It is common for forbidding brethren to **practice deceit in order to grab control** of a congregation. Many an anti preacher has accepted work with a congregation, which he despises as a "liberal" church, so that he might capture it for his cause. Seldom do they declare themselves until they, like termites, have eaten away the foundations. Also, they will feign humility and piety while they are in the minority,. Then when they gain the advantage, they become harsh and aggressive, expressing a totally different attitude. Peter well describes them in II Peter 2:1, They are false prophets who privily bring in their destructive heresies.

\* All legalists of every stripe have a **common bag of cliches and slogans.** They are always the "loyal church." All who disagree with them are "liberal or digressive." Every anti issue is said to be "parallel to the missionary society." All of them claim to have found a "binding example" to prove their point. It is noteworthy that they select binding examples to fit their need. They are unwilling to make all examples binding. Rather than follow their own logic, they conveniently excuse themselves. Few of them would bind the upper room for communion (Acts 20:8). Other examples could be cited.

It is doubtful that there will ever be a time when the anti-spirit, in some form, will not be with us. Therefore we must work diligently to teach our brethren a correct and wholesome understanding of the doctrine of Christ. Also we must ever be on guard lest such a root of bitterness spring up to harm the congregations in which we serve.

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## 5.

# LEGALISM: DEADLY ENEMY OF THE CHURCH

Anti-ism is built on the foundation of legalism. Legalism is a word often used among our brethren but one not clearly understood or well-defined. In religion, the word means "Strictness...in conforming to law, or in theology, to a code of deeds and observances as a means of justification" (Webster). "The term is used derogatively to signify a conformity which has missed the inner spirit or purpose of the laws and degenerated into a barren observance of externalities" (V. Ferm).

## **Bible Examples of Legalists**

In the New Testament, two groups of legalists are mentioned. The Pharisaic sect of the Jews were legalists. Their view of religion was in perpetual conflict with that of Christ. In pronouncing a woe upon them, Jesus said, their converts were two-fold more sons of hell (Matt. 23:15). He scored them saying, “ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?” (Matt. 23:33). A religious attitude like theirs is more than useless, it places one in jeopardy of damnation.

The second group consisted of some Jewish converts to Christianity. They had likely been influenced by the legalism of the Pharisees prior to their conversion. These hounded Paul wherever he went and opposed his work among the Gentiles. They sought to bind the ordinances of Moses’ law upon them. In Galatians 2:3-5, Paul labels them as false brethren who sought to spy out our liberty in Christ. He refused to give place to them for even an hour. Obviously we should not want to be like those people in our faith.

### **Some Traits of Legalism**

Legalists seek salvation by human achievement and merit. They fail to understand God’s grace and are usually suspicious of those who emphasize it. The Galatian Christians had been plagued and confused by legalists. Paul asked them, “Received ye the Spirit (the seal of their salvation, II Cor. 1:21-22; Acts 2:38), by the works of the law (legalism) or by the hearing of faith? (Gal. 3:2). Of course they had been saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9).

Legalists tend to worship the law of God and exalt it above the Law-Giver. No one can doubt the devotion of the Pharisees to God’s law. Yet, Jesus charged that they had not known God (John 8:55). In spite of all their outward claims of loyalty to God’s law, they were, in reality, serving the devil (John 8:38-44). Legalists are given to making laws and enforcing them on other disciples. Pharisees taught the “precepts of men” and made void God’s word in so doing (Matt. 15:6, 9). They bound heavy burdens and laid them on men’s shoulders (Matt. 23:4). James rebuked those who sought to be judges of the law rather than doers of the law. He then pointed out that only one is lawgiver and judge and that is God (Jas. 2:11-12). Legalists tend to be more strict than God requires. Those who do not follow their example are despised. The law forbade servile work on the Sabbath (Deut. 5:12-14). The Pharisees would not even allow a physician to aid the sick on the Sabbath, unless they were in danger of dying. Jesus rejected their excessive prohibitions (John 5:2-18).

Legalists are absorbed with enforcing conformity to their perception of God’s law but they neglect to seek the intent and purpose of that law. Legalistic Pharisees used the Sabbath law to afflict and penalize their fellow Jews. Jesus explained, the “the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath...” (Mark 2:27). So a legalist might view church attendance or discipline; using such as a club rather than for the purpose God intended. With zeal, they enforce God’s law on others but in their own lives they frequently excuse themselves from its more difficult demands. While making long prayers, they devour widow’s houses (Matt. 23:14 KJV). While tithing mint, anise and cummin they leave undone weighty matters such as justice, mercy and faith (Matt. 23:23). In legalism, outward ritual is highly valued, while the inward, spiritual traits are neglected. They are like a beautiful sepulcher, painted white, but inside their hearts are found uncleanness, hypocrisy and iniquity (Matt. 23:27-28). Mercy is rarely found in a legalist’s heart, though a critical attitude toward brethren is a common trait among them (Matt. 23:1-7).

Legalists will often persecute those who do not accept their views. This they did to Jesus because he would not conform to their dictums about the Sabbath (John 5:16). At their best, legalists will be suspicious and accusative toward fellow Christians. Paul was constantly under attack by such brethren. His motives were questioned, the worst possible interpretation was placed on his deeds (II Cor. 11:7-12; 12:15-17). No one can be more accusative than a legalistic brother. Paul likened them to dogs who bite and devour their brethren (Phil. 3:2-3; Gal. 5:15).

A natural outgrowth of the legalistic approach to Christianity is strife and division. The Judaizers would not accept Paul and others who refused to bow to their demands (II Cor. 12:14-21).

There is seldom genuine evangelistic zeal among legalists. Rather than go and preach the good news of the gospel, they

consume their energy trying to save the church from an evil they imagine, or they follow some missionary's trail trying to capture his converts. We do not read of the Judaizers making converts to Christ, but The Acts and the Epistles repeatedly tell of them preying upon Paul's work.

### **Dangerous Attitudes**

As a people, we have often been troubled by legalism. While most of our brethren are moderate and spiritually-minded in their faith and practice, the long shadow of that legalism still haunts us. In the last 100 years, the body of Christ has been rocked time and again by legalistic schisms. Many of our congregational problems involve a legalistic approach to Christianity that causes turmoil and strife.

Many brethren assume that legalism is less dangerous to the church than liberalism. Some have wondered if perhaps we should strike a deal with those legalists, who separated themselves in the past, and jointly fight against liberalism. This logic is not only faulty but dangerous. It is faulty because anything other than true Christianity is flawed, whether it be to the right or left of truth. It is dangerous because to give legalism a welcome place in our midst is to invite the imposition of human opinions, strife and contention. Legalism is a deadly enemy to the church. It paralyzes, persecutes and divides; it consumes and disgraces that which it dominates.

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## **6.**

### **A PORTRAIT OF ULTRA-CONSERVATIVES**

Forbidding brethren like to describe themselves as "conservatives." However those who carefully observe their teaching and practices will conclude that they are actually ultra-conservative.

In all movements, be they civic, political, educational, social or religious you will have a broad spectrum of thought and behavior. On one extreme are those who are liberal, on the other are those who are ultraconservative. This has long been a problem for the Lord's church. The following characteristics come to mind when we contemplate our ultra-conservatives:

- \* Rather than pursuing peace (I Pet. 3:11), they love conflict and controversy.
- \* Rather than meekness and humility (I Pet. 5:5), they often reflect arrogance and pride in their profession.
- \* Rather than kindness, gentleness and patience (II Pet. 1:6-7), they reflect bitterness, harshness and impatience.
- \* Rather than being long-suffering with those with whom they disagree (Eph. 4:2), they are eager to brand them and be rid of them.
- \* Rather than trying to understand another brother's point of view, they are closed-minded and determined to destroy him.
- \* Rather than using speech filled with grace and seasoned with salt (Col. 4:6), they commonly use harsh, denigrating names and epithets to discredit those who reject their dictates.
- \* Rather than building up the kingdom of Christ, they devote all their time and energy to their negative work of finding flaws and attacking others.
- \* Rather than taking time to salvage a brother, a church, a good work that has veered from the Bible way (Jude 22-23), they rush to attack and destroy them.
- \* Rather than being heart-broken and grief-stricken when a brother or church is caught in the snare of error (Phil.3:18), they gleefully rush to dispatch them.
- \* Rather than looking for the good a brother, a church or a project is doing, they spend their time searching for some flaw, real or imagined.
- \* Rather than simply teaching God's Word, they promote their opinions, ideas and deductions about the Word as of equal value with the Bible.

- \* Rather than granting other brethren the freedom and liberty to study, think and conclude for themselves about God's message, they decide what must be believed and set about to enforce their conclusions on all others.
- \* Rather than seeing themselves as sinners, needing mercy, they think of themselves as detectives and law enforcement officers.
- \* Rather than seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10), they devote themselves to seeking out and flailing fellow Christians who do not stand in their small circle.
- \* Rather than concentrating on those broad, basic truths of the Bible, they much prefer to focus on the odd and incidental things that are often matters of dispute and misunderstanding.
- \* Rather than loving the brotherhood (I Pet. 2:17), they are at war with the brotherhood...all save the handful that think as they do.
- \* Rather than work for unity of congregation and the brotherhood (Eph. 4:3), they promote strife and division.
- \* Rather than commending what others are doing they prefer to criticize them.
- \* Rather than concede their mistakes and errors of interpretation, they stoutly defend them and attack those who dare challenge their conclusions, or who refuse to be governed by them.
- \* Rather than building up and strengthening congregations (Eph. 4:16), they generally succeed in wrecking them and scattering their members .
- \* Rather than "cover a multitude of sins," as love should do (I Pet. 4:8), they delight in uncovering and displaying the sins of others.
- \* Rather than openly confessing their sins, they often hide them and direct attention to the sins of others.
- \* Rather than extending grace, mercy and forgiveness to erring brothers, they much prefer to execute judgment upon them.
- \* Rather than proclaim the grace and mercy of God they prefer to preach the judgment and punishment of God.
- \* Rather than explore and find new ways to do God's work and advance his cause, they prefer to find fault with those who do.
- \* Rather than lead the church to become a large and flourishing body of people, they devote themselves to keeping it small, fractured and struggling.
- \* Rather than respecting congregational autonomy, they feel authorized to invade other congregations and imposed their opinions upon them.
- \* Rather than being mere soldiers in the army of Christ, they often perceive of themselves as commanders of others.
- \* While ultraconservatives can exist within the larger body of the church for a while, when their demands are not heeded, they nearly always break away and establish their own brotherhood where they can set the policy. Every "anti" splinter group was launched by a band of ultraconservatives.
- \* In every generation, the church has to deal with ultraconservatives. The issues they raise vary from generation to generation, but the attitudes, the methods, the consequences are always the same.
- \* The careful student of God's Word and church history knows that truth lies between the extremes of liberalism and ultra-conservatism (Prov. 4:25-27).
- \* Rather than help the church, ultra-conservatism always harms the body, by splintering and dividing God's people and leaving them weakened and vulnerable to the other extreme of liberalism.

To be conservative is to stand solidly on the Word of God, avoiding extremes of the right or left. It is to have the mind or spirit Jesus in dealing with others who assay to follow the Son (Phil. 2:5).

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## **NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE WHO IN SPIRIT AND BEHAVIOR WERE LIKE THE NON-INSTITUTIONAL BRETHREN**

1. The Jewish Pharisees, who opposed Jesus and brought about his death, were legalists who used the same kind of methods the non-institutional brethren use. They falsely accused Jesus. "They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders (Matt. 23:4). They compass sea and land to make one proselyte...' (Matt. 23:15). Their proselytes then become agitators who also trouble our churches.
2. The Judaizing teachers, who harassed and persecuted the Apostle Paul, were like the them. They were members of the church but were determined to control the church and make the Gentile converts live by their rules. Paul called them enemies of the cross of Christ (Phil. 3:18). They preached Christ of envy, strife and faction thinking to raise up affliction for Paul (Phil. 1:15-17).
3. They are like grievous wolves that enter in among us, not sparing the flock "and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30).
4. They behave like Diotrophes who loved to have the preeminence in the church. He prated against John with wicked words. He "forbiddeth and cast them out of the church" who would not submit to his tyranny (III John 9-10).

