

Do You Know One?

1. A brother who does not believe in caring for the sick? I do not. But there are many brethren who rightly oppose the churches of Christ building and/or contributing to a hospital. There is no scriptural authority for them to do so.
2. A brother who does not believe in congregational cooperation? I do not. But there are scores of brethren who properly reject the sponsoring church type of cooperation. There is no divine authority for one church becoming the agency through which other churches function. The examples of cooperation in the New Testament were always concurrent action and never joint action.
3. A brother who does not believe in preaching the gospel? I do not. But there is a host of brethren who refuse to support any human missionary society. Elders of a church cannot scripturally assume a work and oversight that Christ did not assign them. When an eldership assumes the oversight of a brotherhood work and its treasury, as in the sponsoring church arrangement, they form a society in the eldership and act without divine authority.
4. A brother who believes that Christians have no responsibility toward any needy person unless he is a Christian? I do not. But there are multitudes of brethren who rightly object to the church treasury being depleted by a program of general benevolence for which there is no New Testament authority.
5. A brother who does not believe in caring for orphans? I do not. But there are many brethren who properly oppose church support of human benevolent societies, all of which came into existence during the past century.
6. A brother who does not believe in Christians enjoying clean recreation? I do not. But there are thousands of brethren who correctly protest the misuse of funds, contributed into the church treasury for the furtherance of the gospel, to provide for social and recreational activities. There is no Bible authority for the church undertaking such programs.
7. A brother who does not believe in Christians having a good education? I do not. But there are scores of brethren who justly oppose the colleges soliciting and receiving contributions from the churches.

- by Huey Hartsell

Did You Know? . . .

That the apostles never used food, games or social activities to draw a crowd so they could preach to them?

Yet in many churches today, even some calling themselves "Church of Christ," the social programs are so extensive that a social director or a "youth minister" must be hired to oversee the social planning.

Although schools existed in the first century, and the apostle Paul even taught in one for 2 years (Acts 19:9,10), no churches ever supported them financially?

Yet in many churches today, even some calling themselves "Church of Christ," the financial supporting of "Christian schools" or "Colleges" is a regular part of the budget.

That the apostle Paul illustrated many of his epistles with analogies from sporting events (1 Cor. 9:24,25). Yet no church sponsored or had sporting teams?

Yet in many churches today, even some calling themselves "Church of Christ," the sporting activities are so much a part of the work that full scale gyms have been built.

If these things mentioned above were not a part of the early church and we do not find them in the Bible, WHY are churches doing them today? And who gave them the RIGHT to do it? These things ought not to be! "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17).

- by Roger Shouse

Can We See The Bible Alike?

Moses said we could (Deut. 29:29). David said we could (Ps. 119:104). John said we could (Jn. 20:30,31). Jesus prayed that we might (Jn. 17:20). All of these spokesmen for God have declared that through study of the Scriptures we are enabled to see them alike.

There are some things that *HINDER* a clear understanding of the Bible:

- Relatives (Matt. 19:29; 10:34-37)
- Pride (Prov. 14:12; 16:18; Rev. 3:17-18)
- Majority opinion (Ex. 23:2; Matt. 7:13-14,21)
- False doctrines (Matt. 13:14-15; 2 Thess. 2:9-12)
- Satan (2 Cor. 4:3-4)

If we will accept only the word of God (1 Pet. 4:11), we would not only see the Bible alike, but understand and practice it alike (1 Cor. 1:10).

- by Johnny Polk

“Amen”

Many of our brethren have dropped the practice of saying "amen" at the end of prayers, and when they agree with what has been said from the pulpit. However, we note that saying "amen" is an altogether scriptural thing to do. In 1 Cor. 14, Paul mentions it. In this context he is dealing with the use of spiritual gifts in the worship of the church at Corinth. Specifically he argued that speaking in unknown tongues should be limited to occasions when an interpreter was available (see especially vs. 27,28). Unless this rule was observed, it resulted in chaos, with no one knowing or understanding what was being said. Under those conditions, it would be impossible for others to "say Amen at thy giving of thanks" (vs. 16). While the miraculous spiritual gifts have ceased, the teaching about the use of the "amen" still has application.

"Amen" is from a Hebrew word that has been transliterated into both the Greek and English. When spoken by men it literally means "so let it be". Speaking the word at the end of a prayer simply expresses the desire of the one praying that these things come to pass. Others show a similar desire by adding their "amen" to what has been said. According to W. E. Vine, the Greek construction in 1 Cor. 14:16 shows that this was a common practice in the New Testament church.

Several factors obviously come into play in this matter. First, the prayer must be spoken loudly enough and plainly enough to be both heard and understood. The thoughts expressed must also be scriptural in content. And we should listen closely so that we may be sure that we agree with what has been said before adding our 'amen'. The same rules would hold true regarding things spoken from the pulpit. Caution ought to be used so that this never becomes a thing done by habit or ritual, and without meaning.

Brethren have historically added their "amen" to the scriptural prayers of others, and when the preacher spoke "as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). We can and should do the same.