

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

March 18

2018

Old Issues Do Not Go Away

Back in the 1950s and 60s, our brethren faced the daunting task of dealing with issues within the church such as, the supporting of orphan homes and the sponsoring church arrangement. Now, although many today consider these things to be issues of the past, the truth is, they are still issues today.

For instance, I recently read an article in the November 15, 2017 issue of the Hoosier Topics about the church of Christ in Cloverdale, Indiana. In that article, I read the following, “It is not always easy to know the best way to donate funds. The Cloverdale church of Christ has partnered with two groups, for several years that we feel best handle the monetary donations.” I went on to read, “By having no debt, other than normal expenses, we seek to use God’s money to further spread His word. More than 60 percent of the contribution is used to help missionaries in six different areas as well as supporting preaching school students and two children’s homes in Indiana.”

Now, some may ask, what’s the big deal? Well, first of all, there is no authority given in the Scriptures for any local church to send their money to any other local church or organization to distribute their funds for the preaching of the gospel. You see, we have an example in Philippians 4:15-18, where funds were sent directly to Paul to help aid in his necessities while he preached the gospel, which gives us an approved example to follow today. Therefore, if one is preaching the gospel of Christ, and is in need of financial support, the funds need to be sent directly to the one in need of the support (the

preacher), not to some other local church or organization to distribute the funds as they see fit.

Next, we also have no Scriptural authority given for a local church to send monetary funds to sponsor orphan homes. Again, we are to follow the commands and approved examples given in the Scriptures on how to use the Lord’s money, and we have no command or example given for the support of orphan homes, but rather local churches are to only assist and distribute to the needs of the saints (Romans 12:13).

Folks, I know there are many who would believe that these issues make no difference what so ever. For many would quote the apostle Paul and say, “as we have opportunity let us do good to all...” (Galatians 6:10). However, the problem with that is, Paul is not speaking here in reference to the responsibility of the local church, but rather he’s speaking in reference to the responsibility of the individual Christian.

Therefore, may we all always strive to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15) and let’s follow the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9) rather than the teachings of men (Matthew 15:9). For as we have learned old issues do not go away, so let’s always be on guard against these matters, and let’s do all that we do, in word or deed in the name of the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:17). That is, by His authority!

✍️ Brad Phillips



Pleasing Men Or God?

In addressing the problem of some turning from the gospel of Christ, Paul said to the Galatians, “*For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ*” (Galatians 1:10). When men become more concerned with pleasing themselves or other men than pleasing God apostasy takes place.

When you examine the apostasies that have taken place through the years it soon becomes evident that men were more concerned with doing what pleased themselves than with what pleased God. We see this situation in the religious world today. Doing only that which is

authorized in God’s word is of little or no concern to the majority. If you listen to the TV evangelists you hear no appeal to God’s word. Instead, you hear emotional stories; appeal to feelings or men speaking of their conversions in ways unheard of in the word of God.

When people speak of looking for a “church home” they speak of finding a church teaching or doing things that please them. Very seldom do you hear them say they are looking for a church that teaches only the word of God and seeks to please God in all they teach and practice.

What about you? Whom do you seek to please? Remember, Paul said if he pleased men he would not be a servant of Christ.

✍ James Hahn

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Buying Truth

Buy the truth, and sell it not; Yea, wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. (Proverbs 23:23) Gods truth is treasure of immeasurable value. It alone anticipates and provides for mans every spiritual need because it, as man, has come from God Himself. Only this truth shows man how to be freed from sin and how to serve God. By it comes faith, unity of the Spirit and sanctification. It is the only adequate defense against Satan. This truth is the second-most precious thing to come from the Father.

However, to accomplish its Divine purpose, truth must be appropriated into the lives of individuals. This is what our text calls buying. The price of truth is that which it requires of those who would embrace it. As with most truly precious things, truth cannot be bought with money. Those who would buy it must pay for it in the coin of learning, belief, and obedience.

Truth must be known to be owned: learned to be earned. God endowed man with both mind and truth but has left it to man to get truth into his mind — and this is achieved only at the price of mental industry. Such learning leads to Christ: Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me (John 6:45). The blessings of truth are many and great, but every one of them is predicated upon its being known. Needless spiritual poverty abounds because so many are unwilling to pay the price of learning in order to acquire truth. My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge... (Hosea 4:6) But, neither can one claim truth as his

who does not believe it. Knowledge is not faith; knowing truth is not the same as believing it. Rather, knowledge is to faith as cause is to effect (Romans 10:17). These things are written that ye might believe (John. 20:31). Saving faith is unfaltering trust in God and His Son founded on a firm conviction of His truth. Apart from this truth there is no faith: there is nothing of faith, claims to the contrary notwithstanding. The excellence of genuine faith lies in WHAT is believed. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. (1 John 5:9)

Finally, truth is owned through obedience. At this point, much alleged faith proves counterfeit. Many say Lord, Lord but refuse to pay the price of doing His will (truth): hence waive its purchase. Contrary to the popular and contradictory concept which urges all men to do their own thing in their own way, God is only served in the doing of His will. There is much doing that is not serving in truth (Joshua 24:14; 1 Samuel 12:24; Matthew 7:21). Only wrath and indignation await those who obey not His truth (Romans 2:8).

This precious truth is available only in the market place of the Bible. Those who would buy it must pay the price individually and on the lifetime installment plan. Faithfulness means meeting all installments coming due on truth — even unto death.

This truth IS the pearl of great price — a bargain at any price! Buy it and sell it not.

✍ Dan S. Shipley

Belleville church of Christ

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Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

James Hahn (317) 745-1507