



The Voice of Truth



June 14, 2009

The Church: The Pillar and Ground of Truth

By Jimmy Pettigrew

It is important for members of the Lord's body to realize that the church is the foundation and support of the truth. Paul told Timothy, "*but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*" (1 Tim. 3:15). God has given the truth to the world and has established the church for the up building, maintaining, practicing that truth in its purity in the world.

Sadly, too many silly, irrational and inconsistent brethren have lost sight of the purpose of the church. The purpose of the church is to make known the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. 3:10), to preach the gospel (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16), to edify the saints (Eph. 4:11-12, 16), and benevolence, to help needy saints (Acts 6-1-6; Rom. 15:25-27; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). This is the mission of the church! We cannot go beyond what is written (2 Jn. 9-11). Many think the purpose of the church is to entertain and have amusement and recreation. I have heard of parents doing this very thing when looking for a congregation to attend. Instead of looking for a church that practices the truth, they look to see what kind of entertainment they have for little Johnny. *Buy the truth and sell it not . . .* (Prov. 23:23). The truth is the only means of salvation (1 Tim. 2:4). It is the only deliverance from sin (Jn. 8:32), the only principle of holiness (Jn. 17:17), and the one thing needful (Lk. 10:42). Brethren, the gospel is being traded for games and gimmicks. If this is what we're teaching our children, then we're sending them to HELL! There is only one thing which will build up the saints of God and that is the *most holy faith* (Jude 20).

The Lord's church was not commanded to draw people in by gadgets, gimmicks or entertainment. But so many in the body have polluted, adulterated, and poisoned the gos-

pel of Christ to the point that the church looks more like a three-ring circus than it does the blood-bought body of Christ (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 1:19). Let us get out of the entertainment business and get back to the soul-saving business.

There is less and less emphasis placed on the Bible teaching and preaching and more and more emphasis placed on social functions. All of this is designed to draw numbers, not save souls. It is truly sad to see our brethren go a whoring after the denominational concepts as ancient Israel went a whoring after the false gods of the heathen round about them. I'm sick to the heart of watching these foolish, brainless, ridiculous and idiotic ways of drawing people in the church and saying we got them here, let's slip in the gospel. **GARBAGE!** Just what would they be converted to? Brethren, we cannot use entertainment to attract people. **LISTEN**, if the blood of Jesus will not do the job, nothing will!

The church is a spiritual organization. Our Lord didn't die for some social body. Social activities are needed but belong to individual duty and not the work of a local church. "*And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart*" (Acts 2:46). This verse distinguishes their assemblies in the temple area from their social gatherings at home, as does **First Corinthians 11:34**. The church is not in the entertainment business. We need to all be reminded that the home is to provide for the social and entertainment side of life (1 Cor. 11:34).

The church owning a building is not specified but it is authorized because the church is authorized to provide for worship and teaching. Social activities, meals, athletics, and entertainment do not constitute such

worship and teaching, therefore the church has no authority to provide a place for such activities. The effort to slip social activities in under the guise of spiritual edification opens the floodgates to apostasy. Some people enjoy suppers, parties, and gyms, but other people enjoy association in golfing, fishing, hunting, and camping etc. Can you see all the things the church will have to plan, provide, finance, build, and oversee? If such is truly spiritual edification, why can't we read of the New Testament churches providing such things or building such things?

When will we come to the realization that when we raise a generation of young people on fun and games religion, we will lose the purity of the church in that generation (**Eph. 5:26-27**)? Has it already happened? The gospel is the power of God to save (**Rom. 1:16**). All of the gadgets, gimmicks, social functions, and entertainment one can muster cannot save a soul. In fact, it's costing many people their souls! Millions are on a train bound for hell and the church kindly and unbiblically play games with them. Shame on us! We need to wake up! Can you really believe our Lord hung on the cross for six agonizing hours in order to promote entertainment, to bring men and women together to drink coffee and eat doughnuts?

If we truly love the church as we ought, there would be **NO** question concerning this . . . **IT WOULD BE STOPPED!** The church would be *the pillar and ground of truth* (**1 Tim. 3:15**), not the pillar and ground of entertainment.

Brethren, let us return to straightforward Bible preaching and teaching. Let's get back to the work of the Lord! Let us leave the ping-pong, clowns, balloons, talent shows, plays, fellowship halls, ball games, youth directors and gymnasiums to the denominations.

Can the Church Provide Fellowship Meals? By David J. Riggs

Is it Scriptural for churches to provide fellowship meals for its members? Definitely the church can provide food for its own needy members (**Acts 6:1-6; 1 Tim. 5:16**). However, we are asking, "Can the church, from its treasury, provide food (a fellowship

meal) for its members?" Similarly, we ask, "Are church kitchens and fellowship halls authorized in the Scriptures?"

One passage that is sometimes given for church fellowship meals is **Jude 12**. First, please notice the context. The emphasis is on the false teachers, not the meals. Secondly, please remember that when something is to be established by Scripture, there must be plain and clear instruction regarding it. For example, consider the authority for "church support of preachers" in **2 Cor. 11:8-9; Phil. 4:15-16**. **Jude 12** does not mention the church, nor does it in anyway imply that it was a meal provided by the church. Would not a pot luck meal among brethren in someone's home or at the park be a love feast? Could not that which is revealed in **Luke 14:12-14** be a love feast?