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## **8.**

### **WHAT IS A HOBBY-RIDING PREACHER?**

A "hobby-rider" is a metaphor for a man who is stuck on some peculiar issue to which he devotes most of his attention. He is like a child with a new hobby horse. All he wants to do is ride it. While this can be found in all areas of life, it is especially troublesome when a preacher has such a hobby. Sometimes a man thinks he has discovered that which no one else knows and he is determined to inform them about it. Some men have faulty views of a particular subject or practice. Not realizing their mistake, at every opportunity they set about to impress their point on others. Even good ideas can consume a man so that he ignores or neglects all else when promoting his favorite issue. Such men often try to force their peculiar views on other congregations. Hobby-riders are found in both liberal and ultraconservative circles. In Paul's day, there were Jewish Christian preachers who were on a crusade to pressure every male Gentile convert to be circumcised. Paul opposed them in his Letters to Galatians, Philippians, etc. (Gal. 6:12-13).

Such hobby-riders can do great harm to the church. They cause confusion and sometime division. In some cases their hobby is relatively innocuous. Such men can be ignored as harmless and kept at arm's length. In other, more serious, cases, they must be opposed and marked as factious men and troublemakers (Rom. 16:17; -18; Tit. 3:10). Those whose hobby is opposing orphans' homes, church cooperation, eating in the church building and World Bible School do great harm to the Cause of our Lord Jesus.

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## **PART II: HOW WE DETERMINE THAT WHICH WE CAN AND CANNOT DO IN CHRIST?**

### **9.**

#### **ESTABLISHING NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORITY**

Paul charges us, "and whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus..." (Col. 3:17). As founder and head of the Christian religion, Jesus, has all authority. He built the church (Matt. 16:18). God "gave him to be head over all things to the church" (Eph. 1:22). Christ rightly claimed, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18).

Christ delegated his authority to his Apostles. "But ye (Apostles) shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you and ye shall be my witnesses..." (Acts 1:8). In his great prayer, Jesus said: "The words which thou (God the Father) gavest me (Christ) I have given unto them (Apostles)" (John 17:8). Upon receiving the Holy Spirit, they could forgive or retain sins (John 20:22-23). Being given authority, they could loose or bind in the name of Christ (Matt. 16:19). This they did, not of their own will or volition, but as the Holy Spirit inspired and guided them (John 16:13). The Jerusalem church continued steadfastly in the "apostles' teaching" (Acts 2:42): Not even an angel from heaven could change their inspired and authoritative message (Gal. 1:6-9).

The Apostles and the inspired men were guided and directed by the Holy Spirit to record the will of Jesus in the inspired books of the New Testament "Every scripture inspired of God is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (II Tim. 3:16-17). Thus Paul wrote: "The things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord" (I Cor. 14:37). Jesus said, "The word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48): We will be judged by the things written in the books of God (Rev. 20:12).

The New Testament is the exclusive authority in Christianity. Although we love and respect the Old Testament as God's word, it is clearly no longer the rule for our faith, worship and work under Christ. Paul says, the Law was nailed to the cross, let no one judge you thereby (Col. 2:14-17). Christians are dead to the Law of Moses (Rom. 7:1-6). The Apostle explained that the old covenant is passing away, the new remains (II Cor. 3:4-11). We have a new covenant, the old is nigh unto vanishing away (Heb. 8:6-13). At his transfiguration we were clearly taught to hear Christ, not Moses and Elijah of the Old Covenant (Matt. 17:1-5).

We must have Biblical authority for everything we do in religion (Col. 3: 17). That which is not done by Bible authority must of necessity be done by human authority (Matt. 21:23-27).

Authority is found in the Scriptures in three ways:

I. God authorizes things by **direct statements**.

- a. There are **declarative statements** like, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).
- b. There are **imperative statements** (commands) such as "repent ye and be baptized" (Acts 2:38; Acts 10:48).
- c. We find **interrogative statements that teach by asking questions**. "Is Christ divided?" (I Cor. 1:13).
- d. We note **hortatory statements** that encourage us to do certain things that please God. "We exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all" (I Thess. 5:14).

II. Of course God authorizes things by **commands**. There are two kinds of commands:

- a. **Specific Commands** specify the details of what we must do. A command must give one or more specifications or it is not a specific command. We must always do what is specified in a command. Noah to specifically told to build an ark of gopher wood, etc. (Gen. 6:14-16). No options were left to him regarding the kind of wood he was to use.
- b. **Generic commands** are general in their nature. "A generic command authorizes things not mentioned, by leaving one or more ways, methods or means to human judgement, and by a necessary inference leaves some things to human opinion, choice, or option. "In all such commands we must leave such items in the realm of human liberty, where God left them..." (Gus Nichols). Christ issued the generic command to "Go preach the gospel (Mark 16:15) Note that he did not specify how we are to go. The method of transportation is left up to us. Scripture teaches us to "Visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction" (Jas. 1:27 ). But he did not specify the details of how that relief was to be provided and administered.

III. The Bible also authorizes by **implication or necessary inference**. Acts 22:16 implies that even though he believed in Christ, Saul still had his sins before baptism." That an elder must be the husband of one wife, rule his family, etc., implies that elders were men, not women ( I Tim. 3:2).

IV. The Bible authorizes by **approved examples**.

A. Actions which were condemned as sinful for men living then are wrong for us today. Simon the Sorcerer's attempt to buy the gift of God was clearly wrong and thus it would be wrong for us today to attempt to buy any spiritual privilege or office.

B. Actions that are the fulfillment of a specific command. In Acts 8:4 we read of everyone preaching the word. That was a fulfillment of Matthew 28:19-20.

C. Actions which were obligatory for some men, but not for all (such as the use of spiritual gifts (I Cor. 14:29), is not obligatory for us today since we do not have the gifts.

D. Actions which were acceptable in fulfilling some generic command are not the exclusive way the command can be obeyed. Paul obeyed the Great Commission by traveling by boat. The disciples assembled for worship in an upper room (Acts 20:6-14; Heb. 10:25). Yet we do not have to travel by boat when evangelizing nor do we have to assemble in an upper room.

**NOTE: Approved examples are binding on us only if there is an underlying specific command making that the exclusive way to obey God in that particular. Otherwise, their example only reflects their choice of expedients to fulfill a general command.**

**Examples Not Binding:**

1. Acts 2:44-46; 4:34-37: The disciples selling their possessions and giving to the poor. See also Acts 5:4.
2. Acts 11:29-30: Sending financial help for the needy by the hands of men. We can use mail or electronic transfer to send our help.
3. Acts 16:1-4: Paul had Timothy circumcised to avoid offending the Jews they hoped to teach. We are not obligated to be circumcised.
4. Acts 20:1-13: The Lord's Supper was observed at night in an upper room, but it is not a binding example.

V. **The Law of Silence**. It is important to remember that when God specifies something to be done, all other alternatives are thereby excluded. If God does not make a thing acceptable by one of the above mentioned means of authorization, he thereby forbids it. **God does not have to say "thou shalt not" to forbid a thing.**

A. Lev. 10:1-4. Nadab and Abihu sinned against the Law of Silence by offering strange fire God had not commanded.

B. I Chron. 13:6-13; 15:1-2, 11-15; I Sam. 6: 1-1a. Uzzah was struck dead because they did not comply with God's instructions. The ark of the covenant was to be carried on the priest's shoulders. That eliminated a new ox cart.

C. Gen. 6:14-16. Noah obeyed this rule. God authorized gopher wood, he did not need to forbid oak, etc.

D. Heb. 7:11-14. Christ could not be a priest on earth for he was of Judah, of "which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests." Specifying Levites to be priests, forbade all others even without mentioning them.

E. I Cor. 4:6, A.S.V. "That in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which were written."

F. II John 9-11, We must abide IN the teaching of Christ to have God's blessings. To go onward and abide not in his teaching is to be without God and Christ.

We can abide in the teaching of Christ only by doing those things approved by Christ in his word. Anything done with human authority leaves one without Christ. Among things commonly done without God's authority are:

1. Instrumental music
2. Incense
3. Infant Baptism
4. Sprinkling
5. Etc.

VI. **Expedients:** "For anything to be expedient, according to Bible teaching, it must:

(1) Give advantage in doing what God would have man to do, and (2) Be authorized by His word. Even though man may feel that a particular thing would give certain advantages in carrying out God's instructions, if that thing is not authorized by the Bible, then that thing is not expedient. For a thing to be expedient, it must first be lawful. An unlawful thing could never be an acceptable expedient.

"When God tells man **what** to do **without telling him how to do it**, man is free to do that which in his judgment is most expedient." "When God tells man **what** to do and also **how** to do it, then the **how** is as binding as the **what** in the doing of whatever it is that is to be done." Thomas Warren.

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The author is indebted to:

Thomas B. Warren, **Liberalism and the Use of Instrumental Music in the Worship of God.**

Gus Nichols, **How to Establish Bible Authority**, as published in the Freed-Hardeman College Lectures of 1970, entitled, **The Church Faces Liberalism**, Gospel Advocate Co., Nashville.

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## 10.

### GENERIC AND SPECIFIC AUTHORITY

The word *generic* derives from our word *general*. It is the opposite of *specific*. Thus, generic authority is general authority without specific details being given.

For example: Christ said "Go preach the gospel" (Mark 16:15). No instructions are given about how we are to go. So we conclude we are authorized to go by car or bus, plane or train, by foot or bicycle, on the basis of this generic authority.

But when Christ said preach "the gospel" that specifies what we are to preach. I have specific authority to preach the gospel of Christ and that excludes, the doctrines and commandments of men, human philosophy, psychology, etc.

**A specific command excludes all others.** For example Christ said "Go make disciples...baptizing them" (Matt. 28:19). The word baptize is a verb with specific meaning. It means to immerse. This specific command necessarily excludes

sprinkling, pouring, or any other type of action than immersion for scriptural baptism.

The command to "work that which is good to all men" (Gal. 6:10) is generic or general. It sets forth an obligation without specifying any particular means for fulfilling it. Thus we are free to use many methods in ministering to our neighbors and yet do so by the generic authority Christ has given us.

These concepts are especially important when we come to the question of praising God. The Scripture says, "speaking one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). Since there are three possible ways to make music: vocal music, instrumental music and a combination of the two kinds, when God specified one of them it excluded the others. To sing is very specific, thus we are limited to that way of expressing our praise.

These points will be useful to the person who seeks to determine the correct application of the words of the Savior. Legalistic brethren fail to understand that the command to go teach all nations (Matt. 28:19) is generic and allows us to use many different methods in fulfilling that command. The command to remember the poor (Gal. 10) is also generic which means that no single means or method can be made binding on other Christians.

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## **PART III: THE ORIGIN, BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF THE NON- INSTITUTIONAL CHURCHES**

### **11.**

#### **THE CONTROVERSY OVER ORPHAN HOMES AND CHURCH CO- OPERATION**

Just as the two parties in an accident see it from different perspectives, each side of the "church cooperation and orphan homes" issues see the causes and provocations differently. Of course there are true facts in the case, but it is not always easy to find them. The author has spent many years studying our history, reading virtually all the histories and biographies that have been written about our people.

