

WHAT IS WRONG WITH HUMAN ORGANIZATIONS DOING THE WORK OF THE CHURCH?

1. Human organizations are unauthorized by the word of God; there is no command, example or necessary inference for such in the New Testament.

(1) Apostolic churches in the first century never worked through any kind of human institution/organization.

(2) There is no evidence that first century Christians individually did their work of teaching the gospel through such an agency.

2. Human organizations usurp the function of God's organization; the local church (I Tim. 3:15).

3. The use of human organizations is predicated upon an unscriptural concept; the activation and function of the church universal.

(1) The church universal is not an organic body; it is a relationship.

(2) It has no mission.

(3) It has no earthly organization.

(4) It has no function.

4. The New Testament makes no provision for individuals to do the work of preaching through any organization other than the local church.

(1) There is no organization in the New Testament that is larger or smaller than the local church.

(2) Any other organization larger or smaller than the local church that is designed to do the work of the church is a perversion of the Lord's order. (Example: A Bible class that has its own treasury and begins to function separate from the church is wrong.)

5. The local church is not an optional organization which provides the individual Christian with a choice of teaching the gospel through it (the church) or through a human institution (no matter what you might call it; a Missionary Society, a Foundation, or whatever).

(1) When the Lord specified the local church to support the truth, that eliminated every other organization (I Tim. 3:15); just as the command to "sing" eliminates playing on an instrument (Eph. 5:19).

(2) All collective passages in the New Testament refer to the local church; I Tim. 3:15; Phil. 1:5; 4: 14 & 16; I Thess. 1:8; II Cor. 11:8; I Cor. 11: 20 & 34; Eph. 5:19; Acts 2:42; and Eph. 4: 11-12.

(3) The New Testament authorizes the individual to teach; II Tim. 2:2; Acts 8:4; Eph. 6:4; and Titus 2: 3-4.

(4) There is no authority for any human organization to plan and execute a work to be done by the individual or by the local church.

(5) The work done through a human institution/organization is not being done either as the work of an individual or as a congregation; it is work done by an organization that is separate and apart from the individual Christian and the church.

(6) When individuals work as part of an organization, their individual action becomes lost in that of the whole and the work becomes an institutional work. An organization can only function as the individual parts function in behalf of the whole. (Example: The church teaches through men (I Thess. 1:8; I Tim. 3:15).

6. There is a distinction between an *ōaidō* to teaching and the actual teaching.

(1) A publishing company (a corporation) may publish Bibles, workbooks and other aids, but the publishing of these aids is not teaching. (Example: The World Publishing Company publishes Bibles, but does not teach Bible.)

(2) Individuals and churches may purchase these aids (Bibles, workbooks, songbooks) to aid their work of teaching.

(3) These aids are not synonymous with the work of teaching; no teaching is done until the aids are used by the teacher.

(4) Publishing houses do not teach; they sell materials which aid in teaching (an *ōaidō* is help or assistance).

(5) To *ōteachō* is to instruct, to inform; to teach is simply to communicate knowledge.

(6) Books, tracts, and workbooks are not acts of teaching:

1. A Bible does not teach until it is read or taught by a teacher.
2. A songbook is not singingō it aids singing.
3. A tract or gospel paper does not teach until it is read.

(7) Buying and selling Bibles, tracts, workbooks and songbooks is not teaching and worship, but a means of providing aids to teaching and worship.

(8) A publishing company does not teachō it simply sells materials that are used by the buyer (or others) to teach.

(9) A publishing company, a secular business enterprise, sells and delivers its religious material to customers.

(10) When the publishing company sells its products to the customer, the customer has the oversight of the material that has been bought.

(11) The publisher who publishes a paper and sells it is only providing a means of contact between the teacher and the learner.

(12) The publishing company is like a radio stationō it only provides a means (an arrangement) to bring the teacher and the learner together.

(13) A publisher is only providing the vehicle of communication between the teacher and the student.

(14) When a publishing company moves from the realm of a secular business of publishing religious material and arranges and supports a *ōLectureshipō* to preach the gospel, it has moved from the secular to the spiritual and has become a missionary society. It now is usurping the function of the church (I Tim. 3:15).

(15) The publishing company has now moved into a dual role.

1. There is divine authority for a secular publishing company to publish Bibles, workbooks, songbooks, and other materials (I Thess. 4: 11 ó 12; I Tim. 5:8).

2. There is no authority for the publishing company to oversee and sponsor the preaching of the gospel!
7. No human institution (such as a missionary society or a publishing company) with a spiritual agenda to preach the gospel has a divine right to do the work which God has ordained the church to do (I Tim. 3:15; I Thes. 1: 1, 8).
8. There is no way better than God's way to preach the gospel (I Tim. 3:15).
9. The primary purpose of the church is to make known divine truth (Eph. 3: 9 -11; I Tim. 3: 15; I Thess. 1: 1, 8; Phil. 4: 15 ó 16; II Cor. 11:8).
10. The New Testament gives no authority for the church universal to have any kind of external organization:
- (1) God never intended for the church universal to function as a unit.
 - (2) When God specified the local church as a functional organization, that eliminates any other organization (I Tim. 3:15; Acts 14: 23), just as the command to "sing" eliminates the instrument (Eph. 5:19).
 - (3) Each local church is self-sufficient to do all the work God has given it to do.
11. There are no humanly organized missionary societies to be found in the New Testament.
- (1) The local church is the "pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15).
 - 1. The church is the support of the truth as it pertains to the redemption of men.
 - 2. The church alone is charged with the responsibility of evangelizing the world.
 - 3. The prime mission of the church is to preach the gospel to save lost souls and to edify the saved (Matt. 28: 19 ó 20; Mark 16: 15 ó 16).
 - 4. Examples:
 - (1) The church in Thessalonica (I Thess. 1:8).
 - (2) The church in Philippi (Phil. 4: 14 ó 18).
 - (3) The Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 11: 22 ó 26).
 - (4) Churches of Macedonia (II Cor. 11: 8 ó 9).
12. Any organization formed to preach the gospel that is larger or smaller than the local church cannot exist with the Lord's approval.
13. The local church is God's order, and it is fatal to seek to improve upon it!
14. There is no Bible authority for individual Christians to form any kind of human organization through which to preach the gospel!

(No originality is claimed; these arguments were taken from many sources. Donald Townsley)