

The Work of the Church

- I. What was God's intent for the Lord's Church?
 - A. Through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God was to be revealed (Eph 3:8-10)
 1. Notice that until revealed in the first century, God's plan of salvation was generally unknown.
 2. Angels, ministering servants of God's saved (Heb 1:14), longed to know and to see (I Pet 1:12)
 - B. God's revelation is called the "mystery" or secret wisdom (Eph 3:9; 6:19; I Cor 2:6-8; I Tim 3:9)
 1. The Gentiles are heirs with Israel (Eph 3:6)
 2. The mystery is Christ Himself (Col 2:2; Rom 16:25) – the Gospel
- II. What are the works of the New Testament Church?
 - A. Evangelism (Mark 16:15):
 1. Preaching the Gospel - (I Cor 15:1-4; Acts 4:18-20; Acts 8:4; Rom 1:15-16)
 2. The Church is to be the pillar and support of the truth - (I Tim 3:15; John 17:17)
 3. Examples: Philippians (Phil 1:3-6,4:14-19); Thessalonica (I Thess 1:5-8)
 - B. Edification: to build up and promote spiritual growth (I Cor 14:26)
 1. This is a critical aspect of God's design for the Church (Eph 4:11-16)
 2. The Church is to teach and admonish its members (Rom 12:6-7; Col 3:15-16)
 3. Jesus Himself commanded that His disciples should be taught (Matt 28:20)
 4. We are to stimulate one another to love and good works – (Heb 10:24; Eph 2:10)
 5. Spiritual growth is expected - not optional (Heb 5:11-14; I Cor 3:1-3; Rev 3:14-18)
 - C. Benevolence: assistance to those who are in physical need
 1. The Church is to help others (James 2:14-17; I John 3:16-17; I Cor 16:1-3)
 2. The Lord's Church freely gave to help its members in need (Acts 2:45; 4:32-35; 11:28-30)
 3. Christians are to provide for themselves and their family when possible (I Thess 4:9-12; I Tim 5:8)
 - a. The church is not to be burdened by helping those who have family members capable of doing the job - see example of widows (I Tim 5:1-8, 16)
 - b. Christians who are unwilling to provide for themselves should do without (II Thess 3:10-12) - The Church is not to help those who can help themselves
 4. There are Biblical examples of "Church assistance" where Christians "collectively" help "other Christians" (II Cor 8:1-5)
 5. Does this preclude Christians from helping non-Christians in need? NO!! (Luke 10:29-37)

- a. We are to work so that we may have to share with those who have need (Eph 4:28)
- b. II Cor 9:13 permits help for non-Christians as well.
- c. However, we are to give special attention to fellow Christians (Gal 6:9-10)

III. The New Testament Church is a family of workers

- A. The Church was created in Christ Jesus to do good works (Eph 2:8-10)
- B. God works in the world today through Christians (Phil 2:12-13)

IV. Some things are NOT works of the Church

- A. The Church was never expected to miraculously eliminate all the social ills of society
 - 1. Hunger: Jesus fed thousands (Matt 15:32-39) from a few loaves and fish and yet chose not to solve the problem of world hunger
 - 2. Poverty: Jesus acquired money from the mouth of a fish (Matt 17:27) and could have eliminated world poverty and yet He declared that the poor will always exist (Matt 26:11)
 - 3. Disease: Jesus healed the sick (Luke 4:40-41) and yet He did not heal all humankind but departed from those that tried to keep Him from His work - preaching the Kingdom of God (Luke 4:42-44)
 - 4. Slavery: The New Testament Church contained both slaves (Onesimus) and slave owners (Philemon) and yet did not politically advocate the overthrow of slavery (Eph 6:5-9; Gal 3:27-28)
- B. The Church (God's Kingdom) is not to be a political action platform (John 18:36; Matt 22:19-22)
- C. The Church has a higher mission (John 6:26-27)

Dual Nature of Humankind