Another passage that is used in effort to establish that the church can provide fellowship meals is **1 Cor. 11:20-34**. However, in these verses Paul is not correcting a misuse of a meal (one separate and apart from the Lord's Supper), but the misuse of the Lord's Supper. From verses **22** and **23**, it is evident that some were making a common meal out of the Lord's Supper. Furthermore, it is very significant on how the Holy Spirit corrected this problem. He did not say, "Eat your meals separate from the Lord's Supper, or begin properly sharing your food," etc., but said, "Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?" and, "But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home." (**Vs. 22, 34**). Thus, from **1 Cor. 11:20-34**, it cannot be established that the Corinthians had a separate meal along with the Lord's Supper. It was only a misuse of the Lord's Supper. Definitely, it was not a meal provided by the church.

It is true that in their misuse of the Lord's Supper they were not sharing with others. (**Vs. 21-22**). But again, how does Paul correct it? He plainly instructs them to eat at home. What can Paul's statements, "Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?" and "If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home" mean other than that if anyone was hungry, he was to eat at home? It is the only way the phrases make any sense. Certainly, Paul's statements do not mean that if anyone was

hungry, he was to eat at home so that he could then come to the assembly and properly share a meal with others! And again, it says absolutely nothing about the church providing the meal!

Another passage that is sometimes used is **Acts 2:42-47**. Some argue that this is the collective activity of the church and, thus, authority for church meals. However, the writer is simply explaining the activities of the early church. Some were done collectively, and some individually. For example, prayers are mentioned. Also, **verse 46** mentions, "breaking bread from house to house." Three thousand people (**2:41**) were not moving from house to house to take their meals. The NASV says, "And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart." In other words, these early Christians were sharing their daily meals together. Where does it say that these were collective meals of the church or that the church was providing the meals?

Acts 6:1-4 is also used to prove that the church can provide fellowship meals. However, the provisions were for those in need. The church is authorized to help its own needy. (**1 Tim. 5:16**).

The church cannot provide fellowship meals for its members because such is not authorized. If we practice something which is not in the Scriptures, we don't have God. (**2 John 9-11**). We are not to "think of men above that which is written." (**1 Cor. 4:6**). When we preach "another gospel," the curse of God rests on us. (**Gal. 1:8-9**). Our worship becomes vain when we add the traditions and doctrines of men. (**Matt. 15:9**).

Providing fellowship meals for its members is not part of the work of the church. The primary mission of the Lord was to "seek and to save that which was lost" and this is the primary mission of the church. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. (**1 Tim. 3:15**). It is to help its own needy (**1 Tim. 5:16**), but that's not its main function. The church is a spiritual, soul saving institution. Its work is not to provide food, recreation, or entertainment for its members.

Things of the home should be kept separate from the worship services. For example, some want to make "foot washing" part of the church services. Foot washing was an activity of the home and was never a church function. Likewise, providing fellowship meals is not a church function.

Everyone would readily admit that Christians should have meals together. There are many types of social functions that draw Christians closer together and these are good. However, the social activities are not a substitute for spirituality. Many social clubs have meals and various activities for their members. Although meals bring closer ties and friendships among their members, they do not make them stronger spiritually. It is the spiritual bonds and spiritual activities which make Christians stronger in the faith.

Many denominational churches are beginning to realize that providing meals does not make people stronger spiritually. Their fellowship meals have caused a dwindling membership rather than growth. Here's a quote from a Baptist paper: "Not in sixteen years has the number of baptisms in Texas sunk to such a low...Maybe it would not be out of order for Texas Baptist—along with all Southern Baptist—to stop cooking in our church kitchens, stop playing in our athletic buildings; and call for an old-fashioned prayer meeting...get back to God; back to the Bible...on fire with real love in our hearts for lost souls. Maybe this is the answer." See **John 6:26-27**.

Years ago, there was a great problem of men wanting to join church and state. Man-kind in general suffered many bitter consequences as a result. Today, men are wanting to join church and home. Likewise, many bitter consequences are being reaped: lack of spirituality, emphasis on the carnal, etc. In the end, the results are the same: souls are lost eternally. Let us seek the old paths and do only those things which are clearly and plainly revealed in the Word of God.

Credit: <http://oakridgechurch.com/riggs>

"I'm Too Busy For Church"

By Jonathan L. Perz

It is Sunday morning—time to assemble with the saints of our Lord. Believe it or not, for many, this is a moment of decision. There are so many things around the house calling your name—lawn mowing, repairing the thing-a-ma-jig, washing the car, etc. As all of these things flash through your mind, the Lord calls. You may actually find yourself asking, “Whose call do I heed?”

Do you decide on Sunday morning, or evening, or Wednesday evening, whether or not you are “going to church?” Do you find that chores around the house, fishing, hunting, watching sports, working, or other things, win out over the Lord? What a shameful predicament many place themselves in!

It is shameful because, some day, when the Lord returns again, you will have to explain to Him why you said, “I’m too busy for church.” It is written, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body,

according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Though it is true that attending church is not the ‘end all’ of Christianity, it is nevertheless commanded (Hebrews 10:24-25). Any Christian who must ask himself at the appointed time if he is going to assemble with the saints needs to realize the dilapidated condition of his soul. For the convicted, faithful, zealous Christian, such an appointment is automatic! There is never a doubt, only the faithful fact that he will be there when the saints meet!

When one is too busy to go to church, what they really say is: “I’m too busy for my brethren (Hebrews 10:24-25)” and “I’m too busy for the Lord (Ephesians 1:22-23; Matthew 25:40, 45).” If one is too busy for these, he is too busy for heaven! The next time you find yourself thinking, “I’m too busy for church;” remember what that translates into—“I’m too busy for heaven!”

Credit: www.moodychurchofchrist.com

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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