

Debate

NOTES

BIBLE CLASSES

Compiled by George Battey



"Churches of Christ borrowed from denominational neighbors the Sunday School idea when it was hale and hearty." ("The Twentieth Century Christian," 1967.)

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(NOTE: Unless otherwise stated, all Bible quotations are taken from the New King James Version, published by Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

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BATTEY – THRASHER / DONAHUE DEBATE

June 23-25, 1994

Mableton & Jonesboro, Georgia

(The following report of the Battey – Thrasher / Donahue Debate was written in the December 1994 issue of *Christian's Expositor* as well as the January 1995 issue of the *Old Paths Advocate*. This article will summarize what occurred during that debate.)

On June 23, 24, 1994 I was privileged to travel to the Atlanta area to moderate a debate between George Battey and Tommy Thrasher on the subject of Bible classes. This discussion took place on Thursday and Friday nights at the Church of Christ in Mableton, Georgia. The church had agreed to sponsor Brother Thrasher and Brother Donahue. On Saturday, June 25, two sessions were held at our building in Jonesboro, the Fielder Street Church of Christ, George debated Pat Donahue on the subject of individual cups.

All of the debaters conducted themselves as Christian gentlemen, and while the argumentation was intense, the behavior of all three was exemplary. It was my first time to serve as a moderator in a debate and it was the first debate I have attended in quite a few years.

George did a superior job in defense of the truth on both issues. The only major disappointment for me was that, as is usually the case, our people provided most of the crowd Thursday and Friday evenings. Our brethren slightly outnumbered the brethren from Mableton even though the debate was in their building. There were very few of Brother Donahue's fellows present on Saturday to hear him. I do not suppose that this state of affairs was the fault of either Brother Thrasher or Brother Donahue, but I believe it is worthy of note with respect to the future. Despite this drawback, the debate will, I believe, have a lasting impact for the truth. The reason I am sure of that is because George, in his preparation for the debate, has written a book on each issue. Both books represent a worthy addition to the literature on these vital subjects.

Debate Notes: Bible Classes and **Debate Notes: Individual Cups** ... contain an affirmative presentation of what the Bible teaches with respect to each issue. The heart of these books, however, is found in the documented catalogue of arguments presented over the years by various digressive writers and debaters. George has presented each argument in full, together with its major variants, and then the Bible answer. You will also find a very enlightening list of questions and answers exchanged by the disputants. Since these issues are debated so infrequently these days, I recommend that parents and church leaders order copies right away so that this critical part of the truth can be successfully passed on to future generations.

On Thursday night, Brother Thrasher affirmed that "when the church comes together for the purpose of teaching the Bible, it is scriptural to divide into classes for this teaching, some of which may be taught by women." He began by hanging his hat on the principle of generic authority and claiming that Bible classes represented a method of teaching. In his first

reply, George invited the audience to turn to page 78* in their copy of his book, and he then he led them through the Bible's answer to Thrasher's argument. After that, he had them turn to page 76 to learn that classes are a method of grouping and not a method of teaching, and so it went. George was ready with an answer to every quibble Thrasher offered.

Not surprisingly, Brother Thrasher soon tired of his futile argument from generic authority, and made the next mistake of trying to pinpoint specific authority for Bible classes. Of course, once you have admitted that there is no specific authority for Bible classes, it is fairly difficult to back up and convincingly present passages authorizing Bible classes. George simply referred to the appropriate pages in his book and continued to press Brother Thrasher beyond his ability to answer.

Next, Thrasher abandoned his specific authority argument to try one more run at generic authority. Besides all of that, he decided to begin complaining about the wording of his own affirmative proposition, which he voluntarily signed in his eagerness to persuade George to debate. Finally, he complained that George's tactic of providing a book answers to all of Thrasher's arguments (and more) to the audience was "unfair." It was "unfair" because George could refer people to several page numbers in a very few minutes and get on with pressing the heart of the matter. Consequently, Brother Thrasher's smoke screens disappeared in a wisp of vapor. George's negative the first night was more than successful. It was a resounding victory for truth over error.

On Friday evening, George was in the affirmative and adroitly defended the proposition that "the scriptures teach that then the church comes together for the purpose for teaching the Bible, the people must be taught in an undivided assembly by men only."

As the evening approached, we wondered what Brother Thrasher might do, having had 24 hours to study George's book. But he had not one objection to make against the book. In his last speech, Brother Thrasher warned the audience of "inconsistencies and assumptions" in the book, but we thought it was interesting that he did not trot out a single example for examination. Surely, if he could have documented his warning he would have. Obviously, the book on Bible classes was more than vindicated by Brother Thrasher's inability to produce even one weakness. As an interesting note, Thrasher did hand us a note on Saturday, complaining of what he believed to be a misspelling of a transliterated Greek word on page 32. This was his only complaint. We accepted that as a pretty good testimony to the truth presented in George's material.

Brother Thrasher was completely unable to deal with George's affirmatives. He tried to argue that classes were private, but he did not like the consequences of that (see pages 62-65 of the book) so he decided that they were public. However, he soon ran into problems from pages 21 through 30 and the rules of assembly found in 1 Corinthians 14. Then he decided they were sort of public and sort of private, and only Brother Thrasher could tell which they were at a particular moment. However, a good indication as to which way he would decide at any given moment could be gleaned by listening to which argument George was pressing him with.

Actually, Brother Thrasher generally refused to answer George's affirmatives, and spent almost half of his time in three speeches Friday night on his one showpiece argument. On the

* The page numbers in this report are based on the first edition of the notes that were distributed to each member of the audience. Since then, the book has under gone revision and the page numbers have changed.

wall he had taped up a chart that asked: "Are the Bible classes the church come together INTO ONE PLACE?" George said, "NO, Brother Thrasher, they are not – that is what is wrong with them." George then changed his wall chart to read, "Are the Bible classes the church come together?" He asked Brother Thrasher if he would answer "Yes." George then reminded his opponent that that is what Thrasher promised, and as much as he hated it, had voluntarily signed to affirm. Would he do so now?

In his last speech one almost felt sorry for Brother Thrasher. He was obviously totally bereft of material. He spent some 18 agonizing minutes on his little wall chart and did not even attempt to counter George's arguments. As Billy Dickinson stated in his excellent review of the Bailey – Thrasher debate (**Old Paths Advocate**, December 1993, p. 5):

Although Brother Thrasher has engaged in over forty debates, his experience as a debater did little to help him on this occasion. His problem was not a lack of experience or ability, but a lack of truth.

