

T H E C O N T E N D E R

Contending For The Faith Once For All Delivered To The Saints (Jude 3)
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THOSE CHURCH WEDDINGS

Marriage is decidedly an institution ordained by God, and most certainly spiritual consideration must be a part of the promise of men and women to be husband and wife. But I remain unconvinced at this date that the usual ceremony that is labeled a "church wedding" is a work of the congregation and thereby a fit event to be preformed in its building.

Think with me on this. Formal weddings are characterized by a display of ornate clothing, the lighting of candles, the singing of secular songs, the processional, the recessional, etc. Is this a description of a religious service? Instrumental music is used sometimes, even in church buildings, and is almost always used if the ceremony is preformed elsewhere. This must prove to all Christians that it must not be a religious service. Rather, the formal wedding is a secular custom, with Bible reading and or teaching on marriage occupying a part of the whole picture. The only recorded wedding Christ attended was obviously a social and secular occasion. The wine and merry-making were certainly not a part of a religious service.

We might liken the matter to an inauguration ceremony of a government official. Government is ordained of God. (Rom. 13) With most any installation in office there is prayer offered and sometimes a Bible reading. But does this make the ceremony a religious service? If so we could use the church building for inaugurations. I hold that our so-called "church weddings" are a true parallel. (What is a "church wedding" anyhow?) The ceremony in both instances is basically a social-secular occasion, with the religious flavor a small part of the whole proceedings.

Yes, marriage is ordained of God, but not the ceremonial trappings that social custom dictates today. The idea of being married "by the church" originated with the Catholics. The Catholic Church seeks such complete control over her subjects from birth to death that everything must be done "by the church". To be refused to be married or buried by the church is not to be taken lightly by Catholics. But how can Christians be married "by the church"? Think about it.

--J.D. Tant--

"A CHURCH BUILDING"

WHY THE CHURCH CAME TOGETHER

A CHURCH building is a CHURCH aid paid for by CHURCH money (God's money Acts 5) to expedite CHURCH work.

1. Worship Acts 20:7
2. Hear Word Preached Acts 11:26
3. Evangelism Report Acts 14:26,27
4. Prayer Acts 4:31
5. Discipline Matt. 18:17
6. Benevolence Acts 6
7. Edify Itself Eph. 4:16

EXPEDIENCY

"Apt and suitable to the end in view" (Webster) The building is only a lawful expediency when it "speeds up" "the end in view" which is the work of the church. Expedients must be lawful (by their use cannot change the will of God) (I Cor. 6:12, 10:23)

"Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful."
(I Cor. 4:2)

WEDDINGS AND INAUGURATIONS COMPARED

1. Both are ordained of God. (Rom. 13)
2. Prayer given on both occasions.
3. The Scriptures are read on both occasions.
4. Both are honorable and good but not the work of the church.
5. Neither is a "religious servious" with pagentry, secular songs, etc. occupying a good part of the time.

SOME QUESTIONS: I believe, brethren, if you understand what the work of the church is and what expedients are you will have little trouble being edified with this lesson. Can you answer the below questions:

1. Were the Jews permitted to marry in the Tabernacle or Temple?
2. Were O.T. marriages religious services on a congregational basis or were they private affairs?
3. Whose work are weddings--the congregations' or individuals'?
4. If individuals', can the church aid by providing its building for everything the individual does provided prayer and Bible reading are done?
5. Can a church use its building to ordain a government official?
6. Can a church use its building for a poling place?
7. Can the building be used for school graduation?
8. Was the wedding Jesus attended a social or religious occasion?
9. Can instrumental music be used in weddings in the building?
10. Is it not true that instrumental music has crept into the worship of the church through the seemingly innocent church wedding in the building?
11. Could one have a 50 year anniversary in the building?
12. Would the building be a lawful aid if it were used for other than the work of the church?
13. Where does one "draw the line" for the expediency of the building if not at that which directly bears upon the work of the church?
14. If marriages are a work of the church then the entire church must be present...why send invitations to a select few?

AWAY PREACHING: This past month we have found an empty building in the Garrison, Ky area and many thanks are to be extended to brethren here at South Shore who have sacrificed themselves that perhaps the Truth might be planted in Garrison. (Tannery)

TO GO TO INDIA: If our Father protects me on this dangerous journey through your prayers, through His will I hope to return to you by Jan. 19th. The congregation is to be commended for allowing me to preach the Gospel there.

OTHERS TO GO SOON: Lord willing, bros. Bernard Bolton and Emery McCallister are soon to return to India to strengthen the brethren there and are worthy of sound brethren's and congregations fellowship. Their address:

Emery McCallister
Rt. #2 Box 166-C
Chesapeake, Ohio 45619

Bernard Bolton
1705 Dedo Dr.
Valdosta, Ga. 31601

"And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have taught you publickly, and from house to house...Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."