

## ***What The Work Of The Church Is Not***

All who know and respect Bible teaching realize the work of the church is spiritual in nature and is done in view of the salvation of souls. However, many churches, including many identifying themselves as churches of Christ, have gotten caught up in the social gospel movement and are involving themselves in activities designed to satisfy and please the carnal desires of men rather than pleasing and glorifying God. In this article we wish to call attention to those things which are not authorized by God as the work of the church.

Political issues are not the work of the church. Even though there are issues such as abortion, homosexuality, etc. that we must oppose and teach against (as we would any other sins) we must recognize that it is not the work of the church to develop or carry out a political agenda. These same issues may be political issues for some, but as the people of God we deal with them the same way we deal with other sins, i.e., by teaching the word of God and seeking a change of heart in those who hear.

Secular education is not the work of the church. I am sure all agree that proper education of a secular nature is good and beneficial. However, it is not the work of the church to build, support or maintain schools or colleges to provide such education. This is the responsibility of the home rather than the church. Paul acknowledges that there are responsibilities to be fulfilled by individuals "and let not the church be charged" (1 Timothy 5:16). This could be applied to each of the things discussed in this article.

Social activities are not the work of the church. It is good for brethren to get together and enjoy one another's association whenever possible. However, we need to remember the words of the apostle Paul as he addressed the problem of the Corinthians perverting the observance of the Lord's supper. He said, "What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" (1 Corinthians 11:22). It is not the work of the church to provide for social meals and gatherings. Several years ago I presented a lesson in which I made the point that the church should not be using "coffee and doughnuts" to entice people to attend. A relative of mine objected and said, "James, if it takes coffee and doughnuts to save souls then I think we should use coffee and doughnuts!" I think she was surprised when I answered, "I totally agree with you!" And I still agree with her statement. If it takes coffee and doughnuts to save souls then let's buy all the coffee and doughnuts we can find. However, if we were to do that all we would have is a lot of people full of coffee and doughnuts. If we wish to save souls we must use that which will accomplish such. Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16). Yes, the gospel of Christ is God's power to save. To resort to gimmicks and carnal attractions is not only without authority but demonstrates a lack of faith in God and His will.

Recreation and entertainment are not the work of the church. Wholesome recreation and entertainment have their place but it is not the work of the church to provide such. This truth has been generally understood and accepted by brethren through the years however, in recent years it seems that many are more desirous of turning the church into a country club or health spa than letting "the church be the church." As a result of this thinking we see churches sponsoring ball teams, building gymnasiums and sponsoring various forms of entertainment. I have received announcements of "clowns for Jesus," magicians, puppeteers, body builders or singing groups all being used by churches to reach the masses. The one thing lacking in all these announcements is the scripture or scriptures that would authorize the church providing such. Paul tells us that God has provided all that is necessary "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12). Note that all he lists in verse 11 have to do with the revelation and proclamation of God's word. Note the parallel between Ephesians 4:11,12 and 2 Timothy 3:16,17.

The inspired scriptures are all we need. When Paul had warned the Ephesian elders of the dangers they would face after his departure he said, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). We, today, need to put our faith in God and His word and not in the schemes and gimmicks of men that appeal to the flesh.

***- by James Hahn***

---

## ***Concerning Dancing . . .***

The necessity for specific prohibitions relative to dancing has always seemed out of place -- especially when applied to supposed Christians.

If a man is taught to love his brother, must we have specific lessons insisting that he refrain from sticking a knife in his brother's back?

Then how can one who is properly taught the meaning of modesty, chastity, and pureness of heart be so needful of proof that the modern dance is wrong?

**- by Robert Turner**

---

## ***Parents: Be Consistent About Attendance!***

All godly parents are concerned about bringing up their children to be good, God-fearing people. Of course, we are commanded to do so (Ephesians 6:4). Consistency is an essential key in bringing up faithful children. An obvious area where this consistency needs to be seen is in the matter of attendance.

If you allow your kids to miss the worship services in order to be at a ball game, you are teaching them that the ball game is more important than the Lord. If you let them skip the assemblies for school functions, band trips, dramas or plays, or to go camping, fishing or hunting, in all at these ways you are demonstrating that there are things that are more important than God. If you fail to worship when you are traveling or on vacation, you are showing them that serving God is something you do only when it is convenient. If you let them take part-time jobs that interfere with their attendance, you are giving them a clear sign that work and career considerations are higher in priority than spiritual things.

Many parents who are violating the principles stated above will scoff at these warnings. Yet the personal experiences of many people, as well as the plain teachings of God's Word indicate that this is the truth.

Joshua had it right when he said, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). There would be no compromise in his family. He would LEAD them in a consistent, faithful path. Let's imitate his example of consistency!

**- by Greg Gwin**