On Saturday morning we began by distributing George's book on Debate Notes: Individual Cups. George began the affirmative eagerly defending "that the scriptures teach that an assembly of the church of Christ, for the communion, must use one cup (drinking vessel) in the distribution of the fruit of the vine." George's three affirmative speeches went perfectly. He was able to powerfully present almost all of his affirmative material covering the first 40 pages of the book. His respondent, Pat Donahue, did not make even a token attempt to answer George's material. He began by redefining the word "cup" as all purveyors of false doctrine are wont to, and then he wanted to change the rules of the debate. "Why couldn't George just get up here and answer me?" he wanted to know. Why should George insist on following the rules of the debate and present affirmative material when he was supposed to? Well, Brother Donahue never reached much higher all day.

Pat Donahue hung his hat on the fact that the word "cup" is used metaphorically. While he was mistaken in thinking that it was used that way in every reference, he did prove to be an excellent authority on the meaning of the figure of speech called metonymy. It's all on pages 109 to 121. In question number 1, Donahue astutely noted that "in all likelihood he did use a container (sic)" in the institution of the Lord's Supper. But when asked if the word "cup" was ever used in the scriptures to refer directly or indirectly to that drinking vessel, Donahue replied, "I don't think so." Then, amazingly, Brother Donahue gave an excellent definition of metonymy. George asked:

Metonymy is defined as "a figure by which one name or noun is used instead of another to which it stands in a certain relation." Please answer the following questions about this sentence: "As often as you drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till he comes."

- a) What object is being named when Paul wrote, "Drink this cup"? Donahue replied, "A container."
- b) What is being suggested? Donahue replied, "Fruit of the vine."
- c) What relationship is sustained between the thing named and the thing suggested? Donahue replied, "A cup may contain liquid."

Never mind the contradiction between the cup never being mentioned directly or indirectly with Donahue's definition of "cup" in 1 Corinthians 11:26 as a container. Consider his excellent definition of metonymy. You will not find a better definition anywhere. Later, in one of his charts, Donahue admitted that in Matthew 26:27, the word "cup" was used literally.

As the afternoon wore on it became increasingly clear that, like Brother Thrasher, Brother Donahue was in over his head. Interestingly, neither Thrasher nor Donahue considered either subject important enough to make even the mildest of appeals for our people to change their position. On the other hand, George repeatedly appealed to those on the other side to be converted. He pointed out that the difference was one between right and wrong; obedience and sin; and heaven and hell. George's plea was for all to accept and obey the truth.

When the debate was ended, I believe it was clear to all that George had defended the truth in a most persuasive manner. In addition, we had the comfort of being able to leave all our argumentation, affirmative and negative, in the hands of all the people who were present.

Don't forget to order from George a copy of his debate notes. They will serve you well in home studies, congregational teaching, debating, or just in passing on the doctrine to your children.

Alan Bonifay
(1994)

THE PROPOSITIONS DISCUSSED

Four propositions were discussed during the debate (June 23-25, 1994). These propositions were as follows:

Teaching the Word

Proposition #1: When the church comes together for the purpose of teaching the Bible, it is scriptural to divide into classes for this teaching, some of which may be taught by women.

Thomas N. Thrasher (Affirms)
George Battey (Denies)

Proposition #2: The scriptures teach that when the church comes together for the purpose of teaching the Bible, the people must be taught in an undivided assembly by men only.

George Battey (Affirms)
Thomas N. Thrasher (Denies)

The Lord's Supper

Proposition #3: The Scriptures teach that an assembly of the church of Christ, for the communion, must use one cup (drinking vessel) in the distribution of the fruit of the vine.

George Battey (Affirms)
Patrick T. Donahue (Denies)

Proposition #4: The Scriptures teach that an assembly of the church of Christ, for the communion, may use individual cups (drinking vessels) in the distribution of the fruit of the vine.

Patrick T. Donahue (Affirms)
George Battey (Denies)

Agreements

- 1) The propositions concerning the teaching will be discussed on a Thursday and Friday nights in the church building of the brethren meeting in Mableton, Georgia. On these nights the brethren of the Mableton congregation will be in charge of arranging and conducting the assemblies. Each of these sessions will begin at 7:30 PM.
- 2) The propositions concerning the Lord's supper will be discussed on the next day (Saturday) in the church building of the brethren meeting in Jonesboro, Georgia. On that day the brethren of the Jonesboro congregation will be in charge of arranging and conducting the assemblies. The first session for Proposition #3 will begin at 11:00 AM and the second session for Proposition #4 will begin at 3:00 PM.
- 3) Each session shall consist of three speeches each, by the disputants, of twenty minutes each. The affirmative shall open and the negative shall close the debate on each proposition, but in the closing speeches of each proposition, no new matter shall be introduced without mutual consent.
- 4) Each side may submit ten written questions per proposition if they so desire. The written questions shall be submitted to the opposing side two months prior to the start of the debate to be answered and returned one month before the debate begins.
- 5) Each side agrees to be governed by Hedges' Rules of Logic which are summarized as follows:

Rule 1: The terms in which the question in debate is expressed and the precise point at issue should be so clearly defined that there can be no misunderstanding respecting them.

Rule 2: The parties should mutually consider each other as standing on a footing of equality in respect to the subject in debate, each should regard the other as possessing equal talents, knowledge and desire for truth, with himself and that it is possible therefore that he may be in the wrong and his adversary in the right.

Rule 3: All expressions, which are unmeaning, or without effect, in regard to the subject in debate, should be strictly avoided. All expressions may be considered as unmeaning which contribute nothing to the proof of the question, such as desultory remarks, and declamatory expressions, all technical ambiguities and equivocal expressions.

Rule 4: Personal reflections on an adversary should in no instance be indulged in. Whatever his private character, his follies are not to be named, nor alluded to in controversy. Personal reflections are not only destitute of effect in respect to the question in discussion, but are productive of real evil.

Rule 5: No one has a right to accuse his adversary with indirect motives.

Rule 6: The consequences of any doctrine are not to be charged on him who maintains it, unless he expressly avows them.

Rule 7: As truth and not victory is the professed object of controversy, whatever proofs may be on either side should be examined with fairness and candor, and any attempt to ensnare an adversary by arts of sophistry, or to lessen the force of his reasoning by wit, caviling, or ridicule, is a violation of the rules of honorable controversy.

George Battey (Agrees)

Patrick T. Donahue (Agrees)

Thomas N. Thrasher (Agrees)

SECTION 1: **ANALYZING THE PROPOSITIONS**

PROPOSITION #1 ANALYZED

PROPOSITION #1: When the church comes together for the purpose of teaching the Bible, it is scriptural to divide into classes for this teaching, some of which may be taught by women.