When the majority of our people were determined to introduce Missionary and other Societies to do the work of the church and thus divided the body, there were two differing types of response. Bro. Daniel Sommer took a radical, extremist approach. He built a significant following from Pennsylvania across to Colorado. He not only fought the progressives who became the Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ, he attacked anyone among our brethren who did not adhere to his dictates. He was even at war with his own sons over his opinions. The other, more moderate approach, was that of David Lipscomb. Our mainstream churches are the result of his approach. From Sommer's influence and attitude have sprung most of the negative, "anti" type movements that plagued the church last century. Although he died in 1940, his influence is definitely seen in those who broke fellowship over the children's homes and church cooperation. The leaders of that movement held Bro. Sommer up as a champion whose example should be followed.

The second major player in launching that movement was Bro. Foy Wallace, Jr. He was a powerful speaker, writer and debater. He was viewed as a great scholar by those who admired him. For a couple of years (1932-34) he edited the *Gospel Advocate* paper. The entirety of his long career he was enmeshed in controversy and seemed to relish it. He was belligerent and hyper-critical of all who did not follow his leadership. Strangely, he always had a great following of adorning fans. He was the principal leader in the launching of the "non-institution" movement in ca. 1947-49. With him were Fanning Yater Tant and Roy Cogdill. Together, they began a paper called the *Gospel Guardian*. Within a

few months Tant and Cogdill clashed with Bro. Wallace and he separated himself from their efforts, going into seclusion for several years. When he emerged, he announced that the others were church dividers and wrong. He spent his last years among the mainstream churches, crusading on various issues.

Prior to 1949 our churches had numerous orphan homes such as Tennessee Orphans Home at Spring Hill, Tennessee. Our churches had cooperated together in broadcast evangelism and sending and supporting missionaries. Many of the leaders of the new movement had themselves participated in such efforts.

When the “anti-cooperation” movement burst upon the scene, its major proponents followed the attack style of Bro. Foy Wallace, Jr. Those who saw this as an unwarranted attack and a factious movement, responded, knowing that it would divide congregations and eventually our brotherhood. The most notable leaders of the mainstream churches were Bro. Guy N. Woods, B. C. Goodpasture, G. K. Wallace, Thomas Warren and Roy Deaver. The **Gospel Advocate** was the principal journal that presented the lessons that exposed the weakness and errors of the objectors’ case. For that, those men and that paper have ever since been a hiss and a byword among the non-institutional preachers.

By 1960 the separation and division were a reality. The antis gradually added other binding issues to their list of forbidden practices. These included eating in the church building, sending funds to a missionary via an overseeing church and others. The mainstream leaders and churches largely ignored the antis. They, for many years, railed at us on every occasion.

A common occurrence in religious movements is what is described as the pendulum effect. Just as the pendulum swings from one extreme to the other, so folks who take an extreme, ultra-conservative position often reach a point where they see their folly. Rather than return to the middle, they swing to the opposite extreme and become liberal. Thus Carl Ketcherside for years led a radical faction that opposed located preachers, orphan homes, Christian Schools, etc. Then one day he shifted to be the most liberal man among us, worshiping with the Christian churches and fellowshiping all denominations. Some of the folks in the non-cooperation movement have tended to shift to the left and become liberal.

Today we are seeing problems among our main-stream preachers and churches, with many drifting to the left and embracing things they would not have a generation ago. Likewise, the non-cooperation churches are evidently seeing some of their people shifting away from the more extreme attitudes and approaches of the past. It is not uncommon today to see “non-institutional” churches who are willing to be on friendly terms with those of our churches who are conservative in their preaching and practice. The truth is we have most things in common. Few of our conservative churches of the mainstream have any present connection with the Herald of Truth radio and television ministry. It has fallen into the hands of liberals and lost our confidence. Most orphan homes have faded away because of the scarcity of orphans and unwanted children. Abortion has eliminated millions of them. Also state agencies now administer most child care programs.

It is important to understand that fellowship would not have been broken had not the opponents of our benevolent and evangelistic work insisted on it. We could then and can today, fellowship any person who is of any of the “anti” persuasions if they are willing to fellowship us without trying to impose their ideas and opinions on us. When the issue was new, the approach of the antis was, “you must give up your support of homes and cooperation or we will disfellowship you as unfaithful Christians.” We saw no Biblical basis for their objections and believed that no one has the right to impose such man-made laws on the church.

Today, all the first generation of the non-institutional leaders are gone. The third and fourth generation always tends to cool in its ardor and zeal. Many of them don’t even know what the fight was all about. So also among our brethren. Let us pray that eventually the tension will subside and disappear. Hopefully the non-institutional brethren will one day be willing to work together again in the common Cause of Christ. Unfortunately, Satan never takes a break. The seeds of liberalism and legalism have been planted among us and will eventually result in further conflicts and splintering....unless Jesus returns first.

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## **THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL DIFFERENT ANTI OR “FORBIDDING ” GROUPS**

Across the ages Satan has created factions within the body. Those factions are of two kinds. There are liberals who take liberties with God's law and encourage people to go contrary to it. Then there are ultraconservatives who make rules and regulations and seek to bind them on other brethren. Paul predicted that men would forbid to marry and command to abstain from meats which God created to be received (I Tim. 4:3).

Those members of the Church of Christ who identify themselves as "Non-Institutional" are of this latter group. Some folks describe them as "non-cooperatives" in as much as they refuse to cooperate in the Lord's work with those of us who will not yield to their demands. Some have called them "antis" because they seemed to be against every good work that other brethren were doing.

In the 20th century we had five of these splinter groups to trouble the church.

\* First there was a group that opposed Christian Schools, orphans' homes and located preachers (i.e. preachers who worked with a single congregation and were supported full-time). They said a man should support himself. They insisted that an evangelist had control over churches he served.

\* Then, there was a group that opposed the use of individual communion cups. They insisted that the church had to commune from only one cup.

\* There was a group that opposed having Bible classes and the use of women to teach women and children. They insisted that all the congregation must stay together in one place to study the Word. They also objected to "uninspired literature for class use." They insisted that only the text of the Bible could be studied.

\* There were those who opposed benevolent homes operated by Christians or by the church to care for orphans and abandoned children, the aged, and unwed mothers, etc. They also objected to churches cooperating together in evangelistic endeavors. They insisted that each church should oversee and support its own work and not send funds to another church for evangelistic purposes. They said that the church could assist only baptized believers and forbade her from helping the non-Christian, including children who were not yet baptized. They also insisted that a church could not eat a common meal, a fellowship meal, in its meeting house. This last group is the one that calls itself Non-Institutional.

In choosing that descriptive name, they are saying that all who do not agree with their narrow view are "institutional churches" because we do those things which they forbid. This of course is an untrue charge.

This non-institutional movement had its beginning near the end of the 1940s. By 1960 they were separated from the main body of the church. These brethren were very disruptive and divisive. Their movement flourished for about 30 years and then began to wane. Today they claim some 1900 congregations, few of which are large.

The basic flaw in the various kinds of "forbidding" churches is legalism. Previous chapters have explained the nature of legalism. They do very little evangelistic work, but they send their people to prey on the mission work our brethren have successfully done. They follow behind trying to draw away the young disciples after them (Acts 20:30). Given this history, we must not allow them to gain entrance into the churches where we have influence. Alienation and division will surely follow where they can get an entrance.

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## **ISSUES RAISED AND PROMOTED BY NON-INSTITUTIONAL CHURCHES**

1. They oppose church support for benevolent homes for the care of orphans, widows, the homeless, the aged, unwed mothers. They fail to understand that the generic command to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction (Jas. 1:27), leaves us free to use various means and methods in fulfilling the command, just as Noah was free to use any tools he might need in building the ark.
2. They insist that individual Christians can and should assist such unfortunate people, but privately. They should not expect the church to do so. This is a law they have made with apostolic authority. It is the same mistake made by the Jewish Christians who insisted that Gentiles had to be circumcised in order to be saved. Note the Apostles rebuked them saying “to whom we gave no commandment (Acts 15:24).
3. They believe, teach and practice that the church is restricted in its charitable works to those who are our brethren in Christ. They forbid the church from assisting the non-member. They overlook that Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia instructing them to “work that which is good *toward all men*, and especially toward them that are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10). The Apostle believed the church should assist all needy people as she is able, giving preference to her Christian brethren.
4. They oppose cooperation of two or more congregations in evangelism and other good works where one congregation’s elders (leaders) are responsible for handling the funds. They oppose radio and television ministries that involve many congregations assisting another congregation in producing and broadcasting them. In days past leading “anti” brethren such as F. Y. Tant had radio ministries supported by more than one church. Roy Cogdill and Foy Wallace, Jr. engaged in a great city-wide evangelistic effort in Houston, Texas in which many congregations cooperated. They make laws for others that they do not observe. Like the Pharisees of Jesus’ day, they say and do not (Matt. 23:1).
5. They oppose cooperation in mission work. They argue that it is wrong for one church to sponsor a missionary with other congregations sending funds to the sponsoring church to supplement his support. They insist that churches wishing to support a missionary must send their funds directly to him, rather than through a sponsoring church. Here again we see the sin of making laws and trying to impose them on other Christians. They forget that “One only is the lawgiver and judge, even he who is able to save and to destroy....” (Jas. 4:12). If they wish to do their work according to their man-made laws they are free to do so, but they have no right to demand that others conform to their method. The church is to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). She is to support those who preach (I Cor. 9:14). Missionaries must be sent to the lost (Acts 13:3; Rom. 10:15), but no details as to just how their support will be provided are given. Other congregations assisted Paul in his missionary work. The Church in Philippi worked with Paul “in the matter of giving and receiving” (Phil. 4:15). They gave support to Paul and received funds on his behalf.
6. They oppose Christians Schools, except for the Christian School they operate. They fund and make use of Florida College which is a Christian School that provides Bible instruction and ministerial training for their young people. They take the untenable position that Christians should not establish Christian school to teach the Bible to their neighbor. Yet they will go into schools to teach the Bible where they have that opportunity.
7. They oppose Christians eating a meal together in their church building. They do eat together, they do so at members’ homes, parks, or other public buildings. They oppose congregations building halls on their property to accommodate fellowship gatherings of their members. A later chapter will discuss this matter in detail.
8. They oppose the World Bible School’s correspondence outreach. This too will later be discussed in detail.

## **DEALING WITH THE SOME OF THE ISSUES OF THE NON-COOPERATIVE CHURCHES OF CHRIST**

Bro. John: We are confronted with “non-institutional churches of Christ. I need some help with their issues. Some of the questions are

- 1) Can a Christian make a righteous judgement considering James 4:11-12?
- 2) Is church cooperation in evangelism scriptural? If yes, to what extent?
- 3) Shed more light on 1Cor 16:1-3. The argument is that Paul didn't collect the money by hand and neither was it delivered to Jerusalem by Paul.
- 4) The local congregations in my locality are strongly anti-World Bible School, missionary schools. Can I get facts about these schools - history, organization, delegation of authority (presidents, secretaries etc.), sources of funds, scriptural backings. Salvador

Dear Bro. Salvador: These brethren who are troubling the churches are a faction or a splinter group that separated from the main body of the Lord's church here in America back in 1950s. At that time they caused great trouble by objecting to the church caring for orphans in orphan homes. They were labeled, “anti-orphan home” brethren. Along the way, as they developed their peculiar doctrines, they added that churches could not cooperate in evangelism and good works. They then added that each church that supported a missionary effort had to send their money directly to the missionary. In this they opposed one church sponsoring a man and handling his funds, including those that others sent. In opposing the care of orphans, they began to teach that the church could use its funds only for baptized members. That was known as the “saints on doctrine.” They opposed Churches providing or using a place on the church's property where they could eat together.

You can see from the above list of their cardinal doctrines that they spend most of their energy being against the good things that other brethren are doing. Hence they are antis, i.e., against the things others are doing.

They do very little evangelism on their own, rather, they send their workers to prey on the people we convert and the churches we establish. This has been their practice in every nation where our brethren have gone with the gospel. After we have made a start, then come the “anti” brethren trying to draw away disciples after them (Acts 20:30).

