



Liberalism and Institutionalism:

Issues that Divide Us



1

The Issues

- **Biblical Authority**
- **Social Gospel**
- **Human Institutions**
- **Unlimited Benevolence**
- **Sponsoring Church**



**Our Focus
Today**



3

Local Church Benevolence:

**Limited or
Unlimited?**

Presuppositions

- God's word is our all-sufficient **pattern** (2 Tim. 1:13)
- We must have **Bible authority** for everything we do (Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11)
- All things must be authorized by **command, statement, approved example, or inescapable implication.**
- We must **not deviate** from God's instructions (Gal. 1:6-10; 2 Jn. 9-11; Rev. 22:18-19)
- When God says **nothing**, He means **"No"** (2 Sam. 7:1-7)

Benevolence:

5

The Issue is Not...

- Should needy people receive care? – Jas. 1:27
- Are we concerned about the needy? – 1 Jn. 3:17; Jas. 2:15-16
- Do individual Christians and local churches have benevolent responsibilities? – Eph. 4:28; Jas. 1:27; 1 Tim. 5:16
- Are individual or congregational responsibilities being fulfilled? – Mt. 6:1-3

Benevolence:

6

The Issue Is...

- Who is the church to assist?
- Who is the individual Christian to assist?



7

The Individual Nature of Christianity

Christianity Begins with the Individual

- Responsibilities begin with the individual and move outward
- Seen in conflict resolution – Matt. 18:15-17
- Seen in benevolent responsibilities – 1 Tim. 5:3-4, 8, 16
- Seen in influencing others for Christ – Matt. 5:13-16

Church VS. Individual Responsibilities

Church

- Worship/edify – Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17-33; 1 Cor. 14
- Discipline members – 1 Cor. 5
- Assure truth is preached in congregation – Rev. 2-3
- Help needy saints among them – Acts 6:1-6
- Help needy saints in other places – 1 Cor. 16:1-4; Acts 11:27-30
- Support preaching of the gospel – 1 Cor. 9:4-14; Phil. 4:15-16; 2 Cor. 11:8

Individual Christian

- Not forsake worship – Heb. 10:24-25
- Help all – Mt. 5:43-48; Jas. 1:27
- Live righteously – Tit. 2:11-12
- Obey/honor parents – Eph. 6:1-3
- Raise godly children – Eph. 6:4
- Be good spouses – Eph. 5:21ff; Tit. 2:3-5
- Be good workers – Tit. 2:9-10
- Do one's spiritual part – Eph. 4:16
- Edify – Eph. 4:29
- Preach truth – 1 Tim. 4:16
- Confess sins – 1 Jn. 1:9; Js. 5:16
- Put others above self – Phil. 2:3-4
- Faithful until death – Rev. 2:10
- Study bible – 2 Tim. 2:15
- Produce fruit – John 15:1-8
- Be honest – Eph. 5:25, 28
- Obey and honor rulers, pay taxes – Rom. 13:1-8
- Settle conflicts personally – Mt. 18:15
- Face judgement – 2 Cor. 5:10
- Etc.!



10

Benevolence:

Biblical Distinctions

Benevolence: Individual Vs. Church

Individual

- ▶ Help all deserving people – 2 Thess. 3:10
- ▶ Do good to **all men** – 1 Tim. 6:17-18; Heb. 13:16; Jas. 4:17
- ▶ Help even our **enemies** – Rom. 12:17-21; Matt. 5:43-48

Local Church

- ▶ Helps deserving needy – 2 Thess. 3:10
- ▶ Disciples sent relief to **needy saints** – Acts 11:27-30
- ▶ Helped their **own needy saints** – Acts 4:32, 34-35; Acts 6:1-6

Who Received Help?

- **Acts 2:44-45:** “Now all who **believed** were together, **and had all things in common**, ⁴⁵ and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among **all**, as anyone had need.”
- “All” is determined by the **context**.
- Context: Did **all** people of the earth, Palestine, Jerusalem, or believers receive help?

Who Received Help?

- **Rom. 15:25-27, 31:** But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to **the saints**.²⁶ For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain **contribution** for **the poor among the saints** who are in Jerusalem.²⁷ It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if **the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things**, their duty is also to minister to **them** in material things...³¹ that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to **the saints**”

Who Received Help?

- **1 Cor. 16:1** – “Now concerning the collection for **the saints**, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also”
- **2 Cor. 8:4** – “imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to **the saints.**”
- **2 Cor. 9:1, 13** – “Now concerning the **ministering to the saints**, it is superfluous for me to write to you...¹³ while, **through the proof of this ministry**, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for **your liberal sharing with them and all men**”

Who Received Help?

