

For Our Information

Adene Gray, Jimmy & Annette Gray, Phyllis Jackson, and Brenda Keisler have all been sick this past week. They are all doing better but not yet back to full health. Joyce Venable is still very weak and coughing. Clifton Hurst has had sinus problems.

Brenda had her nerve procedure done and is doing better.

The Simpson family is out of town.

Remember one another as we pray

Contact Us

We want opportunities to speak with others about our work in the Lord's Kingdom.

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We seek only to serve God according to His Will!

How, then, and to what extent, may churches scripturally cooperate? Fortunately, we have a New Testament example. The prophet Agabus prophesied of the famine that should come over the world (the Jewish world, or Judea); and *"the disciples (at Antioch), every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea: which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."* (Acts 11:29-30)

The disciples at Antioch cooperated with the churches in Judea through the elders in relieving an emergency in Judea. For one church to help another bear its own burdens, therefore, has scriptural precedent. But for one church to solicit funds from other churches for general distribution in other fields or places, thus becoming the treasury of other churches, is quite a different question. Such procedure makes a sort of **society** out of the elders of a local church, and for such there is no scriptural example.

There should be no infringement upon the local church as a functioning unit. (Gospel Advocate, May 1931)

Seeking His Righteousness

Tanner St Bulletin Volume 8 Week 11

March 2019

Truth Between Extremes

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

In establishing the identity of the New Testament church, the necessity of being scriptural in doctrine, worship, and name has received due emphasis. While these essential features have not been overemphasized, there are some other points that have been more or less minimized. The organization of the church, for instance, is vital, and scriptural **work** is an essential feature of its identity.

The Divine Arrangement

The organization of the New Testament church is simple, not complex. It is the local church with elders, deacons, and members. No other organization is known in the



Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: Philippians 1:1



1512 Tanner St. Malvern, AR

Meet With Us

Worship Services

Sunday 10:20 am & 5:00 pm

Bible Classes

Sunday 9:30 AM

Wednesday 7:00 PM

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New Testament. The local church with elders and deacons is a complete and perfect organization through which to do everything God has commanded the church **as such**, to do. It therefore, follows that any organization larger or smaller than the local church, designed to do the work of the church, is an infringement upon the divine arrangement and is unscriptural. The truth of this principle is so evident as not to require proof to one who is familiar with New Testament teaching.

Methods Of Work

In the application of the above principle, however, some have failed to discriminate between **methods** and **organization**. The church may use any expedient method of doing anything God has commanded so long as it is a **method only**. The protracted meeting is a method of saving souls. Class teaching, sometimes called "Sunday school," is a **method** of imparting instruction, whether pursued on Sunday or some other day. But there is a vast difference between methods and organizations. It has been claimed that the missionary society is only a method of evangelizing the world. That is not true. The missionary society is an organization, an established institution, and uses methods of its own.

It is easy to encroach upon principles, and such encroachments are in evidence in some of the churches of Christ today. For instance, the Sunday school as a method of instruction violates no scriptural principle. Quite to the contrary, it is the application of the Scriptures that enjoin teaching, but prescribe no method. But when the Sunday school becomes an organized auxiliary, functioning apart from the church, it ceases to be a method and becomes an organization. It is not uncommon for Sunday school classes, young people's meetings,

Store In My Heart

Ezra 1:2-3

Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him! Let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel; He is the God who is in Jerusalem.

This begins Cyrus' decree to send Jews back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. Ezra tells part of the story of this return and rebuilding. Ezra is not introduced until near the middle of this book. His part of the story tells of restoring righteousness of the people thru reading and application of the Law.

women's Bible classes, and other groups to function as organized groups even to the point of maintaining a separate treasury, and doing certain work belonging to the church in the name of their group. If one group has the right to so organize and function, other groups have the same right, and if followed to its logical end the congregation as an organized unit would be destroyed. Such is a perversion of an otherwise scriptural work. When Sunday school classes and young people's meetings so organize and function, they differ from denominational B.Y.P.U. and C.E. societies only in name.

The Truth Between Extremes

The autonomy of the church — the independent existence and functioning of the local church — is an accepted principle among all who oppose the missionary societies. But to what extent congregations can engage in cooperative work without infringing upon autonomous functioning of the church is a question not altogether easy to decide.

The truth is usually found between extremes. The extremes in this case are, organizations that usurp the functions of a congregation, on one hand, and an aloofness between churches that would prohibit all cooperation, on the other. The missionary society usurps the functions of the church. And when an individual does the same thing the missionary society does namely, independently receives and disburses missionary funds for the churches — that individual usurps the functions of the church. On the same principle, if the elders of one congregation solicit the funds of other congregations for general distribution, then the elders of one congregation usurp the functions of the congregations whose funds they receive and disburse. It is the same in principle as if a society or individual should do so.