



The Church's Work: What? Who? How?

With the variety of activities churches are involving themselves, it is easy to see there are differing ideas as to what the work and mission of the Lord's church is. Let us consider what the Scriptures teach concerning what the work of the church is, who is to do it, and how it is to be done.

Most have turned the Lord's church into something more social than spiritual. The result is many people are involved in and enjoying the social activities and facilities that churches are providing, yet they are lacking in the spiritual benefits of the truth. The church of Jesus Christ, however, is spiritual in nature and not social. Jesus' statement before Pilate plainly shows the nature of His kingdom. He said His "kingdom is not of this world" and that He came into the world "to bear witness of the truth" (Jn. 18:36-37). The purpose and work of the redeemed individuals that make up Christ's kingdom is spiritual in nature. The "house of God, which is the church of the living God" is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1Tim. 3:15). Jesus came to bear witness of the truth, a mission neither social or recreational. His church is the pillar and ground of that same truth and its purpose is also one that is spiritual. Banquets, bazaars, rallies, lock-ins, ball games, are enjoyable and have a place in life, but their place is not in the purpose and work of the Lord's church; for its nature is spiritual, not social. In Rom. 14:17, though the context is speaking of the principles of conscience, it is plain to see from the apostle's statement what the nature of the church is. "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." The kingdom of Christ is made up of blood bought people (Acts

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In the Scriptures God has told us what the work of the church is, who is to do it, and how it is to be done. We must simply have faith in and follow His divine direction to accomplish that work.

Biblical authority for joint or sponsoring church efforts with centralized control and oversight. The church today will be able to accomplish its work the same way it did in the first century if it follows God's plan-- a plan that has not changed.

20:28; Rev. 5:9-10; Col. 1:13-14), and Christ blood was shed for a higher and holier cause than to establish a social club, civic organization, or recreational facility.

The work and mission of the church is spiritual; but who is to do the work of the church? The answer is simple, the church. Yet, many say the church must build and or fund separate institutions such as hospitals, benevolent homes, missionary societies, colleges, etc., to do the work of the church. These are not the church, nor are they overseen by the church; yet, they receive financial support from churches. Many contend that such institutions allow the church to do things that God would have done that the church could not do by itself. But again, who is to do the work of the church? If one believes that the church is "the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:23), they believe without a doubt that the church is sufficient to do whatever work God has for it to do, whether it is concerning evangelism, edification, or benevolence (Eph. 3:10,11; 4:11-16; 1Tim. 3:15). When men allow the church's work to be done through a human institution the church loses its autonomy and becomes a fund-raising organization. The church is to do its own work and that work is set forth in the Scriptures. There is no biblical authority for a church to build or support separate institutions.

How is the work of the church to be done? The Scriptures teach it is to be done by autonomous congregations on a local basis, with elders whose oversight is limited to their own congregation (Ac. 14:23; 20:28; 1Pet. 5:2). There is no