The church comes together for teaching – a general public assembly. The purpose of this assembly is to teach the Bible. If everyone stayed in this assembly:

- a) Women would have to remain silent.
- d) Men only could speak and only one at a time.

It is scriptural to divide into classes – the general, public assembly will be divided.

For this teaching – "this" refers to a specific kind of teaching. "This teaching" is the teaching that ordinarily would have been done had the church stayed together in the general assembly.

"This teaching" ordinarily would have been done in a general assembly by men only speaking one at a time, but now it is going to be done in classes.

Some of which may be taught by women – What will be taught by women? "This teaching" – the teaching that should have been done in the general assembly by men only speaking one at a time will now be taught in classes and women are going to do some of "this teaching."

SUMMARY: Bible class advocates have the Herculean task of explaining why dividing the assembly into groups grants the right to do what cannot be done if everyone stayed together. It must be proven that parts of the assembly can do what the entire assembly together cannot do.

Thought Questions

- How many groups must the assembly be divided into before it becomes scriptural to have several teachers speaking at the same time with women doing some of the teaching?

- If all the classes merged, would women be allowed to teach the newly merged "big" class?

PROPOSITION #2 ANALYZED

PROPOSITION #2: The scriptures teach that when the church comes together for the purpose of teaching the Bible, the people must be taught in an undivided assembly by men only.

The church comes together for teaching – a general public assembly. The purpose of this assembly is to teach the Bible.

The people must be taught in an undivided assembly – that is, it is mandatory, essential, and required that the people remain together for this teaching. Sin is committed by dividing the assembly into groups or classes of any kind for teaching. Not even children may be segregated from the audience for teaching. Everyone is to be gathered together: Men, women, children, both believers, and unbelievers. They must remain in one, unclassified assembly because this is what the Lord specified for public teaching of the scriptures. Every example of public teaching of the scriptures was done to an unclassified audience of people.

By men only – men and men only must instruct the audience that has assembled. During the teaching of the word of God, the women must remain silent and may not even ask questions.

SUMMARY: The burden of proof is to show: (a) when public assemblies are convened by the church the people must remain in one, unclassified assembly, (b) that only men may participate in such public teaching, and (c) that every public assembly conducted by the church must be conducted in this fashion.

SECTION 2: **TWO KINDS OF TEACHING**

The scriptures envision only two kinds of teaching: (a) public teaching and (b) house to house (private) teaching.

Acts 20:20

²⁰ "how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house,

Public (δημόσιος) – an adverb meaning simply "publicly."¹ As an adverb, this word describes how an action occurred. Teaching "publicly" meant Paul taught in a way that was "observable by or in a place accessible to the public: openly."²

House to house – set in opposition to "publicly" this expression implies the adverb "privately." As an adverb, "privately" describes how an action occurred. Teaching "privately" meant Paul taught in a way that was "not observable by or in a place accessible to the public: secretly."³

Teaching that is done publicly has restrictions placed upon it. Bible classes constitute teaching that is done publicly – in a way that is "observable by or in a place accessible to the public: openly." Because classes constitute public teaching, and because they violate the restrictions placed upon public teaching, they have created controversy and division within the body of Christ.

Teaching that is done privately does not have the restrictions placed upon it that public teaching has. In private, and as individuals, any Christian may teach anyone the word of God.

- A Christian *man* may teach a man, woman, or child privately (2 Tim 2:2; Eph 6:4).
- A Christian *woman* may teach a man, woman, or child privately (cf. Acts 18:26; Tit 2:3-4; 2 Tim 1:5; 3:15).

Simply put, in private, a Christian man and a Christian woman may teach anyone of any age or gender, but in public there are restrictions. Publicly, a Christian man may teach anyone, but a Christian woman may teach no one – not even a child. Rather than teaching in public, the woman is instructed to be a silent learner (1 Tim 2:11-12).

¹ William Greenfield, The Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament, Regency Reference Library, 1970, p. 40.

² Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, G. & C. Merriam Co., 1979 edition.

³ Cf. Webster, op cit.

AN UNDIVIDED ASSEMBLY IS REQUIRED

An undivided assembly for all public gatherings of the church is required.

1) An undivided assembly is commanded.

Hebrews 10:25

²⁵ not forsaking the **assembling of ourselves together**, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Not only does this passage command worship, but worship done in a certain way: All disciples and visitors assembled in a common assembly.

Here is a command for the common assembly, but there is no command given for the church to conduct simultaneous classes.

1 Corinthians 14

²³ Therefore if **the whole church comes together in one place**, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?

²⁶ How is it then, brethren? **Whenever you come together**, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

This passage, by means of statements, requires the entire church to be gathered in one place for the purpose of edification. "Whenever" (v26) the church gathers people, these rules are to be followed. If classes were permissible, such language would not have been used. (See further discussion of this point: "**These rules apply to every public assembly**," p. 44 **Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.**)

NOTE: When God specifies how to do something, and is silent about any other way of doing it, it becomes sin to utilize some other method. For example:

- a) When God specified that priests should come from the tribe of Levi, and when He was silent about other tribes, all other tribes were excluded by His silence (Heb 7:14).
- e) When God specified that the ark of the covenant should be carried on the shoulders of Levites by use of poles, and when He was silent about other methods of

transporting the ark, any other method was excluded by His silence (cf. 1 Chron 13; 15:1-15).

- f) Likewise, when God specified the church must assemble in one place for public teaching of the scriptures, and when He was silent about other methods of assembling people, any other method is excluded by His silence.

See "BIBLE AUTHORITY," in the next section, p. 20.

2) **An undivided assembly is the divine example.**

"Example" – "an instance ... serving to illustrate a rule or precept or to act as an exercise in the application of a rule"⁴

An example serves to illustrate how to obey a commandment. The church was commanded to read the epistles to its members:

Colossians 4:16

¹⁶ Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

1 Thessalonians 5:27

²⁷ I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren.

QUESTION: How were the above commands obeyed? Is there any example given in the scriptures to illustrate how to read epistles to the brethren? Yes! Notice the following passages:

Acts 14:27

²⁷ Now when they had come and **gathered the church together**, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Acts 15:30

³⁰ So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had **gathered the multitude together**, they delivered the letter.

Acts 14:27 and 15:30 are binding examples of how to teach people that have been called together by the church for teaching.

QUESTION: Where did the first century churches ever divide into classes to read the epistles with women reading some of those epistles?

⁴ Webster, op cit.

