

THE LEXIA EDIFIER

ROMANS 14:19 ...Let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.

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THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN SOCIETY **Jim Stauffer**

What is your vision of the role of the church in society? It would seem most in the world today have a very different view than what the Bible portrays.

Many measure the success of the church by its accomplishments of a social nature. How many soup kitchens, orphan homes, old age assisted living communities and so forth have been supported by the church.

I remember President Bush (an honorable man, I believe) wanting to use churches across the nation as part of a faith based initiative for benevolent causes.

It seems this was very popular with most churches, most religions. But is this the biblical picture of the church Jesus died to build. **(Matt. 16:18)**

The church is presented in Scripture analogously as the Bride of Christ. **Eph. 5:25** *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,*

27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. The church was purchased with the very life blood of the Christ. **(Acts 20:28)** His statement that, *“all authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth”*, qualifies Him as the only authority concerning the church.

It is reasonable then to conclude we should *“Hear ye Him”*, as Peter was told on the Mount of Transfiguration. What He has said about the church should determine its role in any society on earth.

The Holy Spirit sent by Jesus to direct His Apostles in the establishment of the church and to guide them into all truth **(John 16:13)** reveals the will of Christ for His church. Therefore, we consult Scripture for the authority for church activity and not leaders of men.

There are three areas in which the church is assigned a primary role or function. The first of which is to preach the gospel, the word of God that has the power to save the

lost. (**Rom. 1:16; Matt. 28:19,20**) It is through the church and its preaching and teaching that the truth of God's word is preserved and promulgated. (**1 Tim. 3:14,15**) Paul tells us the church is the organization through which is made known, "*the manifold wisdom of God.*" (**Eph. 3:10**)

Secondly, while preaching the gospel to the lost, the church also has the responsibility to build up and strengthen its members. He is how Paul expresses that, **Eph. 4:11** *And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*

The third area of responsibility for the church is to care for its own needy. (**see Acts 4:32-35; 6:1-6**) One thing that seems to surprise people when they study the Bible is the church is never authorized to care for the needy of the world. Don't misunderstand, Christians individually are to love and care for their neighbors, but this is not done through church activity. The role of the church, according to Scripture, according to the desires of the One who died to establish it, is to care for its own needy.

The biblical picture of the church is an organization devoted to the salvation of the souls of men. It is not an agency to solve a nation's or the world's social ills any other way than through conversion to Christ by the gospel. This is the way to not only salvation but also the solution to social ills as sin is the primary contributor to the social maladies of the world.

Men pervert the nature and the mission of the church when they turn it into such an agency as has been done in our society.

Conflicts in Calvinism

Our final installment in this series of articles on the tenets of Calvinism is about the Perseverance of the Saints. The Westminster Confession of Faith gives the following statement of this doctrine: *They whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally*

nor finally fall away from the state of grace but shall certainly persevere there in to the end, and be eternally saved.

This quote comes from the well known Calvinist, Loraine Boettner: *This doctrine does not stand alone but is a necessary part of the Calvinistic system of theology. The doctrines of Election and Efficacious Grace logically imply the certain salvation of those who receive these blessings. If God has chosen men absolutely and unconditionally to eternal life, and if His Spirit effectively applies to them the benefits of redemption, the inescapable conclusion is that these persons shall be saved.*

Now anyone would agree if you believe in Total Hereditary Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace then you would be logically bound to believe in the Perseverance of the Saints.

Many people debate about the difference in the theological positions of "once saved always saved" and the Perseverance of the Saints. There is not much difference practically in the final result of each.

As we have done with the past tenets, we will simply point out scriptures that contradict the very idea of this position.

First, let us notice God has never guaranteed his chosen people the promised reward. Many of the chosen people who were led out of Egyptian bondage never entered the land of Canaan.

On the same point, there was only a remnant of Israel that was to be saved. **Is. 10:20** *In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean on him who struck them, but will lean on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.*

But again, let us use reasoning and common sense concerning the teaching of the New Testament concerning the Christian and his faith. Paul said of the Galatians who had been taught and had received the gospel, **Gal. 5:4** *You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.* Now the argument proffered by the Calvinist concerning passages such as this is these people were never saved in the first place. How can one have the nerve to say that when the passage itself says they had fallen from grace?

