

Receiving Funds Into The Treasury From Other Churches

June 20, 2007

Note: In the August 2006 issue of the Old Paths Advocate appeared a question in The Querist Column and answered by Ronny F. Wade. The question was: 'Is it scriptural for a church to plan a meeting (or work) larger than they can afford and receive funds into their treasury from other congregations?' I believe this question to be of great importance and warrants serious attention. Below is Ronny's reply with which I totally concur. BJJ

To correctly answer the above question, we must first determine the Bible pattern for the work of the church in the field of evangelism. The scriptures teach us that the church in its universal sense is only a spiritual relationship and not an organization (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:19-22). For the church to function, therefore, it must do so through local congregations. There is no unit of organization revealed in the Bible larger than the local church. The local congregation has every characteristic of the church universal (1 Cor. 12:27). Each congregation has a work to do. Each congregation has a treasury that it controls and with which it does the work of evangelism. In the Bible there is no hint of a super or extra congregational organization to carry out the work God has given the church to do. How then, did New Testament churches preach the gospel?

Pattern of the Philippian Church

1. Philippi sent directly to Paul when he was at Rome. "Your care for me hath flourished again" (Philippians 4:10); "Ye have well done that ye did communicate with my affliction" (4:4); "I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you" (4:18).
2. Philippi sends directly to Paul at Thessalonica, "For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity" (Phil. 4:16).
3. Philippi sends directly to Paul in Achaia, "Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only" (Phil. 4:15).
4. Churches sent directly to Paul at Corinth, "I robbed other churches,

taking wages of them to do you service” (2 Cor. 11:8). From whence came these wages? “And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied” (2 Cor. 11:9).

The Bible pattern is clear: local churches sent to preachers directly, rather than through another church. Violation of this principle is what led to the missionary society and the current sponsoring church arrangement. In such an arrangement a church usually undertakes a work or meeting, or crusade (such as Herald of Truth television broadcast) which they cannot support alone. They then ask churches all over the state or nation to help them. These contributing churches send money to the asking or sponsoring church which in turn proceeds with the work. Such an arrangement is wrong for the following reasons:

1. It violates the autonomy of the local church. Churches sending funds to the receiving church lose their autonomy. The work becomes the work of the sponsoring church (No Bible pattern for this).
2. A treasury larger than the treasury of the local church is created. We have in effect a central treasury i.e. one made up of funds received from numerous churches (No Bible pattern for this).
3. This arrangement is a substitute for the one revealed in the Bible which provides for each congregation making up its own fund, by the contribution of its own members and sending directly to the work they are supporting.

It surprises and disappoints me when I hear of churches writing and requesting funds from other churches for a particular work, which they have undertaken, and these churches in response to the letter send monies to the treasury of the requesting church. Brethren, this is wrong. Just as wrong as Sunday school or individual cups. In fact there is just as much scripture for one as there is for the other. All such practices fly in the face of God’s approved pattern.

Another area we need to be careful about is the desire of a church to have a “big meeting” or a “brotherhood meeting” which they cannot support themselves. So, in order to have it, they write for help and several churches send money to the treasury of this requesting church (to do whatever needs to be done) so the meeting can be held. In the first place, the very concept of a “brotherhood meeting” or a meeting belonging to several churches strikes at the tap root of congregational organization and church autonomy upon which the universal church depends. Secondly, the only way sending churches can have control over the funds they have sent would be for there to exist some type of conference consisting of

delegates empowered by their respective congregations to speak in behalf of the sending church. Such a practice would be an example of sectarianism and digression gone to seed. Brethren let us stay with the Bible pattern in all things and avoid the pitfalls sin offers.

BJF Newsletter 04-29-07 Volume 1, Number 8