- 1 Tim. 5:3, 5 – “Honor widows who are **really widows**.... ⁵Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, **trusts in God** and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.”

Who Received Help?

- **Gal. 6:10** – “Therefore, as **we** have opportunity, let **us** do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

Who Is To Take Action?

(Gal. 6:1-5)

“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, **you** who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering **yourself** lest **you** also be tempted. ²Bear **one** another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³For if **anyone** thinks **himself** to be something, when **he** is nothing, **he** deceives **himself**. ⁴But let **each one** examine **his** own work, and then **he** will have rejoicing in **himself** alone, and not in another. ⁵For **each one** shall bear **his** own load.

Who Is To Take Action? (Gal. 6:6-10)

⁶Let **him** who is taught the word share in all good things with **him** who teaches. ⁷Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever **a man** sows, that **he** will also reap. ⁸For **he** who sows to **his** flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but **he** who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. ⁹And let **us** not grow weary while doing good, for in due season **we** shall reap if **we** do not lose heart. ¹⁰Therefore, as **we** have opportunity, let **us** do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

2 Cor. 5:10

Singing

- Mt. 26:30
- Mk. 14:26
- Acts 16:25
- Rom. 15:9
- 1 Cor. 14:15
- Eph. 5:19
- Col. 3:16
- Heb. 2:12
- Jas. 5:13

O
N
L
Y

Saints

- Acts 2:44-45
- Acts 4:32-35
- Acts 6:1-6
- Acts 11:27-30
- Rom. 15:25-26
- 1 Cor. 16:1-2
- 2 Cor. 8:1-4
- 2 Cor. 9:1, 12-13
- 1 Tim. 5:16

Baptism

- Acts 2:38
- Acts 8:12
- Acts 8:38
- Acts 10:43, 48
- Acts 16:14
- Acts 16:33
- Acts 18:8
- Acts 19:5
- Acts 22:16

B E L I E V E R S

Benevolence

- Acts 2:44-45
- Acts 4:32-35
- Acts 6:1-6
- Acts 11:27-30
- Rom. 15:25-26
- 1 Cor. 16:1-2
- 2 Cor. 8:1-4
- 2 Cor. 9:1, 12-13
- 1 Tim. 5:16



21

The defense of

General Benevolence

No Separate Duties

- ▶ **V. E. Howard:** “The church is composed of Christians; what the church does, Christians do; what Christians do, the church does, generally speaking. **We cannot separate the Christian’s work from the work of the church...**Actually we may say that **whatever is the duty of a Christian is the duty of a congregation of Christians.**”
(*Institutionalism, Orphan Homes and Church Cooperation*, pp. 6, 7)

The Individual is not the Church:

Matthew 18:15-17

- ¹⁵“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between **you and him alone**. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.
- ¹⁶But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of **two** or **three** witnesses every word may be established.’
- ¹⁷And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to **the church**. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.



1
Not a
Church



2 or 3
Not a
Church



Church
Is a
Church

Two Treasuries



Honest Labor (Eph. 4:28)

Individual (Acts 5:4)

Contribution (1 Cor. 16:1-2)

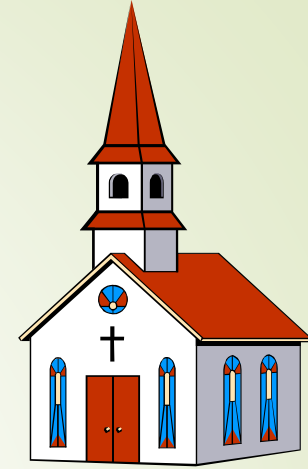
Taxes (Rom. 13:7)

Family (1 Tim. 5:8, 16)

Good Works (Gal. 6:10)

Method of Raising Oversight

Use



Offering (1 Cor. 16:1-2)

Elders (Acts 11:30; Tit. 1:7)

Evangelism (2 Cor. 11:8)

Benevolence (Acts 4:32-34)

Edification (Eph. 4:11-18)

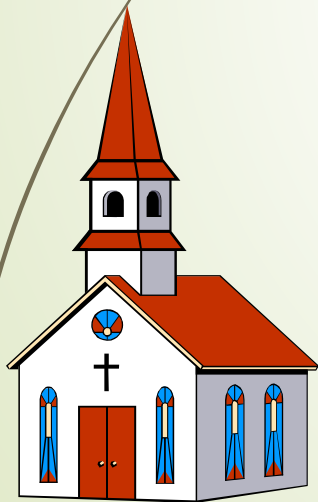
1 Timothy 5:16



Relieve Them



Do Not Burden



Relieve Those

