

(unscriptural) organization. God orders the church to do the Lord's work (the church's work). The church is not authorized to do its work through a man-made organization. It doesn't matter whether that organization is established and operated by members of the church or not. It doesn't matter whether the organization does a good work or not. The church is to do ITS work. God is to receive the glory, not man (Eph. 3:21). God doesn't receive glory in organizations of men, whether in an evangelistic society or a benevolent society or an edification society.

Yet, there is at present such an organization in Nashville, Tennessee, called, "**Churches of Christ Disaster Relief, Inc.**" Many individuals and congregations contribute to this unscriptural organization and rely upon it to do their benevolent work for them. This work is headed and controlled by a board of men, not the Lord's church nor is it subject to any eldership. God instructed the church to take care of his work, not a man-made organization (Eph. 4:12). Since *Churches of Christ Disaster Relief, Inc.* is an unscriptural organization, their work cannot be done in "the name of" nor by "the authority of" Christ which is demanded by Colossians 3:17. "*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*"

Since the board operating this organization is not the Lord's church, God cannot, nor will He, receive the glory for the good that is accomplished. The word of God says, "*Unto him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end*" (Eph. 3:21). This scripture is NOT fulfilled in a society or organization such as *Disaster Relief, Inc.*, or the *Red Cross* or any other organization created by man.

I would not close this dissertation without acknowledging the vast number of people who have been helped by the work done by this group. The tragedy is that they are doing this without God's blessing or scriptural authority and persuading others to do the same. It is my prayer they will realize the error of their way before it is too late and the Lord's church is divided by an unscriptural organization as the church was by the American Christian Missionary Society. The future of the Lord's church will be bright and glorious if we who are members of His body love the church and trust Him enough to perpetuate it in its pristine glory. 206 Van Buren St., McMinnville, TN 37110.

YOUR MARRIAGE CAN BE GREAT

It is often simply a cliché to say a certain book is a classic, but the one named above has that quality. It was edited by the late and beloved Thomas B. Warren using sixty gospel preachers as writers on various "elements involved in building a great marriage." It directs the reader to the Bible on how to have a truly great marriage and it exposes many of the fallacious arguments put forth to undermine the truth of God on marriage, divorce and remarriage. If you are looking for a gift that would be most useful for an elder, adult Bible class teacher, gospel preacher or any godly brother or sister this will be most suitable. It is available from the National Christian Press, which is currently operated by Bart Warren. In fact the younger Warren is making many of his grandfather's books available. Write him for a price list at 7158 Highway 57 West, Ramer, TN 38367 or www.NationalChristianPress.com. Phone: 731-645-6718.

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BULLETIN BRIEFS

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1,452 GOSPEL PREACHERS

In Tamil Nadu, South India, on the 11th and 12th of October, 1,452 brothers in Christ came together in thirteen locations around the state to be further fired up to win souls in the wake of the Tsunami that killed more than 10,000 of their fellow citizens on December 26, 2004. All who attended and all speakers were native Tamil brethren. Not only were they motivated to win souls, but they were urged to plant churches and to mature older congregations by appointing elders.

Since January, 1,234 have obeyed the gospel on Tamil Nadu's sea ravaged east coast and 31 new congregations established in the area. All have trained brethren preaching for them each Lord's day. Besides this, as was previously reported, two bicycle campaigns in January (3-12) and May (9-19) netted another 2,538 souls for Jesus. Yet, these figures hardly tell the story of soul winning by these India brethren since January, because they have baptized thousands on their own.

The vast majority of these brothers in Christ are "tent making" preachers, that is, they are self supported. Most are extremely poor and work for daily wages. Because of this each received \$3.50 in wages for the two days of the lectures plus bus fare. Before they left for home, each was given 800 tracts (eight titles) to use in his local preaching work over the following 66 days (October 13– December 17). The total number of tracts was more than 1.1 million, which cost 1.6 cents each. These brothers will also work in our third bicycle campaign of the year, December 18-31. For this campaign each will receive another 800 tracts, which will cost about \$13 and each preacher will be paid a daily wage of \$2.35. The total cost of wages for one brother for the fourteens days of the campaign will be \$33. Think of it, for just \$46 (\$33 plus \$13) you can support and help equip a gospel preacher for two weeks to win souls for Jesus and His kingdom.

