

Unity In The Church

No Orphan Homes

(I Co 16:1-4)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons on the “Unity In The Church.”
 - a. Last week we looked at “No Eating In The Building.”
 - i. **I Co 11:20-22** “When you come together, it is not the Lord’s supper that you eat. 21 For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry, another gets drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.”¹
 - b. This week we will be examining “No Orphan Homes.”
 - i. **I Co 16:1-4** “Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. 3 And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.”
3. This debate in the brotherhood has been going on for a long time unfortunately.
 - a. It is not limited to “orphan homes” either.
 - i. There is a distinction made with the term “institution” and hence anything deemed an institution is without authority, in those known as “anti.”
 1. A widows home or private collage are other examples of that which is deemed an institution and unscriptural, in their minds.
4. This “topic” however is that which is probably the most well-known out of all of those with which we have discussed thus far.
 - a. Hopefully we each will be more aware of the issues at hand and can get together with our “anti” brethren and unite in the church once again.
5. Before I begin let me clarify what I will not be affirming or suggesting in anyway.
 - a. I will not be affirming the church is insufficient to do the job given it to do.
 - b. I will not be affirming that brethren have the right to establish a missionary society or anything parallel.
 - c. I will not be affirming that the church is delegating its duty to a benevolent organization.
 - d. I will not be affirming that the only way to care for orphans is by way of an orphan home.
 - e. I will not be affirming that the church as a right to shirt autonomy and forfeit its responsibility.

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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I. The Argument

- A. The first argument: It is the local churches responsibility not an institutions
 1. Brother Cogdill in his debate with Brother Woods said, "It is contrary to the Scriptures for churches of Christ to build and maintain benevolent organizations for the care of the needy, such as Boles Home, Tipton Home, Tennessee Orphan Home, Childhaven, and other Orphan Homes and Homes for the Aged that are among us." (Cogdill-Woods Debate pg. 5)
 2. Brother Dye in the article "A Matter Of Authority" wrote, "But we do not believe the local church has the responsibility of feeding people of the world, or of carrying on a program of general benevolence among those who are not saints, or members of the body of Christ. Furthermore, we do not build, maintain, contribute to, promote, condone, nor utilize human benevolent societies – called orphan or widow's homes – through which to do the benevolent work for which this local church is responsible."
- B. The second argument: It is the churches responsibility and as such cannot be supported from the treasury
 1. Though this one is based heavily on the first we will still look to see if this is thus true.
 2. One brother wrote, "IT IS WRONG FOR A CHURCH TO DONATE FUNDS TO HUMAN INSTITUTIIONS BECAUSE THE CHURCH ITSELF IS SUFFICIENT TO DO EVERYTHING THAT GOD COMMANDS THE CHURCH TO DO. THE CHURCH IS NOT DEPENDENT UPON HUMAN INSTITUTIONS TO FULFILL ITS MISSION." (<http://goo.gl/xTBbL2>)
- C. Thus...
 1. Because God has made it the role of the local church to be benevolent and not institutions the church cannot build or support such institutions.

II. The Argument Examined

- A. Some things we must understand before looking into this matter
 1. When examining what God has authorized one can and should realized that God authorizes the whole by the sum of its parts.
 - i. Illustration: God's Plan of Salvation
 - a. Sum: Hear/Study God's Word **Ro 10:14, 17**
 - b. Sum: Put Faith in Jesus **He 11:6**
 - c. Sum: Repent **Ac 17:30**
 - d. Sum: Confess Jesus as Lord **Mt 10:32**
 - e. Sum: Be Baptized unto the Remission of Sins **Ac 2:38**
 - f. Whole: Salvation
 - ii. God clearly states this as well.
 - a. **Ps 119:160** "The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever."
 - iii. Thus whenever you go to look to see if something is authorized or not one must look up every aspect of the matter to get the whole picture.

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2. When examining what God has authorized one must understand that God authorizes in specifics and generics.
 - i. We are specifically authorized to make disciples in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (**Mt 28:19**).
 - a. The specifics are clearly stated.
 - ii. We are generically authorized to “go” (**Mt 28:19**).
 - a. This means we are not told “how” to go.
 1. We can go by foot, train, plane, automobile...
- B. Examining the arguments
 1. Orphans are to be taken care of.
 - i. **Ja 1:27** “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”
 - ii. **Ga 6:10** “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”
 2. Orphans are not specifically told how they are to be taken care of.
 - i. James only teaches we are to visit.
 - a. **Ja 1:27**
 - ii. Galatians only teaches we are to “do good by them.”
 - a. **Ga 6:10**
 3. Orphans are children without parental care.
 - i. This sounds strange to talk about but it isn’t.
 - a. I had someone tell me that a child whose parents have left them without any parental care (abandoned them) is not an orphan because their parents are still alive.
 - ii. Jesus makes it clear that a child can be an orphan even though the parent is still alive.
 - a. **Jn 14:18** “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”
 4. God’s love extends to all men.
 - i. A work motivated by biblical love is a work that is authorized by Scripture.
 - a. **I Co 16:14** “Let all that you do be done in love.”
 - ii. Benevolence towards those that are not saints is a work motivated by biblical love.
 - a. **Mt 5:43-48** “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”
 - iii. Thus benevolence toward non saints is authorized by God.

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5. The church cannot function as a home.
 - i. Parents are over the home.
 - a. **Ps 68:6** “God settles the solitary in a home...”
 - ii. Elders are over the church.
 - a. Elders have no authority to function as heads of a home.
 1. Obviously over their own homes they are but it is as a parent not elder.
 - b. Elders are not elders if on the board therefore.
6. An orphan needs a home.
 - i. A child’s needs cannot be adequately met without a home.
 - a. **Ep 6:4** “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”
7. It is scripturally right to comply with legal requirements.
 - i. As long as the civil law does not violate the spiritual law we are to adhere to the civil law.
 - a. **Ro 13:1** “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”
 - ii. As such we see there is nothing wrong with having a board or being incorporated.
 - a. A board legally stands as guardian of the orphan.
 - b. Incorporation is simply required to get a license for child-care.
8. A local church can contribute to orphans.
 - i. **Ga 6:10** “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”
 - a. Notice this is not to individual Christians but to the congregations in Galatia.
 1. **Ga 1:1-2** “Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— 2 and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia”
9. The orphan home is nothing more than a home.
 - i. Which of these examples would be a home?
 - a. A husband, wife, and three natural children.
 1. Home
 - b. A husband, wife, and three natural children plus three legal children who were left without parental supervision and care.
 1. Home
 - c. A husband, wife, three natural children and three legal children that has been incorporated because the law demanded it.
 1. Home
 - d. Three natural children and three legal children whose parents die and a guardian (board) is placed over them.
 1. Still a home
 - ii. To justify one of these homes justifies the others.

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C. Thus...

1. If the points above are true, and they are, then the sum will equal whole, which it does. Therefore it is scriptural to build and support orphan homes from the church treasury.

CONCLUSION

1. Brethren these topics, though difficult to discuss knowing we are in many ways divided over such, are essential to understand and hopefully these have helped you to better defend the truth and help those that are “binding where God has not bound.”
2. Question: Are you able to defend God’s Word on this topic?
 - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If not why not?
3. Invitation²
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**

² World Video Bible Schools material on “Antism” was use greatly in the development of this outline. Quotes that are not give proper credit are directly from this material.