

The Tanner St Church of Christ meets each Lord's Day beginning with Bible classes at **9:30 AM**. We continue with our worship at **10:20 AM** and again at **5:00 PM**. We also meet each Wednesday evening at **7:00 PM** for Bible study and worship. Our meeting place is located about ¾ of a mile from I30 at 1512 Tanner St in Malvern, AR.

If you have questions about what we believe and teach, please visit our website, tannerst.com to listen to sermons or read past articles from our bulletin. Or you can contact us and we will be glad to find a convenient time to study with you.

Phone: (501) 332-8806 Email: preacher@tannerst.com

Consider: John 20:30-31

Needed News

Dolline Fain has been sick most of this past week.

Conrad & Gloria Harris are both about the same. They have had grandkids visiting this weekend so they are tired.

Bill Venable is doing better, but both he and **Joyce** are tired.

Paula Laubach has tendonitis, but will not have any surgery.

Thelma Echols is doing better. She had some back problems this past week.

Annette Gray has cataract surgery scheduled for her other eye the end of August.

Ricky Ragsdale has been moved to a nursing home in Berryville. His therapy is going much better. He is still not able to get out of bed without mechanical assistance, but he can now stand for about 30 seconds with some help. **Phyllis Jackson** has been staying in that area this past week to help encourage him..

Remember these in your prayers. Opportunities to visit and help others abound. Would you be interested in having a Bible study at your home?

Seeking His Righteousness

"...seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.." Matthew 6:33

August 2015

Volume 4 Number 31

Man Telling God What Is Authorized

Bob W. Lovelace

Apostasy once spawned continues to promote itself. It has been said that certainty and boldness in presentation are often separated in time by the amount of support. But once put in motion (production), and given sufficient support, both financial and numerical, its full-blown presence presents itself to the brotherhood.

There are times recorded in Scripture when the aggression of false teachers was manifested in trying to shut the mouths of the faithful still intent on trusting in God's ways in order to receive His blessings (Isaiah 30:9-11)

Additionally, and often corresponding to, there are times when the picture is that of general acceptance, all is well in Zion, and God's people are at last as happy as a bunch of geese arriving from their migration! (Jeremiah 5:31)

Specifics of descriptions given in the Scriptures, for our admonition and learning, concerning those going into Apostasy are: 1) They are rebellious. 2) They are liars. 3) They will not hear the law of the Lord. 4) They bear rule by their own means. 5) The people love to have it so.

Quite naturally, according to man's own wisdom, the above items are set in a context of man telling God what is authorized. Never can I find where God is so happy as they are with their telling Him! (Isaiah 40:13-14)

Many, having lived through or studied apostasies, know this is the way men have spoken through the ages when seeking to justify human organizations to do the work God gave the (local) church. Although willing to sound-out a great respect for God's wisdom in giving the local church (1Tim. 3:15), they appear as God's counselors instructing Him! Let us remember that the local church was planned in eternity by the wisdom of God, before the world began (Eph. 2:10). Moreover, God's wisdom exceeds all in ability, value and power (1Cor. 1:18-31; Rom. 11:32-36). Yet the human organization is presented to

the world with language that speaks of its divine authorization as if God authorized it. Yes, they tell God Almighty that they have come to realize there is a spiritual role for their human organizations! They become God's counselors in sharing in, and being able to explain to all for Him, His "supposed" way or role in divinely authorizing human organizations for evangelism and edification. This is presented with an "it's your choice" to participate or not, but the choice man makes should be to only serve the Lord in the Lord's own way.

One of the more disgusting attributes of apostasy is the tribute given to those who dare tell God what is authorized. The people appear to be blind in not seeing that such great ones are not capable of teaching God the path of justice, knowledge, and the way of understanding. No doubt, though, wisdom lies with the great ones and others should not be able to see that they are telling the Lord what is authorized! In addition, nauseas as it is, those younger and lacking in wisdom exult in such great men, while ambitiously hoping one day to achieve their wisdom status.

In his day Jeremiah took God's message to both sides of the spectrum:

Jeremiah 5:2-5 And though they say, The Lord liveth; surely they swear falsely. O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return. Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God. I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds.

Suffice it to say that when it comes to an understanding of God's divine wisdom we all get there the same way. Consider Solomon's admonition (Proverbs 2:1-9)

In a local body or church you can have those who through hard work (Please note the verses above that explain the "if" qualification.) have gained God's wisdom and knowledge (Eph. 3:1-4; 1Tim. 4:13-16; 2Tim. 2:15; Heb. 5:12-14; 13:7-17, etc.). This knowledge is for "all" of God's children who imitate the apostles even as they imitate Christ, Paul said (1Cor. 11:1-2,17-34; 2Thes. 2:15). The "praise" or commendation given by inspiration rests only upon those who keep

things the way God set them up (1Cor. 11:2,17,22). The charge given is that disciples hold fast the pattern of sound words (2Tim. 1:13; 3:16-17; Phil. 4:9), while teaching the pattern to others (2Tim. 2:2). This is the way God set things up!

The local church is the pillar and support of the truth (1Tim. 3:15). The beginning of the church recorded in the first chapters of Acts (Acts 2:47; 5:11, etc.), as well as the postscript (Acts 14:23), shows how God ordained the local church organization. Moreover the remainder of the N.T. gives emphasis to just (only) that one organization for Christians for all time (1Pet. 5:1-4, 2Pet. 3:1-2).

When considering the Lord's Supper and its placement in this pattern, Paul said "when you come together as a church" (1Cor. 11:18). The only gathering you will find regarding the Lord's Supper is that of a local church! (Acts 20:7; 1Cor. 11:18, 20). That's settles it so far as the exclusiveness of the function of the church is concerned. Who will dare to teach Him knowledge and show Him the way of understanding? Who will dare stand up now and tell God that the human institution has an equal right in the Lord's Supper? Moreover, the local church is the only organization we find authorized in the New Testament to do the works of evangelism (2Cor. 11:8; Phil. 4:15; 1Thes. 1:6-8), edification (1Cor. 14:26), and benevolence to needy saints (1Cor. 16:1-3). Be it a camp, school or business the brethren who choose to make the work of the church that of the human society are no better off than those who through the centuries have told God what is authorized. God gave that collective work of worship to the local church; human wisdom is not God's wisdom!

The local church is funded to do the above mentioned works through a collection (Acts 4:34-35; 1Cor. 16:1-3; Phil. 4:15-17). These verses and others make it abundantly clear that the local church functions by the members' ability to give. Yet human reasoning alone convinces many that they have given sufficiently to God's organization, thus releasing them of full obligation so that they may now give to the human society. Who has the right to limit the function of God's organization in order to channel their support to the human society formed by Christians to engage in the same works God gave the church? The wisdom of God should destroy such reasoning and bring such into obedience to Christ (1Cor. 10:5).

Now, what organization did God say was to receive your funds for evangelism, worship and edification if you are a Christian?