Answer: There is no passage authorizing dividing an assembly of the church into classes and allowing women to read epistles in such classes.

Acts 20:7

⁷ Now on the first day of the week, when **the disciples came together** to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.

1 Corinthians 11:20

²⁰ Therefore when you **come together in one place**, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper.

1 Corinthians 11:33

³³ Therefore, my brethren, when you **come together** to eat, wait for one another.

There are three critical points to notice in these passages:

- a) The church was to come together for communion.
- g) The church was to stay together for this communion.
- h) All the members must be together; therefore, it was necessary to wait for one another.

QUESTION: Would it be acceptable to divide the assembly into simultaneous classes for the communion?

Most would answer, "No, it is not scriptural to divide the assembly for communion." Why? Because the command and example is for disciples to be gathered into one assembly for communion.

In the same way, it is wrong to divide the assembly for teaching, because the command and example for public assemblies to teach require all disciples and visitors to be assembled together into one place.

3) An undivided assembly is taught by necessary inference.

Many inferences are made by people when reading the scriptures, but a necessary inference is an "*unavoidable conclusion*" that must be drawn. The rules of 1 Cor 14 force readers to draw the "*unavoidable conclusion*" that an undivided assembly is the only way the church may assemble people together for public teaching of the scriptures.

1 Corinthians 14:31-33

³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. ³² And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. ³³ For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

All the teachers will have an opportunity to teach. How? By dividing into classes? NO. By insisting they all speak one at a time Paul implies the church was to stay together for the teaching process.

This would have been a perfect place for Paul to say:

"Some of you have messages for children, so divide over here and teach a class of children to obey their parents."

"Some of you have messages for mothers, so teach a class of mothers."

"Some of you have messages for husbands, so teach a class for husbands."

It is significant that Paul gave instructions requiring the church to remain together in one undivided assembly.

SECTION 3: **BIBLE AUTHORITY**

Authority – "the right to command and enforce obedience or administer punishment"

Authority comes in two forms:

- Primary authority
- Delegated authority

1) God the Father constitutes primary authority:

There is no one above God. He answers to no one.

1 Corinthians 11:3

³ But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and **the head of Christ is God.**

Daniel 4:35

³⁵ All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; [God] does according to His will in the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

Since God has all authority, He can delegate (give) that authority to someone else. This is what He did.

2) Jesus has delegated authority:

Matthew 28:18

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

When Jesus said His authority "has been given," He meant, "has been delegated." Who gave (delegated) this authority to Him? The Father gave it.

Matthew 11:27

²⁷ All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, ...

Since Jesus has all authority, He can delegate (give) some of that authority to someone else. This is what He did.

3) The apostles have delegated authority:

Matthew 16:18-19

¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ And **I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven**, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Keys symbolize authority. The apostles are being given authority by the Lord.

When the Lord said the apostles would bind things on earth and those things would "*be bound in heaven*," the Lord was using a perfect, passive participle. When He said the apostles would loose things on earth and those things would "*be loosed in heaven*," He was again using a perfect, passive participle. The English Standard Version (ESV), in its footnotes, gives the correct

translation of this grammatical construction: "*shall already have been bound ... shall already have been loosed.*" The apostles were not making laws. They were revealing and enforcing laws that had "*already*" been made in heaven.

AMBASSADORS

Jesus was an official representative of the Father's authority (Jn 14:9). The apostles were official representatives of Jesus' authority.

2 Corinthians 5:20

²⁰ Now then, **we** [apostles] **are ambassadors for Christ**, as though God were pleading through us: **we** implore **you** on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

Some use this verse to teach that all Christians are ambassadors for Christ. That is not true. Notice the distinction between *we* and the *you*. The "*you*" are Christians at Corinth. The "*we*" are the apostles. An ambassador is an official representative. An ambassador speaks officially for the king.

1 John 4:6

⁶ **We** [apostles] are of God. **He** who knows God hears **us**; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Here are two groups: "*We*" and "*he*." The "*we*" are the apostles. They speak officially for the Lord.

ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY

"Establishing authority" means that, for everything taught and everything practiced, Christians and congregations must *establish* the fact that the Lord authorized the teaching or practice.

Colossians 3:17

¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

There are five important phrases in this passage:

- "whatever" – means everything (American Heritage).
- "in word" – means things Christians teach.
- "in deed" – means things Christians practice.
- "do all" – means the same as "whatever" above.
- "in the name of the Lord Jesus" – means by the authority of Jesus (cf. Acts 4:7, 10, 12).

To have authority from Jesus means: (a) Either Jesus Himself authorized the doctrine or practice or (b) one of His official representatives (apostles) authorized the doctrine or practice. Having authorization from Moses or the prophets will no longer work. After the Lord was raised from the dead, the announcement would be made that men must listen to Jesus only (Mt 17:5-9). The church "continued in the apostles doctrine" (Acts 2:42). The church did not continue in Mosaic Law.

WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION

Not only must Jesus or the apostles authorize every doctrine and every practice, the authorization must be in written form. No one may say, "I feel the Lord is leading me to do a certain thing" – as though inner leadings, promptings, feelings and premonitions authorized anything. No one may say, "Jesus told me to do a certain thing" – as though Jesus were still revealing things today. No. The authorization from Jesus or His apostles must be in written form (NT scriptures).

John 16:13

¹³ [Jesus said to His apostles] when He, **the Spirit of truth**, has come, **He will guide you into all truth**; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

Consider this passage carefully:

- If the Spirit would reveal "all truth" to the apostles,
- And if the apostles wrote down all which the Spirit revealed,
- And if that revelation was preserved,
- Then there would be no further need for revelation.

Here are three conditions that were actually fulfilled according to the apostles.

- Peter affirmed all truth was revealed to the apostles (2 Pet 1:3).
- Paul affirmed all the truth revealed was written down (2 Tim 3:16-17; Eph 3:3-5).
- Both Peter and Jesus affirmed the revelation of God's will would be preserved forever (1 Pet 1:23-25; Mt 24:35).

Since the conditions have been met, there is no further need for any revelation whatsoever. All revelation ceased at the close of the apostolic era (1 Cor 13:8-13; Jude 3). Neither the Father, nor the Son, nor the Spirit leads or guides anyone independently from the written scriptures.

Therefore, for everything taught or practiced there must be written authorization from either Jesus Himself or from one of the apostles. If there is no such written authorization, the doctrine cannot be taught and the action may not be performed – no matter how innocent or trivial the item under consideration may seem.

EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS

When God instructs His people, there are only two possible ways He may communicate His wishes:

- Explicitly
- Implicitly

There is no third alternative. These two ways exhaust all possibilities.

Explicit – means "fully and clearly expressed; leaving nothing implied" (American Heritage)

1 Timothy 4:1

¹ Now the Spirit **expressly says** that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

Here the Spirit is said to communicate *expressly* or explicitly. Explicit authorization means a NT passage teaches word for word the doctrine or practice under consideration.

Implicit – "understood though not directly expressed" (American Heritage)

Mark 12:26-27

²⁶ But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? ²⁷ He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken."

In the burning bush passage, God taught two things indirectly:

- He taught Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are still alive – though their bodies are dead.
- He also taught there will be a resurrection from the dead.

God did not explicitly say any of these things in that passage, but He *implied* them.

To *establish authority* someone must be able to point to a scripture where (a) Jesus or (b) the apostles either explicitly or implicitly authorized what is being taught or practiced. If the scriptures are silent about an item under consideration, Christians are forbidden to teach or do that thing because silence does not authorize.

Passages that teach silence forbids:

- Gen 4:4-5
- Lev 10:1-2
- Dt 4:2
- Dt 29:29
- 1 Ch 13
- Prov 30:6
- Mt 15:9
- 1 Cor 4:6
- Gal 1:8-9
- Acts 15:24
- Rom 10:17 → in connection with 2 Cor 5:7
- Heb 1:5, 13
- Heb 7:14
- 2 Jn 9-11
- Rev 22:18-19

IMPLICATION IS NOT SILENCE

An important concept is the fact that implication is not silence.

- When the burning bush passage implied Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are alive and will be resurrected, God was not being silent about the resurrection. (Mk 12:26-27)
- When Ps 68:18 implied that Jesus would come down to the earth and live like a man, God was not being silent about the incarnation of Jesus. (See Eph 4:8-10)

Implication is not silence. Alexander Campbell wrote:

"... nothing can be rationally inferred from any verse in the Bible that is not in it; and whatever can be logically deduced from any sentence in the Book, is as much the revelation of God as anything clearly expressed in it."

(Christianity Restored, 69)

In other words, when God implies something, whatever is implied is as much His word as anything explicitly stated. This explains why Jesus was incredulous with the Sadducees for not knowing about the resurrection in the burning bush passage (Mk 12:26-27).

To illustrate, when God commanded Noah to build an ark (Gen 6), He implied any tools necessary to carry out the command. God was not silent about:

- Some type of measuring device.
- Some sort of woodcutting device.
- Some sort of wood-hauling device.
- Some sort of device that would nail, cement or bind the wood together (nails, rope, wood dowels).
- Some sort of device to apply the pitch (tar).

All of these tools were authorized, but they were not authorized explicitly. They were authorized implicitly. It may be said, then, that God was not silent about tools for building the ark.

Some brethren are saying:

"The preachers say **individual cups** are wrong and **instrumental music** is wrong because the Bible is silent about them, but then they turn around and say we can have **a church building** and **songbooks** and **a thousand other things** which the Bible is also silent about. How can they condemn cups and instrumental music and Bible classes because of silence, but then accept church buildings, songbooks and other things?"

Reply: God was not silent about church buildings and songbooks and many other items that are carelessly lumped together with instrumental music, cups and classes.

- When God authorized the church to assemble (1 Cor 11:33; Heb 10:25), He automatically authorized any tools (e.g. a building) necessary to carry out the command to assemble.
- When God authorized the church to sing (Eph 5:19), He automatically authorized any tools (e.g. songbooks) necessary to carry out the command to sing.

Although there is not explicit authorization for a church building or songbooks, there is implicit authorization. As pointed out, implication is not silence.

However, there is no passage that explicitly or implicitly authorizes instrumental music in worship, individual communion cups, or the use of Bible classes. Therefore, these innovations are unlawful and sinful to use.

SIX POSSIBILITIES

Since everything the Bible teaches is taught either explicitly or implicitly, there are six possibilities:

Explicitly	Implicitly
1) Required	4) Required
2) Permitted	5) Permitted
3) Prohibited	6) Prohibited

Consider each of these six possibilities carefully:

1) Some things are explicitly REQUIRED

Acts 2:38

³⁸ Then Peter said to them, "**Repent**, and let every one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins** ...

Here is an explicit requirement to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.

2) Some things are explicitly PERMITTED

Romans 14:5

⁵ One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

Here is an explicit permission. A man does not have to esteem one day above another, but is permitted to do so if he wishes.

3) Some things are explicitly PROHIBITED

1 Corinthians 14:34-35

³⁴ Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says.

³⁵ And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

Here is an explicit prohibition. Women are explicitly prohibited from speaking in any assembly of the church.

4) Some things are implicitly REQUIRED

Exodus 20:8

⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

This passage implicitly required keeping *every* Sabbath day holy (cf. Num 15:32-36). In the same way, Acts 20:7 implies communion is to be observed *every* first day of the week.

5) Some things are implicitly PERMITTED

Ephesians 4:28

²⁸ Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

This passage implicitly permits a man to be a mechanic, a carpenter, a computer programmer or any other occupation that is considered good. No one is required to be a mechanic, but they are permitted (authorized). Is there Bible authorization to program computers? Yes – Eph 4:28.

6) Some things are implicitly PROHIBITED

Matthew 5:44

⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

While this passage explicitly requires certain things (love for enemies), it also implicitly prohibits things. It implicitly prohibits anything that is hateful toward an enemy (e.g. killing him). Therefore, while there is no passage explicitly saying, "Do not join the military and kill the enemies of your country," this passage implicitly prohibits such.

THE "EXPLICIT-ONLY" DOCTRINE

There is a false doctrine called the *explicit-only doctrine*. This doctrine states that only things explicitly stated are required. The entire area of implicit teaching is rejected because it requires

human reasoning and human reasoning at its very best is believed to be flawed. Thomas Campbell believed this false doctrine:

"... although inferences and deductions from Scripture premises, when fairly inferred, may be truly called the doctrine of God's holy word, yet are they not formally binding upon the consciences of Christians farther than they perceive the connection, and evidently see that they are so; for their faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power and veracity of God. Therefore, no such deductions can be made terms of communion, but do properly belong to the after and progressive edification of the Church. Hence, it is evident that no such deductions or inferential truths ought to have any place in the Church's confession."

<http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/tcampbell/da/DA-2ND.HTM#Page25>).

F. L. Lemley believed this false doctrine:

"Since all inferences are of human origin, unless we want to hold on to human patterns we should discard necessary inference as poor pattern material."

