

SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE CHURCH AND HUMAN ORGANIZATIONS

Donald Townsley

INTRODUCTION

1. In this lesson I am talking about other organizations than the church; organizations without and apart from the church.
2. Other bodies designed and established by the will and wisdom of men and controlled by human authority to do the work of the church.
3. Examples of the kind of organizations I am talking about:
 - a. Orphan asylums or orphan homes.
 - b. Colleges.
 - c. Missionary organizations.
 - d. Any kind of human institution man may form to do the work of the church.

I. THE CHURCH OF THE LORD CONTRASTED WITH HUMAN ORGANIZATIONS

- a. The church is a divine organization – Heb. 8:2.
- b. It was designed by the wisdom of God – Eph. 3: 9 – 11.
- c. The deity of Christ is its foundation – Matt. 16:16 – 18; I Cor. 3:11.
- d. Christ is its Head – Eph. 1: 22 – 23; Col. 1: 18.
- e. Its rule of faith and practice is the blood sealed covenant of Christ – Matt. 26: 28; 2 Tim. 3:16 – 17; Heb. 9:14.
- f. The church is made up of saved men and women redeemed by the blood of Christ – Acts 20:28; I Cor. 6:20; Acts 2:47.
- g. The church has a divine mission on this earth:
 - i. Preach the gospel to the world – I Tim. 3:15; I Thess. 1:8; Mk. 16:15 – 16.
 - ii. Build up itself in love – Eph. 4: 11 – 16; Acts 2:46; 5:42; 11: 26; Matt. 28: 19 – 20.
 - iii. Assemble and worship:
 1. John 4:24; Heb. 10:25
 2. Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16: 1- 2
 3. Acts 2: 42; Eph. 5: 19
 - iv. Supply the needs of its poor:
 1. Acts 6: -1 – 7
 2. Acts 11: 27 – 30
 3. I Cor. 16:1 – 2
 4. I Tim. 5:16

II. GOD GAVE HIS CHURCH ORGANIC FORM (ORGANIZATION)

- a. The organization He gave is the LOCAL CONGREGATION
 - i. The divine pattern for this organization – Acts 14: 23 – “*ordained them elders in every church*”.
 - ii. This pattern was carried out at Philippi – Phil. 1: 1.
 - iii. Over and over in the New Testament you read of LOCAL churches:
 1. The Jerusalem church – Acts 8:1
 2. The church at Ephesus – Rev. 2:1

3. Church at Antioch – Acts 11: 26
 4. Churches at Judaea – Gal. 1:22
 5. Churches of Galatia – Gal. 1:2
 6. Seven churches of Asia – Rev. 1:11
 7. Churches of Christ – Rom. 16:16
- b. Equality existed among churches of Christ in New Testament times – 2: Cor. 8:14.
 - i. Equal in Foundation – I Cor. 3:11
 - ii. Equal in Head – Eph. 1:22 – 23
 - iii. Equal in Structure – I Pet. 2: 5 – 9
 - iv. Equal in Identity – Rev. 1: 20
 - v. Equal in Work – All congregations are equally related to preaching the gospel.
 - c. They functioned by Divine Authority – Eph. 1: 22 – 23.
 - d. Their work was limited by ability – 2 Cor. 8:3.

III. SCRIPTURAL OBJECTIONS TO HUMAN ORGANIZATIONS DOING THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

- a. Human organizations through which to do the Lord's work reflect upon the wisdom of God:
 - i. The church was designed by God's wisdom and is sufficient to accomplish His purposes.
 - ii. God's way is different from man's – Isa. 55: 6 – 9; I Cor. 1: 27 – 31.
- b. Human organizations supplant the church, usurp the functions God gave the church, and ignore the divine pattern of work.
- c. Human organizations defeat the purpose of God that each congregation by functioning according to the divine plan shall be built up to God's glory and honor – Eph. 4:16.
 - i. Human organizations rob the church of strength.
- d. They ignore God's silence and lack of divine authority, and thus violate the will of God by presumptuous sinning – Psa. 19:13.
- e. Human organizations are an addition to God's divine arrangement and to His Word, and do not classify as an aid or expedient in the divine plan.
 - i. Human organizations and instrumental music fall into the same classification – they are additions.
- f. Human organizations violate the principle of walking by faith – 2 Cor. 5:7.
 - i. Faith comes by the Word – Rom. 10:17.
- g. Men who believe in human organizations to do the work of the church come to believe these are indispensable to the spiritual growth of churches of Christ.