Let us continue to explore such passages. Peter says, **2 Pet. 3:17** *You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.* The error of lawless people, those who do not restrict themselves to the guidance of the Scriptures can lead Christians astray.

Something to notice in Boettner's description of this tenet is the reference to the Calvinistic system of theology. Let me suggest to you that is exactly what it is. It is a system of theology designed by Calvin, not by God.

Do you want to be guided by a system of theology that carries the name of a man, not God or Christ. How many times does the name Calvin appear in the Bible?

Why does Paul offer this about his own life? Was Paul not saved? Was he not under grace? **1 Cor. 9:24** *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.* Listen to what Paul is saying. So run that you may obtain it. Why, if it has already been attained? The point he makes is it is yet to be attained. He then refers to himself as possibly being disqualified. How can that happen if he is already under grace.? He is obviously telling us we are responsible for our perseverance. We must give diligence and discipline our lives so we do not fall from the grace God has given us.

The Hebrew writer says, **Heb. 3:12** *Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.* Again, the warning from another writer of New Testament Scripture to beware falling away from God. This warning written to those who were Christians at the time.

Now the Calvinist mantra is that anyone who falls away never really was under the grace of God to begin with. Now that is certainly an easy out. Their trump card is if it doesn't fit my description it was never real anyway.

It has not been my goal to ridicule with these articles. It has been necessary to be aggressive, however, to show how consistently this doctrine deviates from the simple gospel message of salvation. That simple message from God and Christ is to believe in the gospel and obey its commands and remain faithful until death and a crown of life awaits in heaven. It is no more complicated than that.

Our hope is you will turn to God and hear His word and obey it and tune out men who have devised schemes such as this one we have exposed.

Losing Our Way

It is amazing how distorted the vision of a man can become when he sets his heart a certain way and disregards all warning signs he might be wrong.

Two incidents in Matthew 9 bring this point home clearly. In verses 1-8 the story of Jesus healing a man is related. The story teaches us the power to heal the body of illness miraculously comes from the same source as the power to forgive sins.

Our point is the Pharisees were so set against Jesus they could not even rejoice that one had been healed.

The second incident is in verses 9-13 where Jesus visits Matthew and some publicans and sinners. His goal was to bring repentance and a change in life to those who needed it. He explains that in His statement, *"They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick."*

Again, the hatred the Pharisees had for both Jesus and the publicans prevented them from genuinely appreciating good.

There is an evil that has crept into our hearts when we cannot rejoice in the good others receive. If it be health, wealth or especially spiritual renewal, let us truly rejoice in the genuinely good things that come to men.

We would love to encourage those with children who are close to the Johnson County area to register for our Vacation Bible School when you stop by our booth at Old Shawnee Days or visit our site to register on line at: <http://thelenexaedifier.com/vacation-bibleschool-2013/>

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, **20** being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; **21** in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1 Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psalms 1: 1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scoffers; **2** But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. **3** And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. **4** The wicked are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. **5** Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. **6** For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the wicked shall perish.

News and Notes: Let us remember the instruction of our Lord by visiting in whatever way we can, **Mary Czirr, Terry Czirr, Candiss Cason, Irene Hurd, Grant Clothier, Byron and Wendy Taylor.**

Matt. 25:40 *And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.*

**This bulletin produced by:
The Lenexa Church of Christ
7845 Cottonwood Dr
Lenexa, Kansas 66216
913-764-9170**

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

We recommend to you the following websites:

***facebook.comlenexachurchofchrist/
thelenexaedifier.com
lenexachurchofchrist.org***

Our Meeting times are:

Sunday Bible Classes: 9:30 AM
Worship Services 10:20 AM&5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Classes 7:00 PM

The Church at Lenexa is a congregation of brethren who have been "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (**Romans 3:24**)

As a result of this justification we have been "delivered out of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (**Colossians 1:13,14**)

We therefore respect the inspired word of God that will completely furnish us unto every good work by speaking only as the oracles of God. (**2 Timothy 3:16,17; 1 Peter 4:11**)

What must one do to be saved?

Hear the gospel -

Romans 10:17

Believe in Christ -

Heb. 11:6

Repent of sin - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord -

Romans 10:9,10

Be baptized for the remission of sins - Acts 2:38