

Bedford Bulletin

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BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE
F A I T H
1 Corinthians 3:9-11

Things That Divide (Part 8) The Church of Christ

We're looking at the works God has authorized His church to do. In part 7 of this series I offered the acronym "B.E.E" for Benevolence, Edification and Evangelism, and concerned ourselves with the meaning and practice of "Benevolence". In this issue we move to the work of Edification.

Paul commands, "Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may [a]edify another" (Rom. 14:19). This word "edify" [οἰκοδομέω], according to Helps Word Studies is a compound word; "οἶκος a house and domeō, to build". But I must point out that domeō refers to the edifice or roof of the house which implies building up to the roof, thus figuratively—to edify as used by Paul means to, build someone up, helping them to stand and be strong. W.E.Vine says "is used only figuratively in the N.T., in the sense of edification, the promotion of spiritual growth." This holds true whether we speak of the individual or of a local church.

In light of this, let me say, "You need bigger shoes". What do I mean by this? There is a proportional and physical relationship between your body's growth and your shoe size. As members of the body of Christ we all need to "outgrow" our current spiritual shell and grow up in Christ. Through love we, "...may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ" (Eph. 4:15). Every local church grows exactly in proportion to the growth of its individual members. The analogy would be, as members grow, so must the building. Peter said, "But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18).

One area where edification, building up is critical, is that we give the new converts the encouragement and assistance which they need to grow. That's what Paul means by saying, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). Can we grow in this area?

TODAY WE CHOOSE TO REJOICE

Proverbs 11:25

*"The generous soul will be made rich,
And he who waters will also be watered himself."*

Church, we have been given such powerful blessings, one of which is our

right to assemble as Christians and to edify and build up the members of the body of Christ and worship Him in Spirit and truth (John 4:24). Cherish this for there is a push by some of our nation's leaders to stamp out the church, it's rights to peacefully assemble and it's rights to teach and practice the truth. Edifying one another is like feeding each other.

Why is edification so important to the life of the Lord's church? Well, because if each we don't put this into practice, we'll never grow, and we'll surely cease to exist as a local church. Hear what Paul had to say to the elders in Ephesus. Acts 20:28 and 29, "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church [a]of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also

Knowing & Doing God's Will

Proverbs 11:14

from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking [b]perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves."

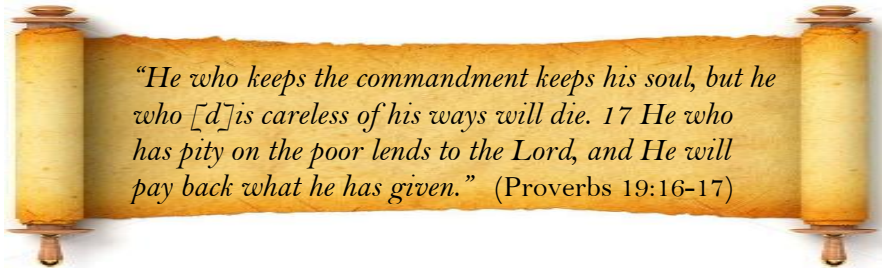
So, then we find that the church has the God-given right to preach the gospel, and secondly to teach its own members, and third to engage in worshipping God Almighty. What are "*perverse things*"? The Greek word [diastrophō] diá, "through, thoroughly," and strophō, to "turn") mean—turned through (thoroughly), into a new shape—which however is "distorted, twisted; perverted" (Abbott-Smith) – i.e. "opposite" from the shape (form) it should be. Thayer's: "perverse, corrupt, wicked". Jesus just before healing a man's son spoke this word to an unbelieving audience saying, "*O [a]faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you*" (Luke 9:41). Paul emphasized that God's children were to shine as lights, "*in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation*" (Phil. 2:15).

Again, what are "*perverse things*"? Anything that is practiced or taught in the body of Christ that differs from the gospel that was "*once for all delivered to the saints*" (Jude 3). Does your church have a kitchen? That's a "*perverse thing*". Does your church have instruments of music? That's a "*perverse thing*". Does your church have fundraisers to raise money apart from the collection on the first day of the week, food drives, day care, secular schooling, clothing drives. That's a "*perverse thing*". Does your church have a single man you call "pastor", that's a "*perverse thing*". Does your church out of its treasury financially support another institution that does the evangelism or teaching for you? That's a "*perverse thing*". Does your church have a "praise team", or a choir? That's a "*perverse thing*". Paul makes it clear there is only one Gospel, and that teaching, preaching or practicing anything that is not authorized by scripture is a perversion. "*6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert[a] the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be [b]accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. 10 For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ. 11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ*" (Gal. 1:6-12). I pray you caught that. Anything, anything that is a "*different gospel*", is a "*perverted*" gospel and is "*accursed*", that is an anathema. What is an anathema? Thayer's "a man accursed, devoted to the direst woes... (pregnantly equivalent to doomed and so separated from Christ)" Something that one absolutely and positively cannot stand is anathema. Garlic is anathema to vampires, kryptonite to Superman or a silver bullet to a werewolf.

This is so often overlooked by members because of apathy or indifference. Too often we forget "*what say the scriptures*" and say, O' it's just a fundraiser, it's just helping others and that cannot be bad.

Listen carefully! Individuals helping others outside the church is not bad. Giving money and time to feed and clothe the poor outside of the church, is not bad. Singing in a school choir is not bad. Giving out of your own pocket to support your local school system is not bad. But taking from the church treasury to do any of these is sin, because the church is authorized to use its collection only for its members.

We must not take what is given for the work of the church, "B.E.E.", exhausting our God given responsibilities to the point that we cannot take care of our own members. When there is a need by a brother or sister in the body of Christ that cannot be met because we're over budget and we're over budget because we've



"He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, but he who [d]is careless of his ways will die. 17 He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will pay back what he has given." (Proverbs 19:16-17)

given so much to those who are outside the body of Christ, that is a perverted use of resources, and therefore a sin.

As always, in Love

Dave Scarpino

Times of Our Services

Sunday Morning Bible Study	9:00 AM
Sunday Morning Worship	9:50 AM
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 PM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:30 PM

What Must I Do to Be Saved?

1. Hear the gospel -----John 6:45; Romans 10:17
2. Believe the gospel -----John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6
3. Repent of sins -----Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30
4. Confess Christ -----Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized -----Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38
6. Remain faithful unto and until death -----Revelation 2:10; Matthew 10:22