

*In
Search
of...*

Truth & Right

GENESIS

Tim Henderson, Editor

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"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Phil. 4:8 (NASB-U)

A publication of the
**Wellsburg
church of Christ**
Which meets at:
112 Sunset Ave.
Wellsburg, WV 26070
304-737-1422

We appreciate so much your presence here with us today. We would like to extend an invitation to join us at any of our other times of worship.

TIMES OF SERVICES

SUNDAY

Bible Classes* 10:00 AM

AM Worship 10:45 AM

PM Worship 6:30 PM

WEDNESDAY

Bible Classes* 7:00 PM

(* Bible Classes for All Ages)

Today's Sermon:

Forgiveness

*Audio CD's are available
free of charge in the foyer.*

*Please visit our website:
www.truthandright.org*

*If you have any questions regarding
what we teach and practice, please
feel free to ask*

The Work God Gave the Local Church

Steve Klein

via-The Auburn Beacon—09-26-2010

God is the Master designer. We need only look at the physical universe to realize this. Psalm 19:1 tells us that, *"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork."* The intricate and marvelous design of the creation shows the wisdom of God. *"O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all..."* (Psalm 104:24). Of course, God's wisdom can be seen in other things He has designed -- like the church. Ephesians 3:10 teaches that the *"manifold wisdom of God"* is made known through the church.

God is the Creator and Designer of the local church, too. His wisdom is seen in the way the church is designed to work just as it is seen in the way the physical creation is designed to work. Men cannot improve upon God's designs. At our best, we learn to read the blueprints and follow them.

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Unfortunately, many fail to recognize this when it comes to the local church. They view the local church as some sort of free-form association of Christians, whose own members are at liberty to determine its form and function -- how it will work and what it will do.

The New Testament clearly reveals that local churches are all to follow a single God-given pattern. Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth is an obvious effort to bring that church into compliance with the blueprint God has for every church. Paul told the Corinthian church that he sent Timothy to them to "*remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church*" (1 Corinthians 4:17). Notice that the "ways" Timothy would remind the Corinthians of were the same things Paul taught everywhere in every church. Later in this letter, as Paul sets down several rules governing conduct in worship assemblies, he explains that "God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints" (1 Corinthians 14:33). The church at Corinth was expected to conform itself to the same standards as every other church. There is plainly a single pattern every church must follow. Call such a view "narrow" or "monolithic" if you will, but it is what the Scriptures teach.

The focus of this current article is the work God has given local churches to do. What is it that every local church is to do? For what purposes has God designed the local church? What does HE want it to accomplish? Only when we have the correct answers to these questions will we have God's wisdom at work in the local church. Only then will we have a ready answer to questions like "Should the church do this?" or "Should the church do that?" The answer will be, that the church should do its God-given work -- nothing less, nothing more -- and that work is...

Evangelism

The first work God has given local churches is evangelism. The church at Thessalonica was praised because from it "*the*

word of the Lord has sounded forth" (1 Thessalonians 1:8).

Here is the pattern for every church! Here is a mission we must not lose sight of! Yet some do. An extreme illustration may be seen in a story I read some time ago about a little old lady who visited Westminster Abbey. Unimpressed by the tour guide's comments about the architecture and history of the place, she broke in and said, "Young man! Stop your chatter and tell me has anyone been saved here lately?" Too many local churches fail to appreciate the duty they have to reach out to the lost with God's word. So much time and energy is spent on keeping house, on impressing and serving themselves with purely human endeavors, that they lose sight of the vital soul saving work with which God has charged them.

Just as churches sometimes lose sight of the soul saving mission God has given the church, they also sometimes lose sight of God's plan for accomplishing that mission. According to God's plan, local churches may spread the Word through several means. They may send out evangelists from among them like the church at Antioch did (Acts 11:20-24; 13:3; 14:25-27). They may support evangelists financially, like the Philippian church and others did (1 Corinthians 9:14; 2 Corinthians 11:8; Philippians 4:15-16). They may invite unbelievers into their worship assemblies to hear the word, as was apparently the practice of the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 14:24). However, men have devised many other schemes ostensibly to do the work of evangelism. Missionary societies and sponsoring church arrangements top the list of human designs that are not part of the work God designed for the local church. You just can't find them in God's blueprint -- the Scriptures.

Edification

Local churches must actively involve themselves in the work of edification. "Edification"

refers to building up and strengthening those who are Christians. This is one of the primary reasons that local churches assemble together for worship. In 1 Corinthians 14:26, as Paul by inspiration regulates these assemblies, he commands, *"Let all things be done for edification."*

Edification, it should be carefully noted, is not doing whatever we want to do to make one another "feel good." Rather, it is doing what God has told us to do to make one another stronger, better, and more faithful. Singing, praying and partaking of the Lord's supper are God-given means of accomplishing edification in the church (1 Corinthians 14:15; 11:18-34). So is the preaching of God's word (Acts 20:7, 32). Pot-luck suppers, Christmas parties, pageants, rock bands, Elvis-impersonator concerts and basketball games are not the edification God planned for the church, despite the fact that many churches include these things in their "work." The edification to be done by the church comes in, from and through God's word (Acts 20:32). It involves instruction, exhortation, correction, reproof, rebuke, and even withdrawal (2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6). It does not entail every self-serving, feel-good activity men can think up.

