
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: ***Are all churches truly non-profit organizations?***

Many churches are registered with the U.S. government as non-profit organizations. This frees them from having to pay taxes. Yet, as you look at what these churches are doing, they appear to be anything but non-profit.

- Many churches have schools wherein they teach students from kindergarten to twelfth grade. They charge enormous tuition prices.
- They have recreational programs wherein they charge fees for young people to participate in sports and recreational programs.
- They have books, tapes, CDs, DVDs, and other publications which they produce and charge exorbitant prices.
- They arrange for cruises for their senior citizens and for their married couples to take retreats – and they charge money for this.
- They have counseling classes which they charge people to attend.
- They have daycare centers wherein mothers are charged to leave their children.
- They have their money invested in stocks and bonds wherein their treasury is growing more and more – making money.

When you look at the senior pastors of many of these churches, these men are dressing more elaborately than the average members. They drive better cars than the average members. They live in nicer houses than the average members.

All of this causes one to wonder if these are truly non-profit organizations.

As one looks into the scriptures and examines the life of Jesus, there is a marked contrast with what we see in the religious world.

Matthew 8:20

²⁰ And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

Here is the Son of God Himself. He had no elaborate clothing. He had no elaborate house to live in. One of his apostles wrote about:

1 Timothy 6:5

⁵ ... men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

Yes ... some men see godliness as a "*means of gain*." Church is a business. Church is a profit center. In the name of God, some men are raking in millions and millions of dollars – enriching themselves.

The one and only time Jesus became violent was when He entered the temple in Jerusalem and found men buying and selling in the courtyard. Listen:

John 2:13-16

¹³ Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. ¹⁵ When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. ¹⁶ And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"

The Lord never intended for NT Christianity to be turned into a business wherein men enrich themselves in the name of God.

The purpose of the church was to "*seek and save the lost*" (Lk 19:10; see also Mk 16:15-16).

- As important as educating children is, and no one is denying the importance of education, this is not the function of the church. The Lord died for the church according to Acts 20:28, but He did not die so children could be educated. Children were educated long before Jesus came and died on the cross. This is not the purpose of the church.
- As important as recreation is, it is not the function of the church to provide recreation for children.
- It is not the function of the church to provide daycare for mothers who need a babysitter.

- It is not the function of the church invest their treasury in stocks and bonds and make more and more money.
- It is not the business of the church to be in business.

Ephesians 2:16

¹⁶ ... that [Jesus] might reconcile [both Jews and Gentiles] to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

The purpose of the church is plainly stated in this passage: ***To reconcile both Jews and Gentiles to God.***

When men and women believe in Jesus Christ and are baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38), they are added by the Lord to the church (Acts 2:47). When men and women thereby become members of the Lord's church, they function as the "*body of Christ*" (Eph 1:22-23). The purpose, then, of the body of Christ (the church of Christ) is to carry on the work which the Lord Himself did when He lived on the earth.

- He did not provide entertainment – and neither should His body – the church.
- He did not provide daycare – and neither should His body – the church.
- He did not provide education – and neither should His body – the church.
- He was not in business to make money – and neither should His body – the church – be in business.

If a church claims to be non-profit, it should certainly act like it is not-for-profit.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Well ... thanks for listening to our message this week. We invite you to visit our website www.WillOfTheLord.com. There you may download the notes and the audio file of the message you just listened to.

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