(Warren, 91)

"Any time a process of human reasoning or deduction has to intervene between the word and a conclusion, the conclusion is human and not divine, and therefore cannot be (even when true) a part of the New Testament pattern."

(Warren, 90)

"Only those examples that are objects of direct command are binding on us."

(Warren, 91)

Q: How did F. L. Lemley and Thomas Campbell reach their conclusions that implicit teachings are not binding?

A: They used reasoning and drew inferences. In other words, they used human reasoning themselves to bind the conclusion that others are forbidden to use human reasoning that have binding conclusions.

If the explicit-only doctrine is true, then most of the Bible becomes irrelevant because none of its commands were explicitly directed to anyone living today. Jesus' rebuke of the Sadducees in Mk 12 clearly demonstrates the explicit-only doctrine is false. The implicit teachings of the scripture are just as binding as the explicit teachings.

SILENCE FORBIDS

The scriptures clearly teach that when God is silent about a practice that item under consideration is forbidden – it is unauthorized. God was being silent on purpose. This is called *legislative silence*.

Legislative silence – when the law is purposefully silent about an action and that silence is viewed as expressing the intent of the lawmaker.

Silence means the absence of both explicit and implicit teachings. Implication is not silence. When God implies something, He is not being silent. True silence is the absence of all explicit and implicit teachings.

- God was not silent about tools for Noah because he implied the tools necessary to carry out the command.
- God was not silent about church buildings being permissible because He implied a "place" when commanding an assembly (Heb 10:25).
- God was not silent about songbooks being permissible because he implied anything necessary to carry out the command to sing (Eph 5:19).

However:

- God was silent about musical instruments in NT worship. He never even implied such.
- God was silent about individual communion cups in the Lord's supper. He never even implied such.
- God was silent about the church using Bible classes to teach the scriptures. He never even implied such.

Consider the following passages that demonstrate silence-forbids:

1) Cain & Abel

Genesis 4:4-5

⁴ Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, ⁵ but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

In Heb 11:4, it is revealed that Abel offered his animal sacrifice *by faith*. Since faith comes from hearing the word of God (Rom 10:17), the necessary conclusion is that Cain and Abel were

instructed by God regarding sacrifice. Abel offered what God commanded. Cain offered a sacrifice that God did not command. Silence-forbids is the only possible conclusion.

2) Nadab & Abihu

Leviticus 10:1-2

¹ Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered **profane fire** before the LORD, **which He had not commanded them.** ² So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

The argument of this passage is based on silence. Since the fire offered by Nadab and Abihu was never authorized, they were forbidden to use this fire. Silence forbids.

3) The Jerusalem Conference

Acts 15:23-24

²³ They wrote this, letter by them:
The apostles, the elders, and the brethren,

To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:

Greetings.

²⁴ Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law" — **to whom we gave no such commandment** —

This argument of the apostles and elders is based on silence. Since there was no command authorizing circumcision nor keeping Moses' law, men were forbidden by that silence to teach either doctrine.

4) Jesus And The Angels

Hebrews 1:5

⁵ For to which of the angels did He ever say:
"You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You"?
And again:
"I will be to Him a Father,
And He shall be to Me a Son"?

Here are two questions:

- To which angel did God ever say, "*You are My Son, Today I have begotten You?*"
- And, to which angel did God ever say, "*I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son?*"

What is the answer to these questions? Did God ever say these things to an angel? No. The argument of this passage is based on silence. Because God never said these things to any angel, men are *forbidden* to teach that Jesus is an angel.

Hebrews 1:13

¹³ But to which of the angels has He ever said:
"Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"?

What is the answer to this question? Did God ever say this to an angel? No. Again, the argument being made is based on silence. When the scriptures are silent about Jesus being an angel, men are *forbidden* to teach such.

5) Jesus And The Priesthood

Hebrews 7:14

¹⁴ For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe **Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood.**

The argument of this passage is based on silence. Since the OT scriptures were silent about priests coming from the tribe of Judah, the Lord Himself was forbidden to be a priest under that law. Silence forbids. In order for the Lord to be a priest, the law had to be changed:

Hebrews 7:12

¹² For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law.

The NT law is not silent about Jesus being a priest, but the OT law was silent and since silence forbids. Jesus could not be a priest as long as the OT remained in force. It had to be taken away (Col 2:14) in order for Jesus to be the High Priest for Christians.

6) The "Do-Not-Add" Passages

All of the *do-not-add* passages teach the doctrine of silence-forbids.

Deuteronomy 4:2

² You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

Proverbs 30:6

⁶ Do not add to His words,
Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.

Revelation 22:18

¹⁸ For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;

Passages that forbid adding to God's word are teaching that silence is significant. God not only revealed His will in what He said (explicit and implicit teachings), but He also revealed His will in what He did not say (silence).

APPLICATION (pt. 1)

Everything taught or practiced must be authorized either by Jesus or one of His official representatives – the apostles (Col 3:17).

If the Bible is silent about a practice that means there is no explicit or implicit teaching authorizing the practice. Silence means the absence of all teaching and all authorization. Therefore, the following things are unauthorized because Jesus and His official representatives (apostles) were silent about these things:

- Popery
- Praying through Mary and other "saints"
- Infant baptism
- Sprinkling for baptism
- Musical instruments
- Bible classes
- Individual communion wafers
- Fermented wine in communion
- Individual communion cups
- A second-offering of the communion on Sunday afternoon
- Transporting the communion to sick people
- Church-financed recreation
- Church-financed schools and colleges
- Choirs
- Hand-clapping during singing of praise to God
- Religious dancing
- Religious drama performances during worship services
- Telling alien sinners they may pray in order to be saved
- Gambling as a way to make money
- Sisters in Christ trimming their hair

The NT is silent about all these things. Silence forbids. All of the things in the list above are forbidden by silence.

APPLICATION (pt. 2)

This present set of notes concerns the teaching and the use of Bible classes (Sunday School). Simultaneous Bible classes, with women doing some of the teaching, are forbidden by the silence of scripture. Neither Jesus nor the apostles authorized such. They did not authorize Bible classes explicitly nor did they authorize them implicitly. There is complete and absolute silence regarding simultaneous Bible classes in the scriptures.

In order to disprove the conclusion of this study, all one has to do is present proof from the NT scriptures that simultaneous Bible classes are authorized either **explicitly** or **implicitly**.

- If there is **explicit** teaching, then simultaneous Bible classes are authorized and may be used.
- If there is **implicit** teaching, then simultaneous Bible classes are authorized and may be used.