Helping Needy Saints

As we've seen, churches are designed to meet man's spiritual needs in God's way, according to His plan. In general, we may also observe that God designed the world so that, through His providence, men are individually able and responsible to work in order to fulfill their own physical needs (cf. Genesis 3:19; 1 Timothy 5:8). However, famine, natural disaster, economic crises, death of a provider, or similar problems can prevent individuals from being able to meet their physical needs. In such circumstances, God expects His children individually to do what they can to help (James 1:27; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 4:28, etc.).

God perhaps could have given local churches the work of helping any and all who are in physical need as well. But the simple fact is that He did not. It may be that He knew such a task would be beyond the resources of the local church. In 1 Timothy 5:16, the reason given for having individual Christians take care of their own widows, rather than having the church do it, is that God did not want the church to be "burdened."

However, God did give local churches the responsibility of relieving the physical needs of destitute saints. This is the pattern we see followed repeatedly in Scripture. Help to alleviate physical needs was given by churches to *"anyone among them who lacked"* (Acts 4:33-35), to widows among the *"number of disciples"* (Acts 6:1), to *"brethren"* dwelling in Judea (Acts 11:26-30), to *"the poor among the saints in Jerusalem"* (2 Corinthians 8:1-4; Romans 15:25-26), and to *"the saints"* (2 Corinthians 9:1, 12). Consistently, the pattern is that churches had the work of helping needy saints, never non-saints.

Churches need to concern themselves with doing the work God designed them to do. Far too often for far too long, church work has been driven by human idealism rather than divine wisdom. Typically, men start with a human idea of "good work," then ask "what's wrong with it?" And then, if they do not find it specifically condemned in Scripture, they begin to practice it. This process has produced not only the man-made mess known as denominationalism, but also division after unscriptural division among churches of Christ. What we need to do is start with God's design, accept that His way is not only right but also best, and then follow His pattern implicitly. In John 17:4 Jesus said, *"I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do."* I wonder how many churches today could say that they have glorified God by doing the work He has given them to do?

Those Serving This Week

Sunday AM

Class Prayer	Harold Marshall
Announcements	Ed Roberts
Song Leader	Wayne Campbell
Scripture	Matthew 27:51-66
Reader	Ken Prager
Prayer	Dave Harless
Speaker	Tim Henderson
Lord's Supper	
Bread	Chuck Isinghood
Fruit of the Vine	Don Coen, Sr.
Serve	Terry Smith
Serve	Dan Marton
Closing Prayer	Tim Henderson

Please inform the one in charge of announcements if you are unable to fulfill your responsibilities.

Sunday PM

Announcements	Ed Roberts
Song Leader	Harold Marshall
Scripture	Matthew 28
Reader	Chaz Shaffer
1st Prayer	Earl Miller
Speaker	Tim Henderson
Communion	Don Coen, Sr.
Closing Prayer	Don Coen, Jr.

Wednesday

Class Prayer	Tim Henderson
Announcements	Ed Roberts
Song Leader	Nathan Marshall
Invitation	Don Coen, Jr.
Closing Prayer	Wayne Campbell

News N Notes

Please continue to remember these in your prayers:

Sick/ Poor Health:

- **Phyllis Coen**
- **Zeda Goddard** is at home
- **Blake Headen**, Alberta's husband
- **Robert Schwerferger**, Alberta Headen's brother-in-law diagnosed with brain cancer.
- **Ronald Lancaster**, as he continues dialysis and recover.
- **Norman Gamble**, Ruth Ann Lemley's brother, passed away Friday morning.
- **Virginia Malick**, Peggy Miller's mother
- **Harold Marshall**, diagnosed with colon cancer.
- **Kitty Morgan**, is at Carriage Inn in Steubenville.
- **Jimmy Roberts**, Ed & Marie's son
- **Jim Roberts**, Ed Roberts' father
- **Marie Roberts**
- **Kris Shane**
- **Terry Smith**
- **Gabriel Taylor**, 5 year old great grandson of Don & Phyllis, dealing with cancer.

Don't forget our Shut-ins

Ann's Retreat:

- Josephine Clow

Brightwood Center:

- Shirley Campbell

Valley Haven:

- Ethel Mahan
- Pauline Sellers

At Home:

- Mabel Fleming
- Zeda Goddard
- Betty Hunter
- Pauline Midcap
- Ann Rudolph

Send them a card—give them a call—let them know we are thinking about them.

If someone needs to be added to this list, please call:
304-914-2262 or 304-914-2263