

Gospel Power



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16)

The Gospel Power is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

**Anderson
church of Christ**
5900 Highway 207
Anderson, Alabama

Visit Us On The Web
Anderson-church.org

Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, December 2nd:

Bible Classes

Song Leader
..... Kevin Chancellor
Bible Reading (Num. 23:25-30)
..... Jonathan Keenon
Prayer
..... Mark McIntyre

Morning Worship

Song Leader
..... Kevin Chancellor
Prayer
..... Eddie J. Hammond
Lord's Supper
Presiding Rocky Rose
Assisting Andrew Gatlin
Serving Corey Goode
..... Ethan Pressnell
..... Mark McCrary
..... Jim Phillips
Closing Prayer
..... Rocky Rose

Evening Worship

Song Leader
..... Jerry Dickey
Bible Reading (Num. 24:1-13)
..... Rodney McCrary
Prayer
..... Brian Blakely
Lord's Supper
..... Rocky Rose
..... Andrew Gatlin
Closing Prayer
..... James Word

Volume XIV

December 2, 2007

No. 48

The Restoration of Giving

Harold V. Comer

This is a day of religious fund raising and money promotions. With all of the emphasis on pressure and gimmicks, there is a great need to restore the New Testament pattern of giving. The first century practice would correct many of the abuses that have become so obvious and distasteful in religious groups today.

I propose that the New Testament church had a specific pattern of fund raising which it was commanded to follow. That pattern called for freely given contributions, contributed upon the first day of the week.

Few people deny the fund raising abuses that exist today. Churches take up repeated collections at any excuse. Stewardship committees solicit members with high pressure techniques seeking larger pledges. Some churches tax members and to set what each member's contribution will be.

Some groups have repeated bake sales, rummage sales, fund raising suppers, car washes, candy promotions, and solicitation of non-members. Denominational groups build large endowments and investment resources with contributed funds. Congregations operate rental properties for profit.

Some preachers are always preaching on money and repetitively push for increased giving. Some preachers appeal to materialistic desires with promises of wealth, assuring you that your contribution will be returned in actual dollars and multiplied ten times or even one hundred times.

In churches of Christ a congregation would sell tapes for profit with the stated purpose of supporting its TV program. An institutional radio program offers prizes and gifts if you will send in a minimum contribution. "Special" contributions are taken up

on Wednesday evening or during a meeting. Some preachers continually “harp” on giving.

If you are tired of a calloused, materialistic emphasis on money, you need to go back to the New Testament and ask if God cared enough about the financial affairs of His people to command anything specifically about how the necessary money matters were to be carried out. Did God command anything on this subject?

Only Contributions Commanded

In 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 the apostle Paul commanded, “...as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”

In 2 Corinthians 8:7 Paul referred to the grace of giving. He said, “...see that ye abound in this grace also.” In 2 Corinthians 9:7 Paul commanded, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” In Acts 4:32-37 the church at Jerusalem practiced sacrificial giving in its hour of great need.

Note that the passages show that contributions were commanded. Paul says that his words were an order or a command. God cared enough about their financial processes to specify one way to do it. When an authority specifies a certain way, that command excludes doing it any other way unless that other way is authorized elsewhere. No other commands are given about congregational fund raising so anyone who wants to go back to the New Testament pattern today should expect to have a contribution but should expect to stop there.

The contributions were specified for the first day of the week. The laying by in store was not laying some money by at home because then there would have to be collection or collections when Paul came. The contributions were to be given upon the first day of the week.

That is why churches that are determined to follow the New Testament pattern do not take up collections every night during a gospel meet-

ing or on Wednesday evening. I’m sure that many could use the money well but a continual emphasis on money is finally distracting to their spiritual purpose of saving souls. When churches continually stress money they begin to look like pagan religions where salvation and redemption are purchased with one’s silver and gold (1 Peter 1:18).

Occasionally, congregations depart from this pattern because of needs that are “special” purposes to them. An institution or a “missionary” wants a special collection, the pattern is bent and an unscriptural precedent is set as the congregation takes up a “special” Wednesday night contribution.

Paul also specified that the contributions were to be given freely and cheerfully. Churches that use high pressure to squeeze more money out of people than they are willing to cheerfully purpose in their heart and give are violating the original plan. They show little concern in restoring the first century pattern for fund raising.

If we restore the New Testament pattern of giving we are going to have to teach commitment of ourselves to God (2 Corinthians 8:5). We are also going to have to teach on giving and encourage brethren to give liberally (2 Corinthians 9:13). Yet that is different from a constant emphasis on church budgets, needs and financial matters.

