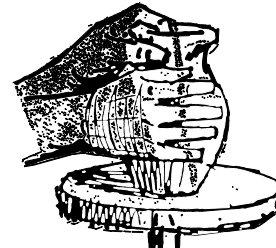


His Workmanship at Westside

*"For we are His
workmanship, created in
Christ Jesus for good works."
—Ephesians 2:10*



Vol. XXII

February 10, 2013

No. 6

Isaiah 64:8

Local Church and Individual Responsibility *by Jimmy Mickells*

Is there a difference between the church and the individual Christian in doing the work of the Lord? Of course there is. There are differences between what the Bible has authorized a local church to do and what an individual can do.

Paul indicated this difference, *"If any believing man or woman has widows, let him relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows,"* 1 Tim 5:16. This passage very clearly makes a distinction between what the individual is to do, the believer who has widows, versus the responsibility that the church has, *"let not the church be charged."* The church was to help those who were *"widows indeed."* Notice the qualifications required before a widow was to be supported by the church. *"Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man, well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work,"* 1 Tim 5:9-10.

As an individual, I can give money to the Red Cross, support the American Cancer Society, help Alive Hospice, contribute to a political party or candidate, support my elderly aunt, etc. As long as what I'm doing is not sinful, I can spend my money (given to me by God) in whatever way I deem best. This is not true with the church. A local church can act only as God authorized it to act. God gave the church a work to do. Can the church contribute to the Red Cross, American Cancer Society, etc.? Absolutely not! Why? It has no authority at all to use the funds collected on the first day of the week, by free will offering, to be used for something other than what we read about in the Bible. God limited church work.

Many churches of Christ today are using the Lord's money to provide things for members (and non-members) that individuals should be supplying. It is not the work of the church to provide entertainment, gyms, camps, social meals, etc. As a parent, I can provide these things for my children. I have responsibilities that I must fulfill, and I cannot and should not expect the church to do what the Lord allows me to do.

Is there a difference between what an individual can do and what the Lord's church can do? Paul says there is! We must never be guilty of involving the church in some work that God has not authorized it to do. Remember the words of John, *"Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds,"* 2 Jn 9-11.

As members of His body (His church), Jesus (the Head) has commanded us to work and worship together with other Christians in whatever local area we may happen to live, 1 Cor 1:1-2, 1 Thes 1:1, Rm 16:16. Like Paul did when He came to Jerusalem, we must seek out faithful Christians in the area where we are and carry out the obligations we have toward God and one another, Ax 9:23-31; Heb 10:19-31. We should not join ourselves to a man-made religious organization, but after having been joined to

continued on p. 2

“Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea.” —Acts 11:29

Christ in the way the Bible teaches, we should join ourselves to a local group of faithful Christians.

How do we know if a local church is following God? We must honestly and diligently evaluate all things that it practices by the standard of the New Testament. If the congregation follows what is written in the scriptures, then we can gladly join with it. If it follows what is wrong, then we should try to teach it. If a group will not turn away from false teaching, then we must not have anything to do with its teachings

and actions that oppose the gospel of Christ, Gal 1:6-9; Ax 17:10-12. After meeting the needs of our families, we should be ready and willing to provide for the needs of others, Mt 7:12; Lk 10:25-37. However, again, we are to set priorities and seek to

help those who are Christians first and then those who are not, as we have opportunity to do so, Gal 6:10; Jas 1:27. As a method of providing for others, we can act individually as Paul did, Ax 20:33-35, or we act within a local church, contributing money on every Sunday for the purposes of the church: worship, evangelism (preaching the gospel), edification (building up the church by teaching righteousness), and benevolence (helping other Christians, first to those of that particular church and then to Christians in other churches), Ax 4:34-35; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8-

9. These contributions should be given from the heart as we have been prospered. No one should be compelled to give any specific amount of money, 2 Cor 9:6-7.

However, there is no evidence in scripture that local churches collected money together to aid those who were not Christians. Also, there is no evidence that local churches collected money for the social, recreational, and other nonessential needs of Christians. The individual was to provide for these things to his family

As sojourners in this world, individual Christians all have a certain number of specific responsibilities. These responsibilities relate to:

♥ **Home:** 1 Pet 3:1-7; Eph 6:1-4; Col 3:18-21; 1 Tim 5:8

♥ **Government:** Rm 13:1-8; 1 Pet 2:13-17

♥ **Business world:** 1 Thes 4:11-12; Phil 4:5; Col 3:22-4:1

♥ **Community:** 1 Pet 2:12; Col 4:5; 1 Cor 10:31-33; 2 Tim 2:24; 1 Thes 1:7; 3:12

