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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)  
Church of Christ: 4th Ave. P.O. Box 649, South Shore, Ky. July 14, 1974  
Editor & evangelist: Richard E. Swan, Phone: 932-3244, Vol. III No. 28  
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WHAT ABOUT THE CHURCH?

I've prepared this lesson for all of you who are "college happy" and institutionally minded. I trust these Scriptures will sink deep in your minds and you will have a new appreciation for the all-sufficiency of the blood-bought church of Christ to do itself every work God has given it to do. Remember for the church to build and support a human institution whether it be a Bible College or an Orphan Home is to act without God's authority and therefore sin! Now if you have had a part in promoting another institution to do the work God has given the church to do you need to repent and unite with a faithful congregation...and do it at once!

THE CONGREGATION ITSELF CAN (AND MUST!):

1. TEACH ITSELF: "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Eph. 4:16

2. SUPPORT ITS OWN PREACHER: "...who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock?..If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is at a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (I Cor. 9:7-14, Deut. 14:27)

3. SEND OUT PREACHER: This is taught in Acts 13:1,3; 15:35,40.

4. SUSTAIN PREACHER: "I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to do you service." II Cor. 11:8  
"Now ye Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only."  
Phil. 4:15

NEWS & NOTES: We are made to rejoice in that sister Emma Madden repented of and confessed her sins and was restored to fellowship here at South Shore! May our Father bless and strengthen her in the truth! May we also remember to obey II Thess. 3:6 II Cor. 2:6 and II Thess. 3:14 that her loved ones might repent of their wrongs and return unto Christ!

We continue to rejoice in that Miss Cindy Atkins rendered obedience to the Gospel of Christ in baptism and we also welcome her into the fellowship of the saints here!

5. BROUGHT ON WAY: "And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria declaring the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy unto all the brethren." Acts 15:3

"Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company." Rom. 15:24

6. RECEIVE REPORT: "And when they were come and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles." Acts 14:27

"And when they were come to Jerusalem they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them." Acts 15:4

THE GREATNESS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST!

1. The Church Spreads The Gospel: "For from you (church v. 1) sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing." I Thess. 1:8
2. The Church Makes God's Wisdom Known: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. 3:10)
3. It Is Where He Receives Glory: "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end." Eph. 3:21
4. The Church Is Pillar And Ground Of Truth: "..thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." I Tim. 3:15
5. It Contains The Saved: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2:47 Eph. 5:23
6. The Church Is To Be Preached: "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Acts 8:12
7. It Is Blood Bought: "..feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts 20:28

WHY DOESN'T IT WORK?

Even though the first thing the Son of God said to the 7 churches of Asia was "I know thy works" (Rev. 2,3) some congregations are hesitant to work through their treasuries. Note below why:

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*	<u>ORDER OF SERVICES</u>	*
* Lord's Day: 10:00 a.m. Worship		*
* 7:30 p.m. Worship		*
* Thursday: 7:30 p.m. Bible Study		*
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1. The almighty building! Any church placing spending of God's money for its meeting house above the preaching of the gospel and care for needy saints is a disgrace and shame and has no right to wear the name "of Christ"! It's members are selfish and corrupted.
2. It could be untaught. Very few preachers will clearly explain just what the Lord's money may Scripturally be spent for. They are afraid of what man may say and do not fear God and of course have no love for the church by forgetting Hos. 4:6.
3. They have no faith in Christ and demonstrate this fact by hoarding up thousands of dollars for "a rainy day" and forget the violent storm that is upon us now. Is God blind not to see and remember these things?
4. False Doctrine. To prevent the treasury from being spent satan teaches gospel preachers are not to be paid from it and, if he can, that there is no such thing as a church treasury or that money may only be collected by the church for a specific, and in time of need. Note below: (II Cor. 11:8, I Tim. 5:18, Acts 4:34,35, I Cor. 10:2, II Cor. 9: 2, 4, 7)

VOICES FROM THE PAST: "Well, if the human institutions can supplant the church in these functions (teaching & benov.) then surely they can supplant the church in money raising also. The church, then, would have no reason whatsoever for existing." (Jack G. Dunn, Harding College Lectures, 1952)

"For if there first be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." (II Cor. 8:12)