In all of their peculiar teachings, the underlying flaw is the desire to make and enforce their rules and prohibitions on other brethren. Paul noted that false teachers would “forbid to marry” and command to abstain from meats (I Tim. 4:3). They are the modern example of the Pharisees of Jesus days who bound heavy burdens grievous to be bore and lay them on men's shoulders' but they themselves would not move them with their finger (Matt. 23:3-4). They are of the same nature as the Judaizing teachers that harassed Paul and the Gentile churches. These his Galatian letter condemns.

Everywhere they go, anti preachers cause divisions and occasions of stumbling (Rom. 16:18). We do not fellowship them. We do not allow them to speak in our churches. These men will wreck and destroy that which they cannot capture and control.

As to your questions. Of course, we can judge righteous judgment for Jesus tells us to do so (John 7:24). We can measure any man's teaching by the word of God and conclude that he is either a faithful teacher or a false teacher. By their fruit you shall know them (Matt. 7:16-20). If a man's teaching is outside the limits of God's word he hath not God (II John 9-11). We can judge antis as factious men since division follows everywhere they go (Tit. 3:10).

Yes, church cooperation in evangelism is scriptural. It is up to the accuser to prove it is not. To preach the gospel is the

duty of every Christian (Matt. 28:19-20). Just as individual Christians can help each other in teaching the lost, so can congregations.

But the church is composed of all Christians. The Church of Christ on earth consists of all Christians everywhere (I Cor. 12:27). But all Christians are also part of a particular congregation where they live. To say that one congregation of Christians cannot assist the other in doing God's work is like saying that the right hand of my body cannot assist the left hand in carrying a load, or that one foot cannot cooperate with the other in walking. Such is a foolish position.

Remember these brethren are making rules on how the church can function. God did not make their rules. We are not bound to observe them.

The church in Antioch sent Paul on his mission trips (Acts 13:3). The church in Philippi cooperated by sending funds to help with Paul's support (Phil. 4:1-16).

In I Corinthians 16:1-3 Paul is soliciting benevolent funds for the needy brethren in Jerusalem and Judea. Antis try to make their chosen method a binding pattern on us. They say we can only assist Christians with the church's contributions. Note that they do not live by the rule they would bind on you. This passage (I Cor. 16:1-3), is not about paying preachers,...but they pay theirs from this First Day collection. It says nothing about building church buildings...but they use it for their buildings. The fact is, by gathering all the teachings on giving we see that we can use these funds for all the needs of the church...including benevolence.

Galatians 6:10 destroys their position on helping saints only. Written to the churches of Galatia, Paul says, "Let us work that which is good to all men and especially toward them that are of the household of faith." So Christians should get our first attention, but our duty is to all men. We ask them, can the church practice the same benevolence as did the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37)?

All anti brethren are against the good works that our brethren do. That is their religion, being against the good others do...by this they try to paint themselves as policemen who are trying to make the church do God's will. (Of course, in reality, it is their will they are demanding be observed).

World Bible School is not a school in the same sense as a college or a university. It is a large number of individual Christians teaching the Bible to the lost through correspondence studies. Thousands of Christians here in America, operating independently, participate in this great teaching program. They are members of their local congregations. They are not paid for their work.

To supply the tens of thousands of lessons needed, brethren are appointed to see that need is met along with any other business that might entail. They do not control the teachers or the churches.

Ask the anti brother if he and or his brethren have bible correspondence courses? They do! They have to have theirs printed, they have to place ads in papers, they have to have volunteers to grade them. The difference is, they don't have a name like World Bible School. We call it World Bible School because we are teaching the lost around the world. That is the only sense in which it is a school. The antis are against Christian Schools...except for the one they conduct which is Florida College in the state of Florida, USA.

Through World Bible School teaching we have brought an estimated 325,000 people to Christ. Who do you think would want to attack WBS and try to destroy it? Who would profit most if it shut down today? Satan...he is behind that attack and the non-institutional brethren are his unwitting agents.

Non-institutional brethren often paint a greatly exaggerated and misleading picture of any good work that they oppose. This is a common tactic of theirs. This they are doing in attacking World Bible School. Brethren in foreign nations would not know if what is alleged is true or not. They like to depict any good work as some mammoth, evil corporation that is robbing churches and controlling the brotherhood. Of course they deliberately deceive in so doing.

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## **THE METHODOLOGY OF THE NON-INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH LEADERS**

To successfully deal with enemies of the church and to survive their assaults we must understand and recognize their methods. Below are common methods used by non-institutional brethren:

1. They prey on the converts and congregations established by workers of the Church of Christ who do not share their views. They do very little real evangelistic work, wherein they seek and save those who are lost in sin and false religion. They prefer to wait until others have done that work and then they wait for an opportune time to come among the new converts and seek to capture them for their peculiar cause. Jesus spoke of thieves who sneak upon the flock of sheep to steal and kill (John 10:10). Some men steal money, others steal converts, congregations and church meeting houses.
2. They attack and accuse fellow-Christians who do not submit to their dictates as unfaithful to Christ. Such slanderers God will judge (Ps. 101:5). By their smooth and fair speech they deceive the hearts of the innocent (Rom. 16:18).
3. They tend to misrepresent the facts concerning the good works we are doing for Christ and the methods we use to advance them. They exaggerate and resort to half-truths to discredit us. They describe innocent men and works in doleful exaggerated terms and depict them as creating some evil monstrous organization to take over the church. The fact is they wish to capture and control disciples and churches.
4. The “anti” type aspires to destroy good works that he and his brethren have not designed or do not control.
5. Two of their favorite charges against the methods we are using to advance the Cause of Christ are
  - \* “It is parallel to the missionary society.” and therefore must be wrong.
  - \* It does not measure up to a pattern they think they have found in the Scripture.

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## **THE APPROACH TO CHRISTIANITY OF NON-INSTITUTIONAL BRETHERN IS FLAWED**

1. They are legalistic in their interpretation and application of God’s Word. They imagine themselves to be the lawmakers and judges over other Christians. They forget that Christ alone fills that role in the church (Jas. 4:11-12). They are like the Jewish Christians who went to Antioch and told the Gentile converts, “Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1).
2. They are self-righteous. They assume their way of fulfilling God’s general commands is the only right way. They measure themselves by themselves and “are without understanding” (II Cor. 10:12). Everyone not conforming to their views they declare to be unfaithful.
3. They are judgmental toward other Christians who will not yield to their demands. James tells us, “He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judgest the law, thou

art not a doer of the law, but a judge. One only is the lawgiver and judge, even he who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judgest thy neighbor?" (Jas. 4:11-12).

4. They are presumptuous in making rules and prohibitions to bind on other brethren. Christ has all authority in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:18). He only is lawmaker and judge of men's souls (Jas. 4:12). Paul condemned those brethren who were "forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats" which God had allowed (I Tim. 4:3). Those who forbid that which God has not forbidden are not faithful servants of Christ. As servants of Christ, we answer only to him, not to non-institutional preachers. Paul asks, "Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own lord he standeth or falleth" (Rom. 14:4).

5. They are ruthless and hateful in their treatment of fellow Christians whom they cannot win to their thinking. They behave like the Jewish brethren who harassed Paul and sought to defeat and destroy his work among the Gentiles. They preach Christ of envy and strife... they proclaim Christ of faction to raise up affliction for those who do not embrace their anti views (Phil. 1:15-17). The Apostle called such people of his day, enemies of the cross of Christ (Phil. 3:18).

6. They are factious men who sow discord among brethren (Tit. 3:10). God hates him that soweth discord among brethren (Prov. 6:19).

7. They cause division in the church, the body of Christ (Rom. 16:17-18). Christ prayed for the unity of his disciples (John 17:20-21) but antis routinely cause conflict and division when they come among our brethren.

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## 17.

### SOME ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ABOUT LEGALISM

\* The forbidding spirit arises in the church from time to time. Each manifestation may involve different persons and different issues, but their attitude, their actions and their arguments are remarkably alike. In every case, they foment strife and division in the congregation where they find footing.

\* Legalism, like malaria, comes in cycles. Every few years there is a new outbreak of this spiritual disease.

\* Legalism is a negative approach to religion that is rooted in fear. They are fearful of any means other than that with which they are accustomed.

\* They fear they will do something wrong, so they do nothing. They are like the one talent man of Matthew 25:24-28. Remember that his lord did not bless and reward him for his fear of making a mistake.

\* Like a nation at war on two fronts, the Lord's church must deal with liberals on the left and legalists on the right. Like attack dogs they constantly snap and bit at the heels of the church, hoping to bring her down and have mastery over her.

\* Legalism has a paralyzing effect on any Christian or congregation over which it gains control.

\* Legalists are guilty of "special pleading." They are unwilling to apply the same rules to themselves they seek to enforce on others. They demand that we produce a specific command or biblical example for an orphan's home or World Bible School, but they have no specific command or example of church buildings, preachers' residences, song books, etc. They condemn our Christian Schools but they make an exception for their Florida College which is a Christian School in all but name. It was begun and first operated by Christians who did not hold their views on church cooperation and orphans homes. They gained control of it without paying for it.

\* All legalists have a vocabulary of terms with special meanings.

1. "Digressive," as used by legalists, means more than to digress from the appointed path. To legalists, it means those of us who do not subscribe to their views.

2. "Liberal," in religious conversation, means to take liberties with God's Word; a willingness to compromise and change the faith and worship of Christ's church. To legalists, it refers to all brethren and congregations they cannot dominate and control, even if they are completely loyal to God's word in all other areas.

3. "Apostate" means one who has fallen away from the divine standard. The most conservative and faithful

saints are considered by antis to be apostate if they do not share their legalistic views.

4. **“Faithful and loyal brethren and congregations.”** To antis, these terms describe only Christians, preachers and congregations who share their legalistic faith.

5. Legalists never think of themselves or describe themselves as **“antis”** even though they will use term to describe other legalists who separate themselves over different issues. Those opposed to orphans’ homes don’t like to be referred to as **“anti-orphan home”** brethren. Yet the are frequently hear speaking of **“anti-Bible Class brethren”** or **“anti-located preacher brethren.”**

6. **“Parallel to the Missionary Society.”** Since all agree that the American Christian Missionary Society (founded in 1849), was unscriptural and therefore sinful, legalists try to discredit any and all good works they did not originate or approve of by saying they are parallel i.e., the same as, the sinful missionary society. Often, they do not offer any further proof other than their assertion.

7. **“Exclusive pattern.”** The Bible does provide a pattern for vital things relating to Christianity (II Tim. 1:13), but not for all means and methods used in doing the Lord’s work. They demand a pattern for means and methods which we use, but not for themselves in their undertakings. Often they see an exclusive pattern where none exists.

\* We must not allow forbidding brethren to distract or discourage us. They have always tried to hinder the church. Without apostolic authority, they sought to bind circumcision on the Gentile brethren in Antioch (Acts 15:1; 15:24). They sought to undermine and defeat Paul’s evangelistic work with Gentiles (Gal. 1:3-5). They sought to prohibit brethren from eating meat which God had authorized them to eat (I Tim. 4:3).

\* Jude describes the forbidding brethren thusly: **“these are they that make separations”** (Jude 19). All anti groups have caused division among brethren. They eventually splintered away and started their own brotherhood.

\* God has told us how to deal with such divisive brethren.

1. Paul gave place in the way of subjection to them, no, not for an hour (Gal. 1:5).

2. He told us to refuse the factious man (Tit. 3:10).

3. We are to mark them and turn away from them (Rom. 16:17).

4. We are not to open our homes and congregations to them nor lend hem any encouragement in their destructive work (II John 7-11).

\* It is not enough for us to reject the forbidding brethren and their negative approach to Christianity:

1. We must be zealous unto every good work (Tit. 2:14; 3:1).

2. We must maintain good works (Tit. 3:14).

3. We must abound in the work of the Lord always (I Cor. 15:58).

4. We must remember the poor (Gal. 2:10).

5. We must preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).

6. We must do all to the glory of God (I Cor. 10:31).

When we are busy doing God’s work of seeking the lost and caring for those in need, folks around us will see those good works and glorify our Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16).