However, if there is silence (neither explicit nor implicit teaching), then simultaneous Bible classes may not be used. Silence would forbid the use of simultaneous Bible classes.

Remember: God not only teaches by what He says, He teaches by what He does not say (legislative silence).

If someone asked for authorization for a common assembly, such authorization could be given:

Acts 15:30

³⁰ So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had **gathered the multitude together**, they delivered the letter.

Acts 20:7

⁷ Now on the first day of the week, when **the disciples came together** to break bread, **Paul**, ready to depart the next day, **spoke to them** and continued **his message** until midnight.

However, if someone asked for authorization for a plurality of simultaneous Bible classes, that cannot be given.

- There is no passage in the NT that **explicitly** authorizes simultaneous Bible classes.
- There is no passage in the NT that **implicitly** authorizes simultaneous Bible classes.
- There is only silence about simultaneous Bible classes.

Silence forbids. Silence cannot authorize. Therefore, simultaneous Bible classes are sinful and unauthorized.

COMMON ARGUMENTS

Consider two common arguments used by many to evade the force of these Biblical truths.

ARGUMENT #1: "This is nit-picking"

With all the major problems in the world today (drugs, teenage sex, rape, murder, homosexuality, and war) how can anyone possibly be concerned about whether it's right or wrong to use instruments of music, plurality of cups, or Bible classes?

REPLY

Luke 16:10

¹⁰ "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

The Pharisees are considered by most people as being "nit-picky," but Jesus did not condemn them for being "nit-picky." He condemned them for being hypocrites.

Matthew 23:23

²³ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

These Pharisees were not condemned for "tithing mint, anise and cummin." They were condemned for neglecting the "weightier matters." Jesus said they should have done both the little and big things. Yet some argue the little things should be neglected. They say only the big things should be performed.

Consider the following passages:

Matthew 5:19

¹⁹ "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

2 Corinthians 2:9

⁹ For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.

Hebrews 2:2-3

² For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

ARGUMENT #2: "We are under the grace of God"

We are not justified based on our ability to keep the law. We are saved based on God's grace. When you are saved on the basis of faith and grace, you don't have to worry constantly about whether you're keeping God's law.

REPLY: In effect, this argument is declaring that God's grace gives men license to violate His law.

Romans 6:1-2

¹ What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

² Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

God's grace does not give men the right to do wrong. Apply this logic and see how well it might work:

- **King Saul** – "God, You know that we humans are prone to make mistakes and we cannot keep Your law perfectly, and we know that you are a merciful and gracious God. Therefore I am going to disobey Your law and spare King Agag."
- **Nadab & Abihu** – "God, You know that we humans are prone to make mistakes and we cannot keep Your law perfectly, and we know that you are a merciful and gracious God. Therefore we are going to offer strange fire which You did not command."
- **Instrumental music** – "God, You know that we are not saved by works of human righteousness, and You know that we cannot keep Your law flawlessly. Therefore we plan to ignore what You said about the music of the church, and we intend to substitute our own form of music."

- **Individual cups** – "God, You know Yourself that we humans make mistakes and we cannot keep Your law perfectly. Therefore, we are going to change some things in the communion and do it differently than You commanded."
- **Bible classes** – "God, You know that we often make mistakes, but we know that You are merciful and gracious. Therefore, we are going to ignore Your rules about teaching the word and we are going to substitute our own methods instead."

All of this reasoning is rebellion. It constitutes a blatant disregard for God's divine law. Grace does not eliminate obedience. No one denies Christians are saved by grace, but it is wrong to believe grace eliminates the need for exact obedience.

Luke 17:10

¹⁰ "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.' "

2 Corinthians 2:9

⁹ For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.

The saving grace of God is given *conditionally*. What is the condition? That men obey His will. This has always been the case in both the OT and NT.

Matthew 7:21

²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

The apostle Paul, who wrote more about grace than any other New Testament writer, did not believe that grace eliminated exact obedience:

1 Corinthians 14:37

³⁷ If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.

When God gives a pattern, His silence excludes all other methods not found in the pattern. It is readily admitted:

- a) God is silent about mechanical instruments, but He is not silent about vocal singing (Eph 5:19).
- b) God is silent about Bible classes, but He is not silent about one undivided assembly (1 Cor 14:23).
- c) God is silent about individual cups, but He is not silent about one cup (Mt 26:27).

d) God is silent about loaves, but He is not silent about loaf (1 Cor 10:17).

Silence does not indicate liberty. Christians must respect God's silence, obey what He said, and not venture into realms unauthorized. God had the prophets of old record the disastrous results of violating the silence of God. Any today who repeat their same mistakes, shall reap the same results.

SECTION 4 **1 CORINTHIANS 14** (Analysis)

First Corinthians 14 regulates all assemblies conducted by the church.

Tongue speakers and prophets are mentioned. In the first century, these men were miraculously endowed.

Tongue speakers – spoke in foreign languages they had never studied (cf. Acts 2:1-11).

- a) We have brethren today who speak in tongues naturally.⁵
- i) The rules that guided inspired tongue speakers also guide uninspired foreign speakers.

Prophets – inspired preachers. They proclaimed the word of God miraculously without having to study (cf. Mt 10:19-20; Acts 7).

- a) Preachers and teachers today proclaim the word of God naturally.⁶
- j) The rules governing inspired preachers also govern uninspired preachers.

The purpose of these rules is to produce edification.

1 Corinthians 14

¹ Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.
² For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. ³ But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. ⁴ He who

⁵ I.e., they learned the foreign language naturally from either their parent or others, either formally or informally.

⁶ I.e., after much study.

speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. ⁵ I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

¹² Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.

¹⁷ For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.

¹⁸ I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; ¹⁹ yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

²⁶ How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

Notice throughout the chapter that no instructions were given to edify the church by dividing the assembly into classes.

By staying assembled together and following these rules, the entire church would be edified (verse 4). Including specifically:

- a) Unbelievers (verses 23-25)
- k) Recent converts (verses 23-25)
- l) Mature believers (verse 31)

There is a "trickle down" effect when everyone is taught in one assembly (cf. Dt 31:12-13; Isa. 55:10-11).

The rules were as follows:

Rule #1: The church must assemble the people together into one place and the people must remain together in one place (1 Cor 14:23, 26; 11:33).

Rule #2: A translator must be used when a foreign language is being spoken (1 Cor 14:27-28).

Rule #3: Judgment must be passed upon what is spoken (1 Cor 14:29).

Rule #4: Men must speak one at a time (1 Cor 14:31).

Rule #5: Women are to remain silent in all assemblies conducted by the church (1 Cor 14:33b-35).