♥ **Local church:** Ax 11:29; Heb 10:24-25; 1 Cor 11:18, 20, 33-34; 14:26; 16:1-4

♥ **Kingdom of heaven** (universal church): Jn 3:5; Ax 2:47; 1 Cor 12:12, 18, 27; Eph 4:12; Col 1:13; 1 Tim 3:14-15 (includes the “brotherhood” 1 Pet 2:17)

and others as he chose. Only when he could not provide the basic necessities of his family would a local church become involved in providing those needs, 1 Tim 5:1-16, esp. v. 16. Although we are to give to others generously, especially to other Christians, we are not to place ourselves in a position where we are not able to provide for our own families. They are to be our first priority, 1 Tim 5:8; 2 Cor. 8:12-16.

The Individual Christian. A Christian is an individual. A Christian is part of the church universal and should be part of a local church, not

forsaking the assembling together with the local church, Heb 10:25.

Most of the New Testament was written to direct how the individual Christian acts. Even though letters were sent to congregations, most of the instruction is about the individual Christian. For instance, The apostle Paul wrote to the young preacher Timothy: “*These things write I unto you, hoping to come unto you shortly: but if I tarry long, that you may know how you ought to behave yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth,*” 1 Tim 3:14-15. In other words, “I’m telling you these things so that you may know how to live your life and teach others to do likewise as members of God’s family.” Where could Timothy find those of God’s household? They may be found in local assemblies, of course. It is this group of saved believers who constitute the “pillar and ground of the truth” in each community. As another example, look at Ephesians 5. “*Be imitators of God, as beloved children,*” is about the individuals. When we get to the sections about wives, husbands, children, slaves, masters—that is clearly about the individual and not the local church. With this in mind, the individual Christian clearly has work to do. This work is above and beyond what he does in the local church.

1 Cor 16:1-2 demonstrates the individual’s responsibility to contribute to a church’s collection to accomplish the church’s work. On the other hand, Heb 13:16 demonstrates the individual simply sharing with others in need apart from the local church. Doing good is the individual Christian’s work and should not be confused with the

continued on p. 3



Psalm 133:1



Fill your canteen in 2013

"...filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord." Hab 2:14

Local church and individual, from p. 2 work of the local church.

The Great Confusion. Almost two centuries ago, Alexander Campbell believed that the universal church consisted of all the local churches. He was clearly mistaken. The universal church is made up of all Christians, living as well as dead, from Pentecost until now. The universal church consists of "the spirits of just men made perfect," Heb 12:23, of individuals.

While many of the Lord's instructions have overlapping applications to our activities in the local assembly (for indeed the local church is an integral part of a Christian's life), most instructions apply specifically to an individual Christian's life as a personally accountable sojourner on this earth. In other words, there are instructions that regulate our entire life as both individual Christians and as members of a local assembly. They tell us, as individuals, how we are to conduct our personal lives as Christians. While some are specific to relationships in our local church, most apply to our roles simply as citizens of the heavenly kingdom.

Individual Responsibility. Christians have many relationships in this life. Yet, we dare not confuse one with the other. As members of Christ's kingdom, our lives and actions must be regulated by the superior law of our Creator, Gal 6:2. Our Christ-like nature must be evident in all our relation-

ships. But that does not give us license to introduce the local church into politics, business, the home, or even the government. There is no authority for the local church being involved in anything other than to worship together, to preach and teach the gospel, to edify its members, and to care for needy saints. Those are the authorized works of a local church as set forth by God's Word. There is no pattern for any other work. Beyond those areas of work, there is no authority for a local church to be involved in any benevolence to non-believers. Individuals may (and should) relieve their neighbors. But in the Bible the recipients of local church benevolence were always needy Christians and their families.

Some believe that it is through the local church that we are to carry out all our works. Wrong. The Holy Spirit has given us specific instructions regarding what we are to do as a local church. Each of these instructions came to us in the form of a command or a positive statement, as an approved New Testament example, or by required conclusions from these commands and examples. The Holy Spirit didn't give us a long list of "Thou shall nots," but left us to discern, by our disciplined study of God's Word, what we are to do and how we are to do it. The local church was designed by our Lord to provide us a means by which we are to work together to share the gospel with a lost and dying world.