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## THE SAINTS ONLY APPROACH TO BENEVOLENCE

### IS THE CHURCH AUTHORIZED TO EXTEND BENEVOLENT CARE TO NON-CHRISTIANS?

Those who call themselves “non-institutional” Churches of Christ take the remarkable position that the church, in her benevolent outreach, is restricted by God, to assisting only baptized believers. This strange position is described as the “saints only” doctrine.

The beginning of the non-institutional movement dates to c.a. 1949. Originally, its leaders objected to the church creating or supporting homes for the care of the aged and orphaned children. They also opposed cooperative efforts to preach the gospel, such as the Herald of Truth radio ministry. It was several years later before some of those men concluded that the church could only extend benevolent assistance to those who were baptized members. Now all of them hold this radical view.

Warren Rainwater, a non-institutional writer, observed, “Out of the need to give an answer as to how orphans are to be cared for, some have solved the problem by taking the position that the church has no obligation to any person that is not a saint. This position has become known as the ‘saints only’ doctrine” (*Gospel Guardian*, May 31, 1962).

The root problem in those who take such extreme positions is **legalism**. Their way of approaching and interpreting the Scripture is flawed and it yields fallacious results. The religion of the legalist is extremely negative. He takes a position and then looks for some verse, word or phrase that he can wrest to justify his view. He then seeks to bind his mistaken conclusions on his fellow-Christians. He tends to feel superior in his faith, zeal, purity and loyalty to God to those who will not bow to his demands. The Pharisees, the perennial enemies of Christ and his Apostles, were legalists. Remember that Jesus said that converts to Pharisaic Judaism were two-fold more the sons of hell (Matt. 23:15).

In the following quotes from Jewish writings, you will see that the Pharisees were the first to hold and teach the “saints only” doctrine and implement it in their practice.

\* “Give to the devout, but do not help the sinner. Do good to the humble, but do not give to the ungodly; hold back his bread, and do not give it to him...Give to the one who is good, but do not help the sinner” (*Sirach* 12:4-7).

\* “Give some of your food to the hungry, and some of your clothing to the naked...Place your bread on the grave of the righteous, but give none to sinners” (*Tobit* 4:16-17).

\* “The **Mishnah** goes so far as to forbid aid to the mother in the hour of her need, or nourishment to her babe, in order not to bring up a child for idolatry...” (Alfred Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus*, (Vol. I, p. 91-92). (Edersheim was a converted Jew).

\* “A Jew sees a Gentile fall into the sea, let him by no means lift him out...” (Moses Ben Maimonides, A.D. 1135-1204). (He codified all the earlier rabbinic teachings of Judaism.).

\* “...in Jewish literature, the expectation prevails that benevolence will garner lavish rewards. Provided the recipient be godly, the giver’s recompense is assured...To feed and keep alive the wicked is hazardous. Only the ‘faithful man’ deserves to be sustained.” (Abraham Cronbach, “**Rewards of Benevolence**,” *Hebrew Union College Annual*. (1944, Vol. 18), pp. 139-143).

\* When the Pharisees read the scripture which said, “thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Lev. 19:18), their legalistic minds interpreted neighbor to mean, “Ones racial brother, a member of the same community: they always placed it in opposition to foreigners” (Joseph Bonsiven, *Palestinian Judaism in the Time of Jesus* (1964), pp. 144-145).

In 1959 Bro. A. C. Grider, a spokesman for the non-institutional brethren, debated our brother W. L. Totty. Grider signed and maintained the following proposition,

**“Resolved: the scriptures teach that a church can take money from its treasury to buy fertilizer for the church yard but if it sends one thin dime to an orphans’ home, they will all go to hell.”**

**\*\*\*(All the above quotes are from Steven Gibson’s excellent book, Galatians 6:10 and the Great Collection: A Critique of the ‘Saints only’ Doctrine. (Privately published, 1990).Used with the author’s permission. Gibson has provided an exhaustive study of this peculiar doctrine. The conclusions at which he arrives cannot be overthrown). JHW**

An honest reader can see that the ‘saints only’ doctrine of the non-institutional brethren is the same as that held by the hypocritical Pharisees who were enemies of Christ.

Now consider what Christ and Paul said of our obligation to the unbelieving poor.

\* **“Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you: that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you what reward have ye” Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others” (Matt. 5:44-47).**

\* **“Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. And if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them...But love your enemies, and do them good...and ye shall be sons of the Most High for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil. Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:30-36).**

\* **Ask yourself, Can the Church of Christ obey these instructions and be merciful to unbelievers even as the heavenly Father is merciful?**

\* **Paul’s message to the churches of Galatia was, “So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith” (Gal.6:10).**

\* **When gathering benevolent funds for the poor in Jerusalem, Paul told the Corinthians that their gifts would be distributed to saints **“and to all men”** (II Cor. 9:13, King James Version). The New International Version renders it, “in sharing with them (Jewish Christian, jhw) and everyone else.”**

The teaching of Christ is sufficiently clear. The church is to extend assistance to all worthy souls who are in need, giving first preference to fellow Christians. Those who hold the “saints only” doctrine must either ignore these scriptures or twist them to avoid their clear meaning. In either case we do not want to follow their example!

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## 19.

# EATING IN THE CHURCH

Occasionally one meets good brethren who strongly oppose eating in the church building. This is a major point of doctrine among our non-institutional brethren. Hopefully, the following thoughts will benefit those who hold such reservations.

### The Proof Text

These folks can appeal to but one text: **“What, have ye not house to eat and to drink in? Or despise ye the church of God...in this I praise you not” (I Cor. 11:22).** Does this scripture deal with eating in our modern “church buildings?” If not, their contention fails from a lack of Biblical prohibition. Remember that our modern meeting houses, owned by the church for their assemblies and activities, did not exist until the third century (McClintock and Strong, Vol. 2, p. 334). Whatever the Corinthians were doing, they were not eating in a “church house,” for they had no “church buildings”

like ours in which to meet or eat. Early Christians met in homes (Rom. 16:5), at public places like the temple porches (Acts 2:46) and in private buildings (Acts 19:10).

The problem in Corinth was more than eating in the church building. The context shows that they were mixing a common meal with the Lord's Super (I Cor. 11:20-21). Some were selfishly refusing to share their common meal with poor brethren who had little or nothing (11:21). For those two wrongs, Paul rebuked them. The same actions would be wrong today. But do we find modern disciples mixing common meals with worship assemblies or refusing to share with the poor. Our fellowship meals occur before or after our assemblies for worship and all place their food on a table for all to share. Such "love feasts" were common among early disciples (Jude 12).

The problem would disappear if we correctly understand the word "church." The word is used three ways in Scripture. **"Church" can refer to God's family of saved people on earth.** Jesus built the church (Matt. 16:18). We often label this the church universal. **The local congregation as a body of people is designated the church.** We read of "the church of God at Corinth" (I Cor. 1:2). **When a congregation assembles for worship it is called the church** (I Cor. 11:18). At no point does the Holy Spirit refer to the place of assembly as the church. This common use of the term has come down to us from Catholic and Protestant usage. Herein lies the root of the problem. **When Paul condemns eating in the church, these brethren mistakenly assume he means church building. In reality he speaks of the assembly. All conclusions drawn from a faulty premise are likewise faulty.**

The church building is not holy like the temple was. It is not defiling God's holy sanctuary to use it for other purpose than worship and study.

Numerous congregations first met in the homes of brethren. If it is wrong to eat a common meal in the same building where the church worships, were they forbidden to eat in their own homes? Years ago the author conducted an evangelistic meeting for a mission congregation that met in the preacher's home, which they owned. We arose early on the Lord's Day and had breakfast. At 10:00 we met for Bible School and Worship. At noon the church was dismissed. By 1:30 we were eating our lunch. The minister invited several brethren to share the meal with us. Did we violate I Corinthians 11:22? Such scenes have been repeated from the first century to the present hour.

### INCONSISTENT PRACTICES

Observation reveals numerous inconsistencies in practice among those opposed to eating fellowship meals in the "church house."

\* If the building may only be used for worship activities, how then could weddings or funerals be scripturally performed therein? At best these are social events.

\* Many preachers who condemn eating in the building have offices in the meeting house. Can they drink a cup of coffee or tea, or eat their lunch while at work in their office? Yet, if it is sin to eat a common meal in the church building as they affirm, then their soft drink or snack would be sinful, even as a pot-luck meal for 50 or a hundred brethren.

\* Most folks who are against eating in the church building have water fountains in their buildings with no apparent sense of wrong. Yet if we take Paul's words as they do, he condemns both eating and drinking (I Cor. 11:22).

\* Those who condemn using church funds to provide "kitchen facilities" have no problem with using the same for providing toilet facilities in the churches house. What scripture do they cite for such conveniences?

\* Some congregations who condemn others for eating in the church house, build a preacher's house on the same lot with God's money. His family eats in the church's house and then the congregation has showers, parties and meals in the basement or recreation room thereof. If it is wrong to use the Lord's money to provide eating facilities for the congregation, they have sinned. If it is only wrong to eat in the "church house" they have made that a holy sanctuary which God did not. Sectarians did that!

\* If it is sinful to eat physical food for the physical body in the church house, do mothers sin who feed their babies in the church building or give a two year old a cracker to quiet him during the worship?

God's truth is consistent. But those who cling to this view rarely are.

## SOME SUGGESTIONS

- \* The first and most important thing is a program of teaching to correct the misconceptions held concerning church buildings and their use. Of course, this truth must be preached in love (Eph. 4:15).
- \* As divinely appointed overseers of the congregation, elders have a right to approve use of the church property for congregational activities not wrong in themselves (I Pet. 5:2).
- \* We must be concerned not to divide the Lord's people over such matters. Neither side should demand their rights to the harm of the church. Maintaining unity is a serious charge (Eph. 4:3).
- \* Those who are strong in faith and can understand these matters must be careful not to trample on the weak consciences of those who cannot (Rom. 14:20-21). There may be times when we voluntarily lay aside our rights for the well-being of a weak brother or sister. The weak brother must be allowed to abstain from joining in such social activities on "church property" until his conscience can approve such (Rom. 14:23).
- \* We should never use our facilities for any activity wrong in itself...even as we would not use our homes or businesses for such (I Thess. 5:22).
- \* Nothing should be done in or on church property that would be viewed as disorderly by God or man (I Cor. 14:40).
- \* As in every activity of life, whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, all should be done to the glory of God (I Cor. 10:31).
- \* We must respect the autonomy of sister congregations. If sine brethren choose not to "eat in their church building," that is their right and privilege before God. They should graciously grant us the same privilege to use our buildings as we judge best. Remember, elders only oversee the flock *among* them (I Pet. 5:2).

May God grant all of us grace and wisdom to use to the fullest the liberty Christ has given us (Gal. 5:1).

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## 20.

### FELLOWSHIP HALLS FOR CHURCHES

Non-Institutional brethren oppose Christians eating together in the premises of the congregation. It naturally follows that they condemn those who build fellowship halls for their congregation to use for fellowship occasions.