The regular work of training preachers and the work among the Tsunami victims this year has, by the grace of God, been made possible because of the wonderful co-operation of so many congregations with Crossville and with the church at Banner Elk, NC where a brother and fellow laborer, Don Iverson, serves as an elder. Please let me thank all our regular contributors and those who helped because of the Tsunami. You love, your prayers and gifts are a great encouragement to the elders here in Crossville and to me personally. As Paul said to the saints in Philippi, it is "not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account" (Phil. 4:17). May God bless you richly according to your faith and your love for His cause and His kingdom.

A SPONSOR?

My family and I first went to a foreign mission field (Pakistan) in August 1967. The church in Camden, TN was our sponsor. Virtually ever since I have been involved in missions (stateside and overseas) in one way or another with the main thrust being to train faithful men to teach others (II Tim. 2:2). Twenty of the past thirty-eight years have actually been spent in other countries doing that very thing. My work abroad has never been as an independent preacher; but I have always served under an eldership of a local congregation as overseers of my work.

My portion of the work described on the front page is sponsored by the Main Street Church of Christ, Crossville, TN. As sponsor the Crossville elders are not over any of the congregations who help us (their gifts are free will) or those on the field with whom we work. The church has six elders and I am responsible to them as an evangelist to maintain: (1) a godly life (Titus 2:11-12), (2) to preach the truth without compromise (II Tim. 4:1-5), (3) to be productive (John 15:8) and (4) to provide, “things honorable not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men” (II Cor. 8:21). Don Iverson is sponsored by the Banner Elk church in his work.

This is congregational co-operation under the oversight of elders is what is termed a sponsoring church arrangement. In light of the fact that some maintain that an evangelist is to serve independently of such and that a work overseen in this manner is parallel to a Missionary Society you will find below some material that deals with that question. JW

CONGREGATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN EVANGELISM

Jim E. Waldron

There are those who says funds from one congregation may be sent to another congregation for benevolence, but they insist that they may not be sent to another for evangelism and edification (e.g., gospel meetings, to support the local evangelist, radio program, etc). In light of that assertion let us examine the only text that authorizes the church to collect funds:

“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come” (I Cor. 16:1-2).

Please note that this was an explicit order for funds to be collected for benevolence. Yet, those who oppose the sending of funds from one church to another **for evangelism and/or edification** admit that the funds contributed on the first day of the week may be used locally for benevolence, evangelism and edification. In the same manner churches that favor sending funds for evangelism to another also use the Lord’s day contribution for all three locally. If asked why, the reply may very well be “because the church’s authorized work is three fold (evangelism, edification and benevolence, Eph. 4:12), and the necessary inference or implication is that the church may raise funds for all three phases of its authorized work through the collection on the first day of the week.” Such is true. Yet, in light of the assertion that funds from one congregation may **not** be sent from one congregation to another for evangelism or exhortation (edification), let us examine I Corinthians 16:3,

“And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem.”

In this text (16:3) Paul, speaking of the same collection (16:1-2), said that it would be sent to Jerusalem. Now those brethren who forbid one congregation to co-operate with another congregation by sending funds for edification or evangelism ought to answer a question for us. Why may these funds be spent locally for all three phases of the church’s work: benevolence, *evangelism* and *edification*, but churches are strictly **forbidden** to send them to another church for *evangelism and edification*? The truth is they are binding the imagination of their own heart on 16:3, which they are unwilling to bind on 16:2.

Concerning one church co-operating with another in evangelism, please note that the church at Jerusalem sent a portion of scripture – an epistle (Acts 15:22-31) to the church at Antioch, and to other Gentile congregations (Acts 16:4). Here is a Biblical example that clearly demonstrates that it is scriptural and right for one congregation to send the scriptures (Bibles) from one congregation to another. In light of that may, a church in Malaysia or the United States send funds to churches in India to buy their own Bibles, locally in their own tongue? If not, why not?

Again the church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch for the purpose of exhorting (edifying) the new saints (Acts 11:22-23). This was co-operation from one church to another in edification. But the objection is raised that they did not send money! So the hang up is on money? Clearly if funds raised as per I Corinthians 16:1-2 could be spent for evangelism and edification locally, then I Corinthians 16:3 authorizes the same funds to be sent to “Jerusalem” for the same. Again we ask, if not, why not? Concerning the question of sponsorship by a congregation being parallel to a Missionary Society, note (below) that Tolbert Fanning, who was one of the first to oppose the Society, used the church sponsorship arrangement in 1859 to fight that evil.