If New Testament churches are to support themselves by the contributions of their own members, that excludes them from door to door solicitations or street corner appeals. A church that is seeking to restore the first century practice will not allow itself to be drawn into sales and fund raising promotions. It will not be drawn into apartment management or farm management by keeping farms or apartments that might be given to it.

If you appreciate the simplicity of the contribution practices of Paul and Peter and the rest of the apostles, and the congregation where you attend doesn’t follow those, then there are probably other areas where they have departed also

and you need to give thorough consideration to all of their practices, examining them and comparing them to the original pattern.

-via *College View Columns*; Florence, Alabama.



Simplify Your Life

Mark Mosely

One of the biggest contributors to the confusion, dissatisfaction, distraction and weariness of our lives is that they are too complicated. Our lives are filled with too much clutter. We are living in a hall of mirrors so that we cannot distinguish between reflections and reality. We are constantly running into walls and in circles without making any progress. Let me make a couple of suggestions.

First, set priorities. List what *must* be done in your life. There are many things I want to do that I have left undone for many years. I still haven't finished that children's book I started twenty years ago. I keep meaning to get with my friend Steve to work on our music. There are projects galore around my house that need some attention.

But my days are focused on accomplishing one thing. Paul said it is the, "*the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*" (Philippians 3:13-14). Jesus told Martha that only one thing was necessary. Think about that. There is only ONE necessary thing. If you leave that out nothing will ever be right.

Second, set goals. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:26, "Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air." How do you "aim" to accomplish your

priority in life? Are there "unnecessary" things that are standing in your way? The Hebrew writer says, "Let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." (Hebrews 12:1) Is your life tangled up and tied down so that you feel that you are getting nowhere with God? Perhaps it would help to sit down and make a list of your obligations. What are your "goals" this week, this month, this year? Can you accomplish those goals without altering your priorities? Are some "goals" clutter?

Understand, not every moment in life has to be momentous. We need times of rest and laughter. But act according to plan and with purpose. You're not building a house just because you are blindly swinging a hammer! You're more likely to put holes in the wall than to accomplish anything worthwhile.

-via *Hueytown Church Bulletin*; Hueytown, Alabama

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Wynell Ridgeway* has been sick this past week and has not been able to be out... *Trent Thornton* has not been able to be at services due to teeth problems. He is to have a root canal done soon... *Molly Kate Phillips* was sick last weekend, but is better now and was able to be Bible study Wednesday night... *James McConnell* has been sick unable to be at services this past week... *Jimmy and Charles Glass' sister, Janice Moody*, suffered another fall this week. She is at home recuperating from her broke hip and the surgery to repair it... *Myrtie Williams* continues in Glenwood Convalescent Center in Florence... *Onzell Tucker* is still coping with compression fractures in her spine.

She was able to get some medicine this week to help manage the pain. She and Jack are confined at home... *Sheila and Robyn Goode* were both sick and unable to be at Bible study Wednesday night... *Jim White, Eric White's father*, is continuing his cancer treatments ... *Signa Skipworth, Catherine Parker & C.L. Weathers' cousin, Hilda Fincher*, is now at her home ... *Judy Williams' mother, Flossie Kazzaire*, continues in a nursing facility in Fayette.

OUT OF TOWN: *The Clemmons: Michael and Sissy* have been on vacation this week.

LEAVING US: Today will be the last Sunday that *Cori Williams* will be with us regularly. She is having to move to Birmingham with her work. We hate to see Cori go, but we look forward to her being back with us when she can. May the Lord bless her.

COMMUNICATION GROUPS: This evening will be the time for Communication Group C to meet. If you are in group C remember to meet with your group this evening.

ELDERS/DEACONS MEETING: The elders and deacons will be meeting next Sunday afternoon.

SYMPATHY: We want to extend our deepest sympathy to *Eddie Hammond and all the family* in the passing of his aunt, *Marvella Davis*. She passed away this past Tuesday and her funeral was Thursday in Greenhill.

THE RECORD: Attendance—Week of Nov. 25th
Sunday:

Bible Classes 89
Morning Worship 110
Evening Worship 77

Wednesday:

Bible Classes 76



Remember Our Bible Class Periods

Sunday at 9:45 a.m.
Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Michael Clemmons (256) 247-0836
Scottie Goode (931) 565-3391

Deacons

Jimmy Glass (256) 247-0571
Eddie J. Hammond (256) 247-3038
Mark McIntyre (256) 729-8316
Steve Parker (256) 247-7843
Phil Pressnell (256) 232-8509
Rocky Rose (256) 247-0011
Brian Word (931) 565-3799

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