- \* It is not wrong for members of a congregation to have occasions of fellowship. The Bible mentions the "love feasts" of early Christians (Jude 12). Virtually every congregation occasionally has such get-togethers.
- \* To have occasions of fellowship there must be a place to gather. There are many options. We can gather in the home of some member...but only if the church is small. We can go to a park...but only if the weather is suitable. We can rent a facility. We can build our own facility for such purposes.
- \* The larger the church, the larger the facility needed for the church to gather for occasions of fellowship.
- \* All agree that it is scriptural to use the money contributed to the Lord for building a house for worship, including restrooms, classrooms, offices, baptistry, dressing rooms and storage areas. We look in vain to a specific command to build such facilities. We all understand that authorization is found in the Lord's teaching for us to assemble for worship and teaching (Heb. 10:26; I Cor. 10:18). We call such conclusions, *implications* or *inferences* drawn from general or generic commands. The logic being, whatever is needed to fulfill a command is authorized. I might add that churches usually have paved parking lots, paid for with the Lord's money.
- \* The same reasoning that authorizes all the above in relation to a church's meeting place authorizes a church to build a place suitable for fellowship. Surely parking cars on pavement is no more sacred an undertaking than having a place for Christians to fellowship.
- \* The question is often on the size and expense of the facility built for fellowship. Some churches build gymnasiums for recreational purposes. We question that on the basis that providing a place for sports is in no way taught in scripture.

But most churches who build this type of building do not build it just for play. It is truly a multi-purpose building. Portable partitions make it suitable for classes. Fellowship occasions for several hundred people can be held in it. The question of the cost is no different than the cost of a plain meeting house or one that is not plain.

\* There are two different mind-sets that protest against fellowship rooms and buildings. There are those who believe that it is sinful for Christians to eat in the church building. They draw this conclusion from a misunderstanding of I Corinthians 11:22. This view is most often found in those congregations that are "non-institutional" in their philosophy. Then there are some who do not say it is sinful to eat in the church building, but they protest the building of a separate facility for such gatherings, especially if it is a large and expensive project. They argue that to do so is using the Lord's money for something other than spiritual matters.

\* In passing, it has been my observation that it is usually those who preach for, or are members of, smaller congregations who complain when large congregations build such facilities. Having no need for such, they conclude it must somehow be wrong for others to have them.

\* Since, in his wisdom, God made each congregation independent and self-governing, such decisions should be left to each local church. Often preachers and others are very critical of a sister church building such a facilities when in reality it is not their concern. If their congregation chooses not to have a facility for fellowship gatherings, that is their right. Should another congregations decide to do so, it is their concern.

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## **PART IV: WORLD BIBLE SCHOOL**

### **21.**

#### **WHAT IS WORLD BIBLE SCHOOL?**

I. What is World Bible School? It is not a school in the ordinary sense of the term. It has no school building or classrooms. Students do not assemble in one place. It does not have a small group of professional teachers. Its area of study is limited to the Bible. It is dedicated Christians using a workable method to teach the gospel to millions of lost souls.

WBS is an effective method of teaching the Bible to those who desire to know and understand God's will for their lives. It uses regular postal service and the Internet to correspond with interested students around the world. Bible correspondence study courses have been developed that .when taken seriously. will lead the student to the Savior and his church.

II. The purpose and goal of WBS is to get the gospel message to all of those in every nation who are searching for salvation with the hope of leading them to Christ and his church (Mark 16:15-16). Currently students from 141 nations are enrolled in WBS studies. On average, each year some 26,000 precious souls are led to request salvation in Christ. It is the most effective method of evangelism currently used by our brethren in third world countries.

III. To accomplish its goal, individual Christians , from around the world, volunteer to correspond with those students who request studies. Other Christians follow up the studies by visiting, further instructing and answering questions from interested students. The goal is to persuade the student to confess Christ and be baptized as the Scripture directs.

IV. WBS enrolls approximately one million new students per year. To effectively meet this great challenge demands that the workers of WBS be organized so that no detail is left undone, no soul who wants to be saved is overlooked.

- \* There is a small staff of workers who coordinate the total program.
- \* There are those responsible for placing ads for students in newspapers around the world.
- \* There are those who prepare, print and ship the study materials to teachers around the world.
- \* There are the approximately 20,000 teachers who correspond directly with the students.
- \* There are office workers who get the names of prospective students to the teachers.
- \* There are Christian workers in foreign nations who follow up and conduct further studies with those who have completed the course. They baptize those who are receptive and involve them in local congregations of the Church of Christ.
- \* There are the elders who oversee the work of production, contact and supply.
- \* There are elders who oversee the life and work of the teachers in their congregation.
- \* There are individual Christians and congregations who support the work of advertising for students and printing materials.
- \* There are churches and individuals who provide support to follow up workers in foreign nations.

V. World Bible School workers are all Christians, active members of the Church of Christ where they live. Those who lead in WBS are all committed to the Bible as the word of God. They have no creed but Christ and believe that salvation is found only in Him. They believe that by faithfully following the teachings of the New Testament of Christ one can be fully pleasing to God.

- \* WBS does not provide support for its teachers or for its follow up workers around the world. Either they work as volunteers, or else they are supported by interested individuals or congregations.
- \* WBS does not own or control any congregation of Christians.
- \* No congregation is obliged to support World Bible School, although many do and all are encouraged to do so.
- \* WBS does not presume to tell congregations what to believe or how to do their work.

VI. All contributions sent to WBS are tax-exempt. For this to be possible and to comply with the laws governing tax-exempt groups, World Bible School is incorporated under the laws of Texas. We must obey every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake (I Pet. 2:13).

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22.

## **WORLD BIBLE SCHOOL IS A SCRIPTURAL METHOD OF EVANGELISM**

If all the elements of a particular situation are found to be scriptural, then that particular situation must of necessity be scriptural. Many years ago Bro. Thomas B. Warren used this logical argument to demonstrate that it was indeed scriptural for churches to support orphan homes operated by Christians. It likewise proves the scripturalness of World Bible School. Thus we ask:

1. Is it scriptural to teach the Bible to the lost?
2. Is it scriptural to teach the lost and bring them to Christ and his church?
3. Is it *scriptural to use bible correspondence studies as your method of teaching the lost?*
4. Is it scriptural to place ads in newspapers, offering free bible correspondence course studies?
5. Is it scriptural for individual Christians to volunteer to teach the lost, using bible correspondence courses?
6. Is it scriptural for a Christian to purchase teaching materials and pay the postage so he can teach the Bible to those in other nations?
7. Is it scriptural for the elders of his congregation to purchase the correspondence courses and stamps so a brother or sister can teach the lost living in foreign lands?
8. Is it scriptural for individual Christians or congregations to support a brother to visit, teach and baptize those who have studied by correspondence and desire to be saved?
9. Is it scriptural to use the postal service or the Internet to teach the gospel to the lost?
10. Is it scriptural for one or more Christians to write, print and make available to Christian workers, literature for teaching the lost?
11. Is it scriptural for elders to oversee the printing and distribution of Christian literature including bible correspondence courses?
12. Is it scriptural to ask other wise brethren to offer their counsel and advice about how best to reach the lost? (Prov. 11:14).
13. Is it scriptural for individual Christians to contribute money to help print and distribute Christian literature?
14. Is it *scriptural for one congregation to help another congregation in producing Christian literature?*
15. Is it scriptural for Christians and for congregations to comply with the laws of the state in which they operate?
16. Is it scriptural for Christians who do good works for Christ to tell others about it by publishing a news letter and by visiting other congregations?
17. Is it scriptural for a person to confess his faith and be baptized as a result of studying with a World Bible School teacher?
18. Is it scriptural for the elders of a congregation to oversee the work of teaching the Bible by correspondence course?
19. Is it scriptural to speak of our Sunday morning bible class as **Sunday School**?
20. Is it scriptural to have a **Vacation Bible School** for children? And refer to it as a VBS?
21. Is it scriptural for a congregation to have a preachers' training school? Can we refer to it as a Leadership Training School or a Preachers' Training School?
22. Would it be better to attempt God's work in an organized or in a disorganized way?

The careful observer will note that these questions cover every aspect of **World Bible School** and its work of teaching the lost by bible correspondence courses. Each individual aspect is certainly scriptural.

Having answered the above questions, consider the following logical statement:

1. Any situation, of which all its component parts are scriptural, is a scriptural situation (i.e. it is in complete harmony with God's Word).
2. All the components of **World Bible School** are scriptural (This is demonstrated in the questions above).
3. Therefore the **World Bible School** is a scriptural situation.

Given the above, every Christian should feel completely comfortable in supporting, using and cooperating with World Bible School in teaching the lost.

For those brethren who oppose World Bible School, I pose these simple questions:

1. An estimated 25 million people have enrolled in a WBS study course. Of those an estimated 325,000 souls have been taught and led to Christ and his church through the work of World Bible School teachers. It is estimated that 26,000 students request baptism each year. Is this good or bad? Is God pleased with their salvation? How many souls did the non-institutional missionaries bring to Christ last year?
2. Will you accept as members of your congregations those who were taught and baptized through the efforts of those working with World Bible School materials?
3. Would the 26,000 people who last year learned the way of salvation through the efforts of WBS teachers be better off if WBS did not exist and no one used its method and material to teach them?

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## 23.

### **WORLD BIBLE SCHOOL IS IN NO WAY THE SAME AS THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY**

In their attempt to discredit World Bible School and turn brethren against it, anti brethren claim it is parallel to “the Missionary Society.” Most brethren of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have little or no knowledge about “the Missionary Society” except that it must be bad. The following information will explain what it was and why it was wrong. With that information we will see that **World Bible School is certainly not “parallel” to “the Missionary Society.”**

In the beginning of our back to the Bible movement, there was no missionary society. Most denominational bodies had them. Our brethren rejected them as unscriptural and without divine authority. Without a missionary society, the restored church flourished and grew in the early 1800s.. By mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, some 250,000 souls had united in going back to the original Christianity of the Bible.

In 1849, Bro. D. S. Burnet and a handful of preachers met in Cincinnati, Ohio and organized the American Christian Missionary Society. They adopted the following statement:

“Resolved, that the Missionary Society, as a means to concentrate and disperse the wealth and benevolence of the brethren of the Reformation in an effort to convert the world, is both scriptural and expedient.”

From the constitution of the society, we see a major flaw. Point 3 said, “The Society shall be composed of annual delegates, Life Members and Life Directors. Any church may appoint a delegate for an annual contribution of ten dollars. Twenty dollars paid at one time shall be requisite to constitute a member for life, and one hundred dollars paid at one time...shall be required to constitute a director for life.” By limiting membership to those with sufficient money to purchase that privilege they created standards that excluded even Christ and the Apostles (Acts 3:6). It placed the leadership of the Society in the hands of the prosperous. (In 1849 these fees were large for working people. jhw).

From the beginning, a cadre of faithful brethren opposed the Missionary Society. They made the following points:

1. It was a substitute for the church. It was a human invention without divine authority. It usurped the rights and responsibilities of the church
2. The Missionary Society was based on the assumption that the Lord's church could not or would not do the work Christ had commissioned it to do. The founders of the Society assumed their plan would work better than God's plan.
3. The Church of Christ herself is Christ's missionary society. He is its head and every disciple a life member and director. The American Christian Missionary Society was a competitor to Christ's church.
4. That to do its work and fulfill its mission, the Missionary Society would have to assume power and control over the churches who were the source of its income.
5. The Missionary Society was a poor investment of God's money since its operating costs consumed most of the funds entrusted to it.
6. There was no scriptural authority for the creation and existence of a missionary society to take over the missionary outreach of the church.

*After a slow and stumbling start, the promoters of the Missionary Society succeeded in building a powerful organization that soon revealed its real nature and intention.*

- \* They wanted to control the life and work of every congregation in the brotherhood.
- \* They were so determined to have every congregation in their fold and supporting their work, that they caused confusion and division on every hand.
- \* During the American Civil War, the Society's directors issued political statements supporting the North and condemning the South. This move alienated many brethren.
- \* The society attracted the most liberal element of backers, and workers; men who did not feel bound to follow the Scriptures in their faith and practice. In time they came to dominate and control it
- \* Some of the missionary workers sent by the Society were found to be fellowshiping other religious bodies and even accepting the unimmersed into their fellowship.
- \* Many of their leaders and workers embraced the tenets and views of the theological liberalism that overtook most of the large Protestant churches. Liberals questioned the inspiration and authority of the Bible and the miracles recorded therein.
- \* Those who promoted the Missionary Society soon created an "International Convention of the Disciples of Christ. (1917). In addition to their Missionary Society, they organized numerous other societies to take over all aspects of the work of the church. Advocates of the Missionary Society embraced the use of instrumental music in worship, women in leadership roles for their churches and participation in interdenominational organizations such as the Federal Council of Churches and eventually, the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches.
- \* By 1968, the Missionary Society, having morphed into the International Convention of the Disciples of Christ, completed its journey away from the Bible by restructuring the Disciples of Christ into a full-fledged denominational organization.