CONGREGATIONAL CO-OPERATION VS MISSIONARY SOCIETY

“After a number of years in which he frequently wrote in opposition to the society, Tolbert Fanning went to Cincinnati and laid before the convention of the society matters concerning cooperation in Tennessee. He was only allowed to speak briefly, but pointed out that in 1858 the church at Franklin College near Nashville, had chosen J. J. Trott as missionary to the Red Man of the west.

“The church at LaVergne, Rutherford County, TN and at Hartsville, Sumner County, cooperate with us in sustaining this mission. We have asked not others for help, because we needed it not. When our brother lacks anything he makes known his wants to us, and the brethren so far have not failed to respond to the call.”

Cf. “Brother Fanning’s remarks,” Report of the Proceedings of the Anniversary Meeting of the American Christian Missionary Society (ACMS), Cincinnati, 1859, p. 25. *Firm Foundations*, 21 August, 1973, p. 7.”

This is not to say there are not man-made bodies and non-profit organizations today that are parallel to the old missionary society for there are many. One of these is the so-called, **Churches of Christ Disaster Relief, Inc.** The brothers who run that organization are well meaning, but that does not excuse nor obscure the fact that they have set up a religious body parallel to the church that not only aggressively seeks money from the churches, but has usurped the name that God authorized His church to wear.

God is to be glorified in **His** own benevolent/missionary body, the church, as it is written, “to Him be glory in the church throughout all ages, world without end” (Eph. 3:21). Nor should one confuse this colossus with a restored home for homeless children, because God authorized the home (Gen. 2:22-24; James 1:27).

Due to the fact that Brother David Lipscomb in his time through the *Gospel Advocate* opposed Christian Church innovations such as the ACMS he was pictured by the *Christian Standard* of Cincinnati in a cartoon as an old woman sweeping back the sea. Because we have opposed the Disaster Relief Society out of Nashville we have had churches cut off funds for the mission work being done through the church. Such action is sad and undermines the Lord’s own body and His work through it. Read on:

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO DOING BIBLE THINGS IN BIBLE WAYS?

Vernon Joines

Since we are taught to “seek first” the divine arrangement, as per Matthew 6:33, we must be vitally concerned with the progress and future welfare of the Lord’s church. The future can be bright and challenging. It all depends on the soundness, zeal and courage of leaders and members. If the church fails, it will not be because of Divine authority and organization, but because of human failure. One of the major problems in the church today is a missing “backbone” of many in not exposing error. We must be “set for the defense of the gospel” (Phil. 1:17). Many brethren permit error to enter the body of Christ and then try to “love it out.” Only the truth will make us free (John 8:32,36).

The future of the Lord’s church will be very dim if we ignore the Divine principle of the “law of exclusion,” also known as the “silence of the Scriptures.” You seldom hear such mentioned any more. Some examples of people doing things *other* than what the Lord had commanded are found in II Samuel 6 (Uzzah), Numbers 20 (Moses at Kadesh) and Leviticus 10 (Nadab and Abihu). This principle is violated when men act without God’s authority. The endowed teachers named in Ephesians 4:11 were given to the church for the purpose of teaching the saints the complete and full will of God until the Scriptures were completed. Once the New Testament had been written, the miraculous gifts were to cease. The church was then to be guided by the written word.

In Ephesians 4:12, the church is authorized to function (or do its work) in only three areas. They are (1) “For the perfecting of the saints (spiritual edification);” (2) “for the work of ministry (benevolence);” and (3) “for the edifying of the body of Christ.” This latter one includes the teaching necessary to bring people into the church (evangelism).

Now, if we assign any of the preceding duties (that God gave the church to do) to an organization other than the church, God does not receive the glory for the work accomplished. We transgress God’s will by not following his directions. An example of this occurred in the 1800s. In 1831, Alexander Campbell advanced the idea of the *American Christian Missionary Society*. This called the congregations of the Lord’s church to pool their financial resources in a manmade organization in order to do mission work on behalf of the congregations. When he was opposed, he delayed his appeal for ten years and advanced it again in the *Millennial Harbinger*. When it was finally established and put into operation, the church was divided and the division remains to this day. The society was an unauthorized