

# Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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## Edification

Barry O'Dell

The English word *edify* appears twenty times in the New Testament in one form or another. The word means, “the act of building.” Nineteen of the twenty times this word is used in the New Testament it is used by Paul and has the sense of Christians encouraging or strengthening one another (Rom. 15:2; Eph. 4:29). It has been said that the church has three important works: evangelism, benevolence, and edification. Evangelism is the work of spreading the gospel to those who are outside of Christ. Benevolence is the work of helping those in need,

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whether inside or outside of the body of Christ (Gal. 6:9-10). Edification, as it is revealed in the pages of the Bible, is a responsibility

of the church in an effort to keep the saved, saved. How can we accomplish the important work of edification?

We can edify one another by not tearing one another down. In Romans 14 Paul dealt with matters of conscience among Christians and wrote, “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Rom. 14:19). In the same context he wrote, “Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification” (Rom. 15:2). He instructs us to not despise one another and to remember that God is the Judge in such matters, not man (Rom. 14:2, 12).

We can edify one another by speaking properly to one another. Paul wrote, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Eph. 4:29). It is the case that words can hurt and be detrimental. Consider some things that Solomon wrote about words: “In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin” (Pro. 10:19). “Grievous words stir up anger” (Pro. 15:1). “A fool’s mouth is his destruction, and his lips are

the snare of his soul” (Pro. 18:7). Our words can be a tree of life or a source of foolishness (Pro. 15:2, 4). God’s children should use their words to strengthen their brethren, not cause them harm.

We can edify one another by fulfilling our own responsibilities within the body of Christ. Paul wrote about this aspect of edification in Ephesians 4:11-16. God wants His church to grow up and for every joint to supply its work for the purpose of the “increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Every member of the church has work to do! If one part fails to do his/her part, the whole body suffers. First Corinthians 14 reveals that there was much division in that congregation because of a spirit of competition among the brethren and an abuse of the spiritual gifts they possessed. Paul commanded them, “Let all things be done unto edifying” (1 Cor. 14:26).

We can edify one another by our faithful attendance at the assembling of ourselves together (Heb. 10:24-25). Some of the Hebrew Christians were in danger of falling away and were told, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised)” (Heb. 10:23). What happens when a Christian sins willfully by forsaking the assembly? The author wrote that that child of God, “. . . hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace” (Heb. 10:29). We must never underestimate the encouragement we can give or the damage we can do with our attitude toward the assembly of the church.

God wants His church to be strong and mature. Paul encouraged the Corinthians by writing, “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men (act like men), be strong. Let all your things be done with charity” (1 Cor. 16:13-14). Perhaps all of the above points on edification could be summed up with two verses written by Paul: “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Phil. 2:3-4).

## Evangelism

Clint Yarber

Before Jesus ascended into heaven He left His disciples with what is often called the “Great Commission.” Mark recorded, “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mk. 16:15). In the Bible this work is called “evangelism.” The word “evangelize” simply means to announce good news (the gospel).

Evangelism is the work of the whole church. Unfortunately there are those today who believe that the Great Commission was limited only to the apostles. While the immediate context of the Great Commission is Jesus speaking to the apostles, the early church knew that the Great Commission belonged to them as well. As we read of the church in Jerusalem (the model church) and their efforts to be pleasing to God, one cannot but notice their zeal to evangelize the world. “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). While some might contend that the apostles were the ones who did the evangelizing, the Bible indicates something different. Acts 8:1 states that those who were scattered were everyone “except the apostles.” Then, verse 4 tells us that those who were scattered went everywhere spreading the good news. Thus it was the entire church, not

***“ . . . it was the entire church, not just the apostles who fulfilled the Great Commission.”***

just the apostles who fulfilled the Great Commission. Evangelism is called the work of the church because it the work of the

whole church, not just one man or a certain group of men.

But why has God given the church the work of evangelization? Paul wrote, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher” (Rom. 10:13-14)? If Christians do not tell others about the gospel, then who is going to do it? The message of Jesus dying for man’s sins can

save humanity only if they hear it and believe it. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth...” (Rom. 1:16). But a person cannot believe in something of which they have never heard: “So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). God does not desire even one person to perish (2 Pet. 3:9). That means He wants all men to hear the good news. How important is it? It is impossible for even one man to be saved without evangelism!

While there is only one gospel, there are many different methods that can be used to spread the good news. Evangelism can be done in a one on one Bible study, but it can also be done in other ways too. Sometimes it may be a simple invitation for one to attend church services or a Bible study. It was through Philip’s invitation that Nathanael came to accept Jesus as the Son of God and thus hear of God’s salvation (Jn. 1:45-46). Consider the Samaritan woman that Jesus encountered at Jacob’s well (Jn. 4:5-7). It was because of her invitation that the men of the city came unto Jesus (Jn. 4:28-30). At the very least each one of us can invite someone else to a place where they can hear the good news. But there are many other forms of evangelism that one can practice too. A person can write an e-mail, a letter, or an article and inform others about the good news. If your fear is that you cannot communicate well enough, do not panic! God never said that men had to hear the good news in your own words. Tracts can be handed out or books can be given which will help others to hear the good news. One can tweet, Facebook, blog, text, etc. to help spread the word of God. Whether it is in our own personal words or the words of others we are doing the work that God has given us to do. We are evangelizing the world or spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Evangelism is an important work that God has given the church to do. May each of us work to spread God’s word “...until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate” (Isa. 6:11).

