



ISSUE

23.1

January 3, 2021

# Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN OF  
THE OL-  
SEN PARK  
CHURCH OF  
CHRIST

## Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

## Elders:

Pat Ledbetter

Brady McAlister

Jeff Nunn

## Deacons:

Ryan Ferguson

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Walker McAnear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Justin Smiley

Kevin Wise

Trevor Yontz

## Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

## Issues That Divide Brethren

By Kyle Pope

Among those who first began with the intent of restoring non-denominational New Testament faith and practice, there have been a number of issues that have arisen in the last three centuries centuries that have divided brethren. While we appeal to the world to find unity in the simple teachings of the New Testament, such divisions have hindered the cause of Christ and our own effectiveness. In some cases, these divisions involve brethren imposing what they believe to be liberties upon brethren who find no biblical authority for such practices. In so doing, the Lord's body is splintered, brethren bring disgrace upon themselves, and the Lord's prayer for unity among His people is unfulfilled. To resolve this, we must understand the issues that have led brother to stand against brother and ask how God's word teaches us to conduct ourselves.

**Instrumental Music.** One of the first issues that initiated division in the 19th century was the question of whether the Bible authorizes the use of mechanical instruments in church worship. The New Testament is silent on the matter. Although it commands singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16), there is no scriptural authorization for instrumental accompaniment. To insist on using such additions in worship forces brethren to do what the Bible does not authorize.

**The Missionary Society.** Another issue that divided brethren during the same years was the creation of manmade organizations to coordinate the support of preachers in other places. Under this scheme different churches supported a society, which in turn supported and sent out preachers. This scheme surrendered the responsibility of the local church to a separate man-made organization. In the Bible, churches supported and sent out preachers themselves with no separate institution between the church and the preacher (Acts 13:1-3; Phil. 4:10-20).

**Bible Classes.** Some brethren in this country have had concerns about whether the church is authorized to support and conduct Bible classes for all ages. Two of the main concerns about this are: (1) Does this surrender parental responsibility? and (2) Should there be women teachers? The Bible makes it clear that in the assembly women are to be silent (1 Cor. 14:34) and that they must not teach over men (1 Tim. 2:12), yet at the same time women are instructed to be **“teachers of good things”** (Titus 2:3). Though it is clear that the primary responsibility for spiritual teaching of children rests with parents (Eph. 6:4), the church is authorized to support the teaching of God’s word in and out of the assembly (1 Cor. 14:26; Phil. 4:10-20). While we must not make Bible classes into anything more than simply Christians teaching one another, the concept of the church supporting the teaching of God’s word is authorized.

**One Cup in the Lord’s Supper.** Among some brethren the question of whether it is right to use multiple cups in the taking of the Lord’s Supper has led to division. While the Bible does refer to the **“cup of blessing”** (1 Cor. 10:16) it is clear from the events described at the institution of the Lord’s Supper that before the supper Jesus gave them the cup and said **“Take this and divide it among yourselves”** then after their



Olsen Park Church of Christ

meal identified the memorial significance of it (Luke 22:17, 20). Many who hold the one cup view believe that the cup itself represents the New Covenant. The Bible makes it clear that there are two elements in the memorial (not three) and that it is a covenant of blood which is symbolized (1 Cor. 10:16; Matt. 26:27-28).

**Support of Human Organizations.** In the 20th century a cause of great division among many brethren was the question of whether the church is authorized to financially support organizations that are set up by Christians to perform worthwhile services. Organizations that were initially at the heart of the controversy were Bible colleges and children's homes. Now the question has expanded to church supported hospitals, student centers, camps, etc. Unfortunately, this often becomes a very emotional question rather than a simple question of biblical authority. If spiritual education and benevolence are the responsibility of the church what right does it have to surrender this responsibility to another organization? On the other hand, if the activity concerns something that is not an authorized work of the church, we have no right to support it from the church collection.

**The Social Gospel.** In the late 20th century the church also found itself confronted with issues about its role in the social life of its members. Beyond acts of collective worship which the Bible authorizes, some brethren insisted that the church sponsor meals, social events, and young people's entertainment. While it is clear that Christians should be involved in each other's lives beyond the assembly (Acts 2:46), the Bible also warns that we must not confuse the social and the spiritual (1 Cor. 11:22, 27-34). This distorts

the work and purpose of the church.

### **The Sponsoring Church.**

Much like the missionary society of the 19th century, this modern innovation in the support of preaching involves churches sending money to one central church in order to support a project a single church could not do by itself. We note again that in Scripture church contributions were used to directly support preachers (Phil. 4:10-20). The only cause for which support was sent from one church to another was benevolence (Acts 11:27-30). This was not passed on through the receiving church to another congregation. It was for their own relief.

### **The Discipling Movement.**

Near the end of the 20th century some brethren began to take a much more aggressive posture towards evangelism. In the Boston area this involved the adoption of an unscriptural organizational structure and



methods of accountability that are not taught in Scripture. This movement allowed a single church to oversee what it referred to as “home churches.” Regions of the country were divided into districts of oversight. Converts were required to engage in a set amount of daily Bible study and confess their sins to special sponsors (who were not

required to confess to them in return). While we want to see the church grow, if we abandon an insistence upon Biblical authority for what we do, we are no more than just another denomination.

**The AD 70 Doctrine.** In the 1980s in the Ohio area some churches of Christ began to argue that Jesus’s Second Coming happened spiritually in AD 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. Those who accept this doctrine, do not believe in a future Final Judgment Day, a bodily resurrection, or a future Second Coming of Jesus. Jesus taught that an **“hour”** will come in which all **“in their graves”** will **“come forth”** for either **“life”** or **“condemnation”** (John 5:28-29). He called this the **“last day”** (John 6:39-40). The angels at His ascension declared that Jesus would **“come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven”** (Acts 1:11). To deny the hope of the gospel is to deny the gospel itself.



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# Welcome Visitors

We are so glad that you joined us today.  
Please come again.