

# THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

July 21

2024

## 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 once read an article in an 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 (i.e. the preacher), and 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 distribute to the needs of the saints (Ref. Acts 11:27-29; Romans 12:13, 15:26).

Now, I know there are many who would believe that these issues make no difference whatsoever. 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 always 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 (i.e. by the authority of) the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:17).

*✍ Brad Phillips*

## Sometimes It Is Not Enough!

One of the earliest jobs my dad had was teaching school—he began while he was still in his teens, with a one room school in upstate Mississippi. Some of his students in the higher grades were as old and as big as he was, and more than one time he maintained discipline with the threat of a literal fist fight! He would tell me of a mother who brought her son to school and explained that he was very sensitive. She said, “whenever there is trouble, and discipline is called for, just hit the boy next to mine, and Junior will get the message. There will be no need to actually punish him.” (To this day, I am not sure whether this actually happened, or was one of his “made up” experiences). Whatever, I’m here to tell you it will not always work.

Early in my preaching “career”, not much older than my dad was as a teacher, I was in a work in central Illinois, and a Methodist lady started attending. For some reason she became attached to me, and continually praised my efforts, coming up to me after every lesson to tell me how much she appreciated my stand for truth. Believing (and I still do) that my work included identifying and opposing every stripe of religious error, I started including in my material lessons on sprinkling, and the error of salvation by faith only, as well as one or two other fallacies the church she was with held to – and this continued for a number of months. No matter, she still held me high, and expressed her respect for me as a teacher who “taught the bible”.

After a while, it dawned on me that there was a disconnect between what “her church” believed, and the truths I advanced relative to those things. I had taken these issues in isolation, without being specific about who taught them. Eventually, I

preached a lesson on Methodism, pointing out that the Methodist church taught sprinkling, faith only, instrumental music, and so on. That was the last time she commended my teaching, and soon after she quit attending... As long as I was “hitting the one next to her” (teaching without making a specific connection), she failed to get the message! When she realized these things had personal implications, her prejudices kicked in.

The lesson I learned? Teaching “general truth” falls short of the demands of gospel teaching! Biblically, teachers in the first century made it clear as to the application: “THOU ART THE MAN” ....God doesn’t “blind side” folks, and neither should we. Becoming a disciple requires hard choices, and it does not help to withhold the implication of such alternatives. “Warning the wicked from HIS wicked way” (Ezek 3:18-19) is an uphill fight if he doesn’t even know he is among the wicked!

*Aubrey Belue*

### Belleville church of Christ

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Website: [www.bellevillechurch.net](http://www.bellevillechurch.net)

#### Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study .....	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship .....	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship .....	4:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study .....	7:00 p.m.

#### Evangelist

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