By the opening of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the long and hard battle over the Missionary Society and its accompanying departures reached the breaking point. Faithful brethren could not fellowship such apostasy. The liberal element were determined not to surrender their Society or their instruments, etc. The apostates went out from us, never to return to the safe ground of God's Word. As John wrote, "They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us" (I John 2:19). Sadly, the majority of the brethren went with the those who wanted the Society, etc. Those who stood faithful and loyal to Christ and his Word were the remnant who survived the division to rebuild the brotherhood of Churches of Christ that now number more than three million and reach around the world. The Disciples of Christ, with their Missionary and other

Societies, bear little resemblance to the church that Jesus built (Matt. 16:18) and over which he rules (Eph. 1:22).

*For one thing to be parallel with another means that it is to be “identical in nature” or “the same as.” The following pages will clearly demonstrate that World Bible School is in no way parallel to the Missionary Society.*

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## 24.

# **WORLD BIBLE SCHOOL COMPARED AND CONTRASTED WITH THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY**

1. The Missionary Society was a substitute for the Lord's church. Its founders thought it could do a better job than the church could do.

2. The Missionary Society was directed by those who purchased their membership.

3. The leaders of the Missionary Society aspired to take over and manage the Church and her work.

4. The leaders of the Missionary Society extended their fellowship to other Protestant bodies.

5. Later leaders of the Missionary Society embraced liberalism that denied the verbal inspiration of the Bible, etc.

6. The leaders of the Missionary Society used their position to engage in political matters.

7. The Missionary Society was an organization designed to take control of and govern the churches.

8. Advocates of the Missionary Society were determined to pressure each congregation to participate in their society.

1. World Bible School is not a substitute for the church. It is congregations and Christians fulfilling the Great Commission and building up the church by teaching the Bible.

2. One does not have to pay to be associated with World Bible School.

3. World Bible School has no interest in taking over and managing the church.

4. The leaders of World Bible School do not extend fellowship to denominational bodies.

5. Leaders of World Bible School are strong believers in the Word of God and all supernatural aspects of biblical events.

6. World Bible School does not get involved in political controversies. Its business is teaching the Bible and leading men to Christ.

7. World Bible School is only a method of teaching the Bible. It is a tool which Christians and churches use to win the lost and add them to the church. It makes no attempt to control or govern churches.

8. This World Bible School has never done and will never do.

9. The officers of the Missionary Society were not accountable to the church for their teaching, work and conduct.

10. The Missionary Society employed preachers and teachers in Mission Fields. The workers were answerable to the Society's authorities.

11. The Missionary Society built church buildings and Christian Schools. The Society owned and controlled them.

12. The Missionary Society was in competition with the Lord's Church.

13. The Missionary Society was above and over the church. It sought to control and direct the mission work of the church.

14. The Missionary Society did great harm to the church and its promoters caused division.

15. Within 50 years, the Missionary Society had totally departed from the biblical pattern of the Lord's church (II Tim. 1:13).

9. Each individual associated with World Bible School is a member of a local congregation of the church and is answerable to its leaders.

10. World Bible School does not employ teachers in foreign fields. Each worker is supported by a church or individual. He answers to the church, not to WBS.

11. World Bible School builds and owns no church buildings or Christian schools.

12. Workers with World Bible School recognize the church as God's missionary agency. They serve the church by providing her materials and a method for teaching the Bible and accomplish her mission. There is no competition

13. WBS is overseen by the elders of the Westover Hills Church of Christ in Austin, Texas. All who use its methods are under the oversight of their local elders and leaders.

14. World Bible School is a great benefit to the church. It provides a highly effective method of evangelism that has brought hundreds of thousands of converts to the church. Only those who have already left our brotherhood oppose WBS.

15. In 50 years of service, World Bible School is still faithful to God's Word. She serves the church by teaching the gospel and promoting New Testament Christianity

From this extended comparison it is clear to all with open minds that World Bible School is in no way parallel or equal to the American Christian Missionary Society. This is a faulty comparison that draws a false conclusion. Those who make this false charge are either unaware of the facts regarding both the Missionary Society and World Bible School, or they are deliberately misrepresenting World Bible School hoping to poison unsuspecting brethren against it and its workers.

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## **WHO PROFITS FROM THE WORK THAT “FORBIDDING BRETHREN” DO?**

Does it profit Christ when men sow discord and strife among his churches? Does it benefit the Cause of Christ when his church is divided? Is His cause helped when weak brethren are discouraged by the strife and confusion that non-institutional preachers bring to the congregations? Some will turn away from the church because of their ugly attacks against them and their brethren. Others will surrender their Christian liberty (Gal. 5:1) and become the spiritual bond-servants of anti preachers. Is Christ benefitted when forbidding brethren are able to stop good works that bring souls to Christ?

Who but Satan would be best served if the World Bible School, a wonderfully successful method of evangelism, were defeated and destroyed by anti preachers? Each year, some two million sinners are enrolled in WBS and taught about Christ, his salvation and his church. Of those, an estimated 26,000 will request to be baptized into Christ and added to his church. If WBS can be destroyed Satan would get to keep most of those WBS students in ignorance, sin and condemnation. If WBS did not exist, hundreds of congregations of the Lord's church would not exist and hundreds of thousands of members of the Church would never have learned the gospel way of salvation. Before they learned about Christ from their correspondence studies, many of the WBS students were living wicked, sinful lives. Had they not had the privilege to learn the gospel from their WBS teachers, most would still be living in sin.

Looking at it from this angle, we can see who wants to defeat and destroy World Bible School and its great work of teaching the Bible and winning souls for Christ. Only Satan would promote such a warfare against World Bible School.

Teachers who did not take the time, spend the resources and make the sacrificial efforts to win lost souls to Christ, now come to you saying, “Those who taught you and led you to Christ are ‘unsound, unfaithful Christians.’” They urge you to reject your brothers who taught you about Christ, his salvation and his church and led you to the Savior. They want you to follow them as they tell you what you can and cannot do (Acts 20:29-30). Making rules for Christians is the sole domain of our Lord Jesus who is head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:22). No man has the right to make religious laws and insist that you must obey them.

Is it not remarkable that Christians who were saved from Satan's evil power by the patient efforts and teaching of Christians working with World Bible School are now taught that their benefactors are really enemies of Christ; that they should be rejected as false teachers.

Paul describes those who seek to lead Christians astray as “vile men and impostors” (II Tim. 3:13).

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## **PART V: DIVISION IS DESTRUCTIVE TO THE CHURCH**

### **26.**

#### **THE CURSE OF DIVISION AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE**

No one can dispute that Christ expects unity among his people such as exists between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (John 17:20-21). However, the sad fact is that division has raised its ugly head among God's people from earliest times to the present. Satan, the untiring enemy of God, has worked unceasingly to sow discord and division. Sad to say he has been highly successful in his efforts.

Within the very first human family Satan created enmity in the heart of Cain toward his brother Able. So virulent was his hatred that he murdered him (Gen. 4:1-9).

In the days prior to the Flood, humanity was divided into two camps. In one, every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts were evil continually (Gen.6:5). In the other, they walked with God and obeyed his commands (6:9,22).

Division arose within the family of Abraham (Gen. 13:7-12). It occasioned the separation of the families of Abraham and Lot. The house of Jacob was racked by division when his sons turned on their brother Joseph (Gen. 37:18-28).

In the midst of the Exodus of Israel from their bondage in Egypt, Satan stirred up Korah, Dathan and Abiram against the leadership of Moses. A large contingent of the Hebrews joined them in their rebellion (Num. 16:1-3).

There was painful division in the house of David the king. His own son, Absalom, led a violent rebellion against his righteous father (II Sam. 15:1-13). Later, there was strife within the family of Solomon, God's chosen king of His people. Adonijah sought to usurp the throne from him. One of his servants, Jereboam, was successful in dividing the kingdom in the days of Rehoboam, Solomon's son (II Chron. 10:1-5, 19). This resulted in the divided kingdom. Israel in the North and Judah in the South were in constant conflict.

Thus the tragic history of the Hebrew people was one of strife and division. With division came hatred, violence and suffering. Frequently it erupted into destructive war.

When Christ established his kingdom on earth, he knew the propensity of men to become alienated and divided. He stressed to his Apostles that they must "love one another even as he had loved them (John 13:34). He told them that he expected them to be one even as he and his Father were one (John 17:20-21). Yet, Satan entered into the heart of Judas and led him away from the others (Luke 22:3). Animosity was stirred when the mother of James and John sought special privileges for her sons (Matt. 20:20-24).

The kingdom of heaven was launched in unity, but soon Satan sowed seeds of division. It showed up first in Antioch when Jewish disciples sought to impose unauthorized rules and regulations on Gentile converts (Acts 15:1-2). The Judaizing brethren especially resented the work of Paul among the Gentiles (Gal. 2:3-5).

There was division in the congregation at Corinth. Paul wrote, reminding them that there should be no divisions among them (I Cor. 1:10). He pointed out that divisive conduct was proof that they were carnal, not mature disciples of Christ (I Cor. 3:1). Later Paul warned the leaders of the church in Ephesus that division was coming (Acts 20:28-30). He saw the same potential for division in Rome (Rom. 16:17-18). In virtually every epistle penned by inspired men, the problem of division was addressed.

The Great Apostasy eventuated in the Roman Catholic Church. The corrupt church also faced divisive forces as sincere disciples sought to escape her corruption and turn back toward God's truth. The popes' solution to division was penalties and bloody persecution. The great Protestant Reformation broke the power of Rome, but Protestants soon found themselves divided.

When our "Back to the Bible" movement was launched, it was in hope of uniting God's people. The early pioneers called men and women out of their denominational churches to stand together on the Word of God. They preached unity and condemned division. They saw Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians and hosts of others abandon their parties and embrace one another on the foundation of God's truth.

But Satan, ever the enemy of all righteous men and causes, soon poisoned the hearts of some to stir up strife and separate themselves into their own parties. There were men like Dr. John Thomas who founded his Christadelphian Church, Sidney Rigdon, who took his party to the Mormons and Jesse Ferguson who made havoc of the church in Nashville, Tennessee, leading many into Universalism. But the most destructive division occurred in the half century following the Civil War. Worldly-minded disciples grew weary of walking in the old paths of scriptural faith and worship. They insisted on creating para-church organizations to do the Lord's work (missionary societies) and modifying her worship to make it more appealing to worldly disciples (by adding organs and women preachers, etc). They sowed the destructive seeds of division that devastated the unity of the church and well-nigh destroyed us. A full eighty-five percent of the brethren were led astray. They are seen today in Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ.

The Twentieth Century was an era of recovery. Yet, as the church struggled to recover her losses, she suffered from divisions caused by factious men. Satan rejoiced to see division over issues such as Christian schools, benevolent homes, eating in church buildings and numerous other similar matters. While such controversy may seem foolish to us today, to those who were persuaded to oppose these things, they were the very essence of their faith and religion.

Unity is the ideal toward which we must ever strive. Division is the fruit of Satan's campaign to disrupt Christ's kingdom. While we can never approve of division and while we must ever labor to avoid it, factious division will come as misguided men, yield to Satan's promptings (I Cor. 11:18-19). We will always stand united with every faithful child of God (Eph. 4:3). We will resist and oppose those who cause divisions (Rom. 16:17-18). We must not stand silent when we see wicked men fomenting strife and separations in the blessed church of our Lord Jesus.