Expecting Marie Carlson—late June

Memory verse: "For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.' " —Acts 13:47 [Paul quoting and applying Is 49:6]

Discipleship Here At Home

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here & away

- Brielle Kosik**—ear infection
- Madge Wallace**—chemo, lung cancer
- Gary Boyd's sister Gail Storz**—fluid in her lungs; cancer
- Judy Strand** and family—ill
- Gary Boyd**—rash
- Lazar Gintchin's uncle**—heart
- Brittany Tope's mother Gayle Shrull**—return of breast cancer; radiation
- Judy Sartin's son David**—low thyroid levels. **Judy's aunt Vallie Ek**, age 86 in CA—PRAISE: uterine cancer gone
- Alexander Gintchin's classmate, Jack Miller**—2 brain tumors; age 6
- Frank Savarese**—pneumonia recovery
- Tracy Corray's best friend Meghan O'Donnell's aunt Kathy Dewey**—lung cancer; daily chemo
- Chris Hayes's mother Cathy Hayes**—brain cancer tumors spread
- Mina Gonzalez's uncle Charles Hawkins**—colon cancer

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

- Logan Corray; Carter Hayes; Rocco Sangellino Jr; Addison Tope**—asthma
- Autumn Hadders**—epilepsy
- Pearl Chapman**—leg pains; pancreatitis
- Nell Free**—heart; spinal pain
- Jonathan Hadders**—RA
- Kirk Johnson**—worsening MS; housebound in cold weather and needs help
- Menards**—age; **Lloyd**, diabetes, ear cyst drained; **Virginia**, eye problems, BP
- Sandra Perry**—neuropathy from diabetes
- Cheryl Reames**—diverticulitis; fibro
- Lynda Szymanski**—COPD, lung

Travel Brett Witherington is in MD for work.

Job concerns Andrew Tope and Frank Savarese are seeking jobs.

Directory change: Chris and Sandy Hayes are going to work and worship with the Smoky Hill church.



Exposing current thoughts & trends

Wyoming Supports Marriage *by Tony Perkins*

Wyoming was just voted the second most conservative state in America—and last Wednesday, their legislature proved why! State leaders fought off not one, but *two*, liberal bills that would have dramatically redefined marriage in the Equality State. The first, driven by Wyoming's only openly homosexual official, state Rep. Cathy Connelly (D), hoped to sucker conservatives into believing that the bill would "clarify" how the law deals with same-sex couples.

Wyoming's Republicans weren't nearly as naive as Connelly had hoped. Mark Baker (R) and other leaders read the strategy perfectly, blasting the Left for trying to misrepresent the bill. Although Connelly's language intentionally tried to distance itself from marriage, it was obviously a backdoor attempt at redefining it. "We know this is about same-sex 'marriage' and civil unions no matter how it's sugar-coated," Baker said. The only reason leaders are being pressured, he insisted, is not for the good of the state but "because it's politically correct." He warned of the "disastrous consequences to this bill."

Lawmakers killed the proposal in committee. It was the first time the Wyoming legislature had formally voted on same-sex "marriage." Even Connelly doubts the possibility of bringing it up again after comments from Rep. Lynn Hutchings. An African-American Republican, she took offense at Connelly's suggestion that gay "marriage" is a civil rights issue. "People choose to be homosexual," Hutchings said, "they don't choose to be black." Rep. Nathan Winters (R) called it "a down-payment on future lawsuits leading to same-sex 'marriage.'"

A domestic partner law was also up for debate. It would have extended special benefits to just about any two people—including platonic relationships—stripping marriage of all meaning or incentive. Rep. Baker pointed out the high costs to taxpayers, especially as it pertains to homosexuals. Baker insisted that only 1% of homosexuals die of old age, a reference to the expensive health conditions associated with same-sex behavior. He insisted that would burden the state's budget. The majority of lawmakers agreed, stopping the bill by a 34-25 vote on the statehouse floor. Both victories upheld Biblical marriage. *'And Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."* Mt 19:4-6.

Westside church of Christ

meets at

13789 W. 8th Avenue
Golden, Colorado 80401
(303) 233-5683

Pastors

Larry Campbell
(303) 462-4987

DeWayne Howell
(303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover
(303) 973-5102

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Grounded in Authority Series

this afternoon at 1:30 PM:

"The Church and the Individual Christian" by Justin Hambrick

GOALS: What are you doing to develop your spiritual gifts? If you really want to be of service to God, you need to let Him equip you, Eph 4:12. Did you meet together with other Christians during last week to pray Lk 10:2 and Eph 4:11-16? Did you welcome a guest at last Sunday morning's assembly? Are you adding to your list of unbelievers for whom you're praying to receive the gospel? Did you memorize a scripture passage last week? Will you commit to your own spiritual