

Selected Concern

When a Ferguson, Missouri policeman recently shot a man who reportedly had assaulted him but was unarmed, the incident grabbed widespread attention. The national press made it the lead story for several days. Citizens rioted. Social activists came and made bold speeches. President Obama made a public statement about it. Attorney General Holder sent a team of investigators and promised the full resources of the federal government, then made a personal visit.

Meanwhile, just 300 miles to the north, the city of Chicago has averaged more than a murder a day this year, including one on August 20 when a nine-year-old boy was shot while playing in his yard. His story was barely a blip on the national radar.

Why is there so much more interest in and concern about one killing than another? Reasons vary. You decide in this case. What I would like us to think about is the concept of selective concern as it relates to our own lives. Are we more concerned about some applications or violations of God's law than others?

Take honesty, for example. I have known a few brethren who from all appearances were quite honest when it came to financial matters, yet they seemingly thought little of misrepresenting others' statements or positions. Is that any less dishonest?

Israel's wilderness experiences taught them that God was outraged at their idolatry, fornication, and open rebellion, but no more so than He was at their frequent complaining. How many of us would put complaining and idolatry on equal footing?

In the church, some would be appalled at the suggestion to bring in instrumental music, yet they seldom sing. When it comes time to appoint elders, some meticulously examine a potential appointee in regard to the family qualifications, then turn around and minimize a character or ability requirement.

Are we as concerned about positively doing right as leaving off wrong? Or vice versa?

Jesus' story of the lost brothers in Luke 15 illustrates the problem. The younger son was lost through bad conduct. His older brother wouldn't have dreamed of engaging in such immorality, yet he was eaten up with self-righteousness and bitterness. Although he did not see it, his bad attitude made him just as lost.

Consistency is always a challenge. So is honest self-evaluation. Nevertheless, we must do our best. Remember God's charge: "Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you" (Jeremiah 7:23).

- by Frank Himmel

Overseeing or Sponsoring Churches

David Lipscomb warned: *"All meetings of churches or officers of churches to combine more power than a single church possesses is wrong. God's power is in God's churches. He is with them to bless and strengthen their work when they are faithful to him. A Christian, one or more, may visit a church with or without an invitation and seek to stir them up to a faithful discharge of their duties. But for one or more to direct what and how all the churches shall work, or to take charge of their men and money and use it, is to assume the authority God has given to each church. Each one needs the work of distributing and using its funds as well as in giving them"* (Gospel Advocate, March 24, 1910).

Brother H. Leo Boles taught: *"There is no example in the New Testament of two or more churches joining together their funds for support of the gospel"* (Gospel Advocate, Nov. 3, 1932).

F.B. Srygley cautioned: *"If two or more churches put it into the hands of a board, though the board may be made up of the elders of one of the churches, we have a very nice beginning of a missionary society to try to take charge of the churches"* (Gospel Advocate, Jan. 11, 1934).

Message from a Recent Visitor

For your encouragement, we are including here some excerpts from an email recently received. It comes from a person who has visited us at Collegevue:

"I have oft times visited the church there (while visiting my son and his family in Columbia) and tend to compare other congregations to the Collegevue church. I was so pleased with the friendliness, modest dress, and sermons, that now I want to be a part of a congregation like that. Unfortunately, I live a few hours away from the nearest conservative congregation and we currently (3 families) worship in our home together while watching (video archives of 'The Virtual Bible Study'). Though not the optimal situation, it is all that we have . . . The other purpose of my writing you is to ask you if you are familiar with any congregation (in my area) that is conservative AND friendly like Collegevue? I simply am looking for a congregation to worship with (wish it could BE Collegevue) . . ."

Pretty amazing, wouldn't you agree!?! A few observations seem to be in order:

- First, our efforts to be warm, friendly, and inviting to our visitors is extremely important. Thanks for your participation in these things. Keep it up!
- Second, we never know how far our influence may extend. Our strong and determined stand for doctrinal truth and moral purity is vitally important. Keep the faith!
- And, third, we should never become complacent or take for granted the wonderful blessing of being a part of a congregation like this one. Others – many others – long for what we have here. Be thankful!

- by Greg Gwin