When our Lord returns, those who have harmed his church will be justly rewarded for the evil they have done (II Pet. 2:1-3). What a bitter judgement that will be!

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## **MUTUAL RESPECT WOULD PRESERVE UNITY AND BROTHERLY FELLOWSHIP**

Because the expedient means and methods used in fulfilling God's commands are not themselves binding laws, we do not insist that our non-institutional brethren must use those we have chosen. We do not ask them to do anything about which they have doubts (Rom. 14:23). They do not have to support homes for orphans or widows. They are free to care for them as they choose. They do not have to cooperate in evangelism as they go about their work of preaching the gospel. They do not have to eat in their buildings. They do not have to use World Bible School correspondence courses to teach the lost, or visit and baptize those WBS students who request baptism. We will gladly provide that service.

But fellowship involves two parties mutually willing to accept each other as equals in Christ (Rom. 15:7). Will the non-institutional brethren be willing to accept us as their brethren in good standing? Will they allow us to do God's work, using those means and methods which we in good conscience are convinced are pleasing and acceptable to our God? Where the love of God and love for the brotherhood prevails we could work together and enjoy the blessings and benefits of thereof. But sad to say, the conduct of the non-institutional brethren rejects, defeats and destroys all efforts to work with them as brothers in a common cause. They invade and seek to subvert our congregations. They seek to lead away our members and our young preachers. Where successful, they take the property our congregations and brethren have paid for, in part or in whole. They falsely accuse us and seek to discredit and destroy our influence as faithful servants and teachers of Christ's church. Such unbrotherly conduct forces us to withhold our fellowship from divisive non-institutional brethren and warn other Christians to avoid them as men who cause divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine they have received (Rom. 16:17-18).

May the day come when they will grant to us the liberty which we would gladly extend to them. Then we can join hands in serving Christ in the great task of preaching the gospel to every creature.

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## **28.**

### **DEALING WITH DIVISIVE BRETHREN**

Paul wrote that some would depart from the faith (I Tim. 4:1). Those who depart rarely openly declare their apostasy. Rather they are determined to stay in the midst of the body of Christ. Like a deadly virus, they work to embed themselves in the host body until every cell is over taken. When they are marked and cut off by brethren, they soon dry up and die.

#### **Divine Methods of Treatment**

God's prophylactic and treatment for heresy is set forth in Scripture:

"Mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn

away from them. For ...by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent" (Rom. 16:17).

"A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse " (Tit. 3:10).

"If any one cometh unto you and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works" (II John 10,11).

### **Mark Them**

In simple terms then, those who divide churches and trouble the brotherhood with their false teaching and unscriptural practices should be exposed before they can infiltrate and damage other congregations. Elders of churches that have been harmed owe it to sister congregations to warn them of those troublemakers. To allow them to slip quietly away with an apparently clean record is to endanger all others. Such is a serious mistake, as well as disobedience to God's will.

### **Refuse Them an Audience**

When teachers arise in a congregation, who espouse methods, doctrines and practices that are disruptive, they should be confronted by the elders and called upon to renounce their error and to cease from their agitation. If they refuse two appeals they should be subjected to scriptural discipline (II Thess. 3:6). For preachers, that should include immediate dismissal and removal from all teaching posts. For others, it should involve removal from all leadership or teaching roles as well. It is a fatal mistake to allow such agitators to go on operating for months before decisive action is taken. In that period they will sow seeds of discord and undermine the church. Some diseases must be dealt with swiftly if we are to save the patient.

### **Do Not Bid Them Godspeed**

No aid nor comfort should be given to church wreckers. No sensible person would invite a person infectious with some deadly plague into his home where loved ones would be jeopardized. No congregation should invite into their midst those involved in faction and division. Don't employ their campus evangelists. Don't host their preachers or teachers for your meetings and workshops. Don't invite their singers and youth workers. Don't use them for campaigns and workshops. To invite them in is to court disaster, it is the height of folly. Neither should we announce their evangelist efforts, retreats, mission forums and workshops and thus encourage our people to participate.

Editors of gospel papers should close their columns to those who harm the body. Do not promote their destructive cause by publicizing it. Don't provide them space to spread their doctrine to unsuspecting souls. In so doing you bid them godspeed and others assume they must be acceptable by your apparent recommendation.

Those who direct schools, lectureships and workshops should extend no invitations to factious brethren. Why some unthinking brethren continue to do so, in view of the awful carnage already done to the Lord's body, is a mystery. A disease must be isolated and denied a breeding place before it will subside. Solomon asks. "Can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned?" (Prov. 6:27). Neither can we fellowship a factious movement without damage.

## **An Ounce Of Prevention**

Preventive medicine is always better than a curative approach. Preachers and elderships owe it to their congregations to inform them of the dangers of a false system before it attacks them locally. It is not out of order to present one or more sermons dealing with a specific heresy to properly inoculate the brethren. Perhaps a class could be devoted to the issue. Printed literature could be made available. Where wise leaders have provided this preventive teaching, false teachers cannot gain a foothold.

### **An Artful Dodge**

Our current crop of church-splitters have found an effective tool to silence their critics. When someone speaks out against them they respond "It is unfair to criticize us until you have visited us." This is a diversionary tactic to squash criticism that might close some doors to them. It is a faulty argument based on unsound premises. We can analyze, identify and refute an erroneous system without visiting the town or meeting house where it emanates. We need not to go to Rome and personally interview the pope before we teach against Catholicism. We can read their books and see the fruit of their faith and practice. Likewise, when we hear their taped sermons, read their published bulletins and observe multiple congregations wrecked by a false system, we can and should speak out against it. Jesus said "a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit" (Matt. 7:18). A wise man once said, "anyone can be a fruit inspector."

Brethren, do not allow your blows to be deflected because you haven't made a pilgrimage. A powerful army can be routed if its soldiers won't fire their weapons. Preach the word, reprove, rebuke and exhort" (II Tim. 4:2). The camp of the saints is under siege and we must resist the adversary or suffer great loss to the Cause we dearly love.

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## **29.**

### **FACTIONS: WHAT DO THEY PROVE?**

The enemies of the Lord's church, delight in pointing out the schisms that have occurred among us over the last 200 years. They condemn us for them. Their conclusion is that since we have experienced divisions, therefore something is seriously wrong with our approach to serving Christ. Perhaps they have not noticed that Jesus and the Apostles left us repeated warnings about false teachers who would infiltrate the church (Matt. 7:15). Some would corrupt her (II John 9-10); others would cause chaos and division (Rom. 16:18); still others would lead gullible disciples astray for their own selfish purposes (Acts 20:29-30).

It should come then as no surprise that Churches of Christ in America have had their share of schisms over the years. Paul said to the Corinthians, "First of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that divisions exist among you...for there must also be factions among you: that they that are approved may be made manifest among you" (I Cor. 11:18-19). Rather than prove we are a flawed movement, as our enemies argue, it is precisely what one should expect to be the fate of God's church.

The day our forefathers committed themselves to go back to the Bible to restore the faith and worship thereof, Satan resolved to disrupt and destroy their undertaking. The day your congregation was established, he did the same. The old devil never tires and never gives up. If a body of people is striving to be God's church they will have occasional disruptions caused by the Prince of Darkness. Of course, if a church is already following the broad way that leads to

destruction (Matt. 7:13), Satan has no need to disrupt them. God's will is for his people to live together in peace and harmony (Eph. 4:3). Those who cause division sin and will be held accountable (Gal. 5:19-21). Those who make laws for the church and demand that all must obey them cause division in congregations around the world. For their sinful actions they will have to give account unto God. When they enter into a church and schism occurs, folks are forced to examine the situation and make a decision to follow Christ and His Word or the law-makers and their practices. In this it is manifest who is truly obeying Christ and is therefore approved by Him.

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## **PART VI: FINAL THOUGHTS FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE CHURCH**

### **30.**

#### **THOUGHTS FOR THOSE CHRISTIANS BEING PRESSURED BY FORBIDDING PREACHERS**

When non-institutional preachers gain the confidence of Christians, who are not familiar with their record of strife and division, it is common for them to press their converts to renounce "orphan homes, church cooperation, eating in church facilities, World Bible School and those brethren who use these means and methods to do the work of Christ." I ask each brother who is being so pressured,

- \* Who was it that first taught you about Christ and led you to His salvation and church?
- \* Did those who first taught you bind on you all of these rules and regulations of the non-institutionali brethren?
- \* When you asked for baptism into Christ, did the brother quiz you about orphan homes, church cooperation, eating in the church building or World Bible School before he would assist you?
- \* Did those who taught you spend their time attacking fellow-Christians and trying to undermine the good work they were doing for Christ?
- \* When you, your family, your congregation or your poor neighbors were assisted by generous brethren in America, did you ask them about their position on orphans' homes, church cooperation, eating in church buildings or World Bible School? When the brethren in Ephesus were tempted to turn back to their old wicked life-style, Paul reminded them "But ye did not so learn Christ!" (Eph. 4:20). The doctrines of the anti brethren are precepts and commandments of men (Matt. 15:9). You will not benefit by following them.

The forbidding brethren and the doctrines they promote are destructive to the unity and strength of the church because they cause divisions among brethren.

They seek to bring you under their power and influence. You are free in Christ (Gal. 5:1) and no man has the right to impose on you restrictions or demands that Christ has not made.

Forbidding preachers have many artful and deceitful arguments that confuse and beguile the hearts of those who are uninformed. "By their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of he innocent" (Rom. 16:18). Paul exhorts us, "Let no man beguile you in any wise" (II Thess. 2:3).

Lest your congregation be confused and divided by these forbidding brethren, you should heed the advice of the Apostle Paul. Refuse the "factious man" (Tit. 3:10). Turn away from "them that cause divisions and occasions of stumbling" (Rom. 16:17). Do not welcome them into your house, or your place of worship and do not bid them godspeed, lest you partake in their evil, divisive works (II John 10-11).

May all of God's children devote themselves to prayer that our heavenly Father will protect his church from those who would harm her. Let us all give "diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3).

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## 31.

### **AN EXHORTATION TO ALL WHO LOVE CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH AND HONOR HIS WORD**

1. Remember, just because a forbidding brother calls you or World Bible School liberal, digressive or apostate that does not make it so. He can be guilty of slander and misrepresentation. Paul was slandered by legalistic Jewish Christians (Rom. 3:8).
2. A thing that is right does not become wrong because it complies with the laws of the state or nation. We are to "be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (I Pet. 2:13).
3. Do not allow non-institutional brethren to frighten or intimidate you into bowing to their unscriptural demands. You are free in Christ (Gal.5:1). With Paul, when false brethren seek to spy out our liberty in Christ, we must resist them (Gal. 2:4-5).
4. Do not allow forbidding brethren to consume your time and energy, nor should you allow them to paralyze you so that you are unable to continue your work of teaching and saving the lost.
5. Do not allow yourself to become bitter, negative and hyper-critical of your brethren. Satan is happy when God's people manifest this ugly attitude.
6. Do not imagine that you can ignore the forbidding brothers and they will go away and cease to bother you and your congregation. Like weeds in a garden, they will not go away on their own. They must be rooted out or they will soon overtake and choke out your work.
7. You must apply the truths of God's Word to their claims and accusations and show that they are forbidding those things of which our God approves.
8. Many years ago, in America, the teaching and actions of non-institutional brethren were tried and found wanting. They were refused and rejected (Tit. 3:10). Isolated, they were unable to continue their work of drawing away disciples after themselves (Acts 20:30). Now they spend much time and energy trying to capture the hearts and minds of brethren in foreign lands where their record is not known.
9. Now that you know the whole story, you must be like watchmen on the walls (Ezek. 33:7), who guard the safety of the church from unwanted intruders.

**END**

