

# THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

May 17

2009

## The Individual And "Societies"

### Dear bro.Turner:

Many say an individual may contribute to an orphan's home; for an individual may use his money as he chooses. May this individual contribute to a missionary society? (One that did not receive money from the churches.).

### Reply:

I have certain obligations to my children, not simply because I am a Christian, but because I fathered them. I would have these obligations even if I were not a Christian (1Timothy.5:8) although being a Christian adds obligations in this field (Ephesians.6:4).

As a part of the human race, I have certain obligations to my fellow man, regardless of Christianity. The Gentiles (without law, Romans 2:12-f) sinned by being unmerciful; (Romans 1:30-31) even as they did by being disobedient to their parents. Think carefully on these things, and you will see that general benevolence is not a peculiarly Christian obligation; but is an obligation which all mankind shares.

Hence, I may (and should) help those less fortunate than I. This is a humanitarian obligation – by virtue of purely human circumstances. For this reason (not because one "may use his money as he chooses") an individual may support eleemosynary institutions (I should not support those that propagate false religious doctrine, for obvious reasons.).

But preaching the gospel of Christ is a Christian, not a humanitarian obligation. As an individual Christian I may teach (2Timothy 2:2) or help those who teach (Galatians 6:6); or I may (and should) join hands with other Christians to function collectively in support of the gospel (2 Corinthians 11:8). But God has designated, authorized and prescribed regulations for such collective (or "organized") work of Christians. God authorized the local church, autonomous, independent. To set up, support

or encourage any manmade organization in this work would be wrong. It is in order to note here that the local church is given certain benevolent responsibilities (1 Timothy 5:16) and in carrying out these obligations the church must not relinquish her God-given responsibilities to a "sponsoring" church or church combine. God's plan is sufficient for the accomplishment of God's work.

The missionary society and most (if not all) benevolent societies operated by brethren today are parallel in that both (a) pool the funds of churches – serve as media for collective operation of churches – (b) to do the work God specifically assigned the single, local independent church. But there is a basic difference in preaching the gospel and general humanitarian welfare work. Purely humanitarian benevolence could be supported by an individual Christian without conflict with his obligations to the Lord through the church; but support of a missionary society would conflict with such obligations.

Buying services or products, where no God-given responsibilities are relinquished, must not be confused with "support" of an institution.

✠ Robert F. Turner (July 1966; Plain Talk)



## *Without Faith It Is Impossible To Please God*

We are examining in more detail what God requires of us to be saved: 1) Hear Christ (Heb. 1:1-2); 2) Believe Christ (Jn. 20:31); 3) Repent (Acts 17:30); 4) Confess Christ (Rom. 10:10); 5) Be Baptized (Mark 16:16); and, 6) Live Faithfully (Col. 1:22-23). This week we'll consider what we must believe in order to be saved.

**1) We must believe in God.** Hebrews 11:6 says “*without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*” Note that two things are involved: 1) Belief in God’s existence, and 2) Belief that God rewards “*those who diligently seek Him.*” Importantly, belief goes beyond a mere recognition that God exists. Belief also requires obedience to His word. James said “*the demons believe -- and tremble!*” (Jas. 2:19) So a belief that saves goes beyond just a mental assent of God’s existence to the obedience of His word, for “*faith without works is dead*” (James 2:26).

**2) We must believe the gospel.** In Mark 16:15-16 Jesus said to His disciples, “*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*” He also told them the one “*who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.*” Believe — or not believe — what? The gospel! Those who believe and obey the gospel message will

have forgiveness of sins (Rom. 6:16-17); those who do not believe and obey it will be condemned to eternal punishment (2 Thess. 1:8).

**3) We must believe Jesus is the Christ.** As John concluded his gospel, he told us he recorded Jesus' miracles so "that you may believe." Believe what? "That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." As we read, we accept the evidence that leads us to believe and faithfully obey the Lord's teachings (Lk. 6:46) and receive the benefits of that "obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5). Or, we reject it and remain an unbeliever, receiving the punishment for having done so (Jn. 8:24).

The faith that saves believes and obeys the commands that bring forgiveness of sins. "And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized." (Acts 18:8) Do you believe? Have you confessed your belief? (Rom. 10:9, 10) Have you turned from your sins? (Acts. 17:30) Have you been baptized "for the remission of sins"? (Acts 2:38; 22:16) If not, why not do so today?

✍ Ryan J. Thomas



## "Sunday School" Or "Bible Class"?

Over the years the phrase "Sunday School" has been coined to refer to a Bible class for young people on the first day of the week. I personally prefer calling it "Bible Class" as that designation emphasizes God's good book as the content to be taught. Sadly though, calling these 30-45 minute periods, "Bible Class" would be inaccurate in some churches. More and more we see and hear of glorified crafts classes where children have very little Bible impressed upon their precious minds.

Can scripture be taught to young ones? Timothy's guardians thought so. Paul wrote, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3:15). The word "child" from that passage literally means "infancy." From his earliest of days, Timothy was feeding upon the wonderful words of life. I'll guarantee his knowledge of the holy scriptures was not dependant upon the number of bird feeders or wind vanes he constructed.

Let's not insult the intelligence of our little people. Sure, there may be a prop, visual aid, or project that helps reinforce the Bible point we are making. But please let us make sure the Bible point is being made. After all, it is supposed to be a Bible class.

✍ David McPherson

## Bible Class Teachers

I commend David's article to you. As he noted, in some places what some call "Bible Classes" are nothing more than "play periods" or baby sitting sessions. I wish to commend those who recognize the importance and value of making these classes Bible study periods. As David noted, it is an insult to our children to think they cannot learn the Bible. I have seen the youngest of children sing the songs they have learned on Sesame Street or repeat commercials they have heard on TV, but we are told they are too young to learn Bible stories and verses.

As parents we need to support and show appreciation to those teachers who work hard in preparing Bible lessons for the classes they teach. We can do this by proper teaching and training at home. Some children have not received proper training and discipline at home so they do not know how to behave themselves in a Bible class. When this situation exists the teacher is unable to teach the children who are misbehaving, nor the other children either, because of the disruption caused by the children misbehaving.

Also, we need to make sure our children attend the classes. It is sad when teachers have studied long and prepared to teach the class and then the students do not show up or are not regular in their attendance. Let's all work to make our Bible classes what they should be, i.e. a period of Bible study and learning.

✍ James Hahn

### **Belleville church of Christ**

5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258

[www.bellevillechurch.net](http://www.bellevillechurch.net)

#### **Schedule of Services**

Sun. Bible Study. . . . . 9:30 a.m.  
Sun. Morning Worship. . . . . 10:30 a.m.  
Sun. Evening Worship. . . . . 5:00 p.m.  
Wed. Bible Study. . . . . 7:00 p.m.

#### **Elders**

Charles Carpenter. . . . . (317) 839-3873  
James Hahn. . . . . (317) 745-1507

#### **Deacons**

Leon Nevins. . . . . (317) 272-2966  
Don Perry. . . . . (765) 676-5825  
Alvin Stanley. . . . . (317) 831-3514

#### **Evangelist**

James Hahn. . . . . (317) 745-1507