*Clint preaches for the Gospel Hill church of Christ in Pottersville, MO*

**Benevolence**

Larry Yarber

“And he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” (Eph. 4:11-12). One of the works of the church, as listed above, is that of ministry. Many have understood this phrase to be the preaching of the gospel. However, this is not the case. Of this phrase David Lipscomb and J.W. Shepherd wrote, “There are two different words used in the Greek to designate the work of serving and the work of preaching the gospel. *Ergon diakonios* indicated the work of serving; *ergon evangelistes* the work of preaching the good news of salvation. The term used here, translated ministering, is the one which designates work of serving or ministering to the wants of the afflicted – first of the household of faith; secondly, to all the suffering mortals of the earth”<sup>1</sup> The church is, by implication, commanded to be a benevolent institution.

That the early church was to be involved in benevolence is evident by the command to collect funds for this work, “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye” (1 Cor. 16:1). We need to remember that the collection of these monies was used, not only for benevolence, but also for evangelism and other congregational obligations, “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14), and, “Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things” (Gal. 6:6). The Gentile congregations were being instructed by Paul to set aside a portion of these funds to send to their Jewish brethren, “For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things” (Rom. 15:26-27). The Gentile helping the Jew not only broke down racial barriers, it also broke down congregational barriers. The church is one body consisting of many congregations, and individual members, throughout the entire world who are to work together to the glory of God (Matt. 5:16). Likewise, some of these monies were to be used to help

the poor and needy. The poor have been mentioned above and concerning those in need Paul penned, “If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed” (1 Tim. 5:16). Since orphans are aligned with widows by James, it is obvious that they are to be aided by the saints too, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (Jas. 1:27).

God is benevolent to all men according to the word of Jesus (Matt. 5:45). Until these people obey the gospel they are destitute of God’s spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3), but His physical benevolence is still extended toward them. The Lord and His disciples, from a collective purse, were benevolent to all men, “Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simons son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor” (Jn. 12:4-6; also see and read Jn. 13:27-29). Since the New Covenant began with the teachings and examples of our Lord, we should imitate these things, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;” (Heb. 2:3; also see and read 1 Pet.

***“ . . . the church, as a collective body, is to be benevolent to all men.”***

2:21). According to the inspired Paul the church, as a collective body, is to be benevolent to all men (Gal. 6:10; also see and read 2 Cor. 9:12-13). The Corinthians

text is a parallel text to the Galatian passage and ends with these words, “... for your liberal distribution (*fellowship – see Strong, 2842, pg. 56 - LY*) unto them, and unto all men.” Like God and His Son, we are to fellowship all men in carnal things, but can only offer them spiritual fellowship after their obedience to the gospel.

*Larry preaches for the Curry St. church of Christ in West Plains, MO*

<sup>1</sup> David Lipscomb and JW Shepherd, *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles, Vol. 4, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians* (Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, TN) pg. 78.

**F.C.G.N. CONTRIBUTIONS FOR JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2016**

**CHURCHES OF CHRIST**

Viola (Viola, AR) .....	50.00
East Side on the Hill (Lexington, OK) .....	60.00
Pritchett (Big Sandy, TX) .....	100.00
Clarkridge (Clarkridge, AR) .....	150.00
Moody (Moody, MO) .....	100.00
Agnos (Agnos, AR) .....	100.00
Pilot (Mammoth Spring, AR) .....	700.00
Elizabeth (Elizabeth, AR) .....	100.00
Sturkie (Sturkie, AR) .....	100.00
Mammoth Spring (Mammoth Spring, AR) .....	2000.00
Gepp (Gepp, AR) .....	300.00
Lowell (Springdale, AR) .....	100.00
Bakersfield (Bakersfield, MO) .....	100.00

Camp (Camp, AR) .....	80.00
Bellefonte (Harrison, AR) .....	100.00

**PERSONAL**

L.W. Mayes (Memphis, TN) .....	25.00
Joel Patterson (Bentonville, AR) .....	300.00
Wilene & Luceile (Franklin, AR) .....	60.00
Helen Rious (Franklin, AR) .....	100.00
Gail Weaver (Franklin, AR) .....	25.00
M&M Gerald Cozort (O'Fallon, IL) .....	100.00
Pat Crouch (Salem, AR) .....	100.00
Wilma Wolverton (Grain Valley, MO) .....	20.00
Linda Childs (Corinth, MS) .....	15.00
Raymond Moran (Springdale, PA) .....	200.00
Bill Tabor (Malden, MO) .....	20.00

**Service Times for Mammoth Spring church of Christ**

- Sunday AM Class - 10:00
- AM Worship - 10:45
- PM Worship - 6:00
- Wednesday Night Class - 7:00

Church of Christ  
 PO BOX 251  
 Mammoth Spring, AR 72554  
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 Service  
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***God's Authorized Worship  
 - Colossians 3:17 -***

1. Lord's Supper - Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-24
2. Prayer - Acts 12:5; Philippians 4:6-7
3. Singing - Ephesians 5:19; Hebrews 13:15
4. Giving - I Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:7-8.
5. Preaching - Acts 2:42; 20:7

***The Churches of Christ***

1. The Bible is the only guide - Rom. 1:16
2. A Biblical name - Rom. 16:16
3. Established in Jerusalem Acts 2:1-4
4. Established by Christ - 1 Cor. 3:11
5. Established in 1st century - Acts 2:47
6. The body of the saved - Eph. 5:23
7. You can be added to the church of Christ by being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins - Acts 2:41, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13

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