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE RULES

RULE #1: The church must assemble the people together into one place and the people must remain together in one place.

1 Corinthians 14

²³ Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?

²⁶ How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

By way of statement, these two verses teach that when the church conducts a public assembly for teaching the word, everyone invited is to be assembled together into one place. As noted in the above passages, this includes:

- a) Unbelievers (verse 23)
- m) Recent converts ("unlearned" – verse 23)
- n) Mature Christians (verse 26)

The fact that these people assembled and must remain assembled together is necessarily inferred from two facts.

Fact #1: When the very same language ("come together") is used in regard to the Lord's supper, "come together" means "stay together."

1 Corinthians 11

¹⁸ For first of all, when you **come together** as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.

²⁰ Therefore when you **come together in one place**, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper.

³³ Therefore, my brethren, when you **come together** to eat, wait for one another. ³⁴ But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you **come together** for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

"Come together" and "come together into one place" meant in regard to the Lord's supper: "Stay together in one place." When the very same language is used in regard to public teaching of the scriptures, it means exactly the same thing: "Stay together in one place."

Fact #2: In 1 Cor 14:26-40 the rules given to regulate public assemblies imply everyone must stay together.

To illustrate, in verses 29-31 rules were given to regulate several teachers who all wanted to participate in the edification of the church. Specific instructions were given so the people would remain assembled in one place and the teachers exercised their talents by speaking one at a time. By telling the audience to "stay together" while the teachers spoke one at a time, the Lord implied He did not want the assembly divided into classes for "this" teaching.

RULE #2: A translator must be used when the speaker is addressing the assembly in a foreign language.

1 Corinthians 14:27-28 (KJV)

²⁷ If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. ²⁸ But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.⁷

Some mistakenly conclude that a limit was placed on the number of men who could speak during the assembly. This is a misunderstanding of the rule. Verse 31 allows any man present in the assembly to speak if he wishes:

1 Corinthians 14:31

³¹ For **you can all prophesy one by one**, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

No limit is placed upon the number of prophets who could speak during an assembly.⁸ Likewise, no apparent limit is placed upon the number of tongue speakers who wished to speak. No one wishing to speak in a tongue could be forbidden to do so, but each must abide by the rules given.

Look closely at vv27-28. "If any man speak" – only one man is under consideration. The one man is to speak "two or at the most by three" – that is, he is to speak two or at the most three phrases. One phrase would be too short for an accurate translation to be made. Translators

⁷ The KJV is quoted here because it is a more literal translation of these two verses.

⁸ Cf. Thomas L. Shaw; The First Epistle to the Corinthians; Yesterday's Treasures; 1988; p. 111.

know that to translate accurately, there must be a context of other words and phrases surrounding each other in order to convey the meaning into a "host language." Likewise, more than three phrases or sentences would be so lengthy that the translator may forget what was said and the translation again loses accuracy. "If there be no interpreter, let him keep silence" – again notice the singular man of v27 is still under consideration. "Let him speak to himself and to God." Who is to do this? The one man who spoke "two or three" phrases or sentences.⁹

Instead of limiting the number of speakers during an assembly, the Lord has devised a way to allow every man in the assembly to have an opportunity to exercise his talents.

The same rule applied to the prophets:

1 Corinthians 14:29-30 (KJV)

²⁹ Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. ³⁰ If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

The important point to focus upon is that a translator must be used when a brother speaks to the assembly in a foreign language. Without a translation, the assembly would receive no edification. If no translator was present, the tongue speaker must keep his seat and remain silent.

RULE #3: Judgment must be passed upon what is spoken.

1 Corinthians 14:29 (KJV)

²⁹ Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

This is a major problem with classes. The elders and leaders of the congregation cannot oversee and judge what is being taught when simultaneous classes are being conducted.

Many class advocates will not allow a man (an elder/leader) to be present in a room while a woman is teaching a class! Thus, an arrangement has been constructed that prevents oversight.¹⁰

⁹ James MacKnight offers the following explanation of this passage: "The word $\tau\iota\varsigma$, any one, being singular, shows that the 'speaking by two, or at most by three,' cannot mean persons. For how could anyone speak by two or three persons? Besides it is said, ver. 31, that they could 'all speak one by one.' The word therefore to be supplied here is not persons, but $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$, sentences. ... As the apostle did not allow foreign languages to be spoken in their meetings for worship, unless they were interpreted, ver. 28, the direction to speak what was revealed in these languages by two, or at most by three sentences at a time and separately, was most proper, as it allowed the interpreter time to deliver distinctly his inspired interpretation for the edification of the church." (MacKnight on the Epistles; Baker Book House; one volume 1984 reprint edition; p. 195. E. M. Zerr offers a similar explanation; Bible Commentary; Guardian of Truth Foundation; 1954; Vol. 6; p. 34-35.)

¹⁰ Cf. Thrasher's answers to questions #7 (p. 103) and #10 (p. 104).

Without oversight, well-meaning teachers might teach error that would go uncorrected or heretics could intentionally infiltrate the church with their false doctrine.¹¹

RULE #4: Men must speak one at a time.

1 Corinthians 14:31

³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

The purpose for this is to avoid the confusion that comes when two or more are speaking simultaneously (cf. Acts 19:29; 21:34).

1 Corinthians 14:33

³³ For God is not the author of confusion but of peace ...

The "confusion" mentioned here is confusion resulting from several people speaking simultaneously. God is not the author of such confusion because He has given these instructions to prevent confusion.

Notice: The solution to avoid confusion was to keep the assembly together and have men speak one at a time; the solution was not dividing into classes and having simultaneous teaching.

RULE #5: Women are to remain silent in all assemblies conducted by the church (verses 33b-35).

The verse divisions of the ASV, NIV, and RSV make it obvious what is being said:

NIV	RSV	ASV
<p>³² The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. ³³ For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints, ³⁴ women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. ³⁵ If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.</p>	<p>³² and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. ³³ For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, ³⁴ the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. ³⁵ If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.</p>	<p>³² and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets; ³³ for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, ³⁴ let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law. ³⁵ And if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home: for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church.</p>

¹¹ Bert Thompson discusses how evolution was taught to the students of Abilene Christian University because there was insufficient oversight within each classroom of that university. See Bert Thompson; Is Genesis Myth?; Apologetics Press, Inc.; 1986.

"Church" is from the Greek word ἐκκλησία meaning "assembly." Thus in every assembly conducted by the congregation, the women are to remain silent. Not only was Corinth required to conduct every assembly according to these instructions, but also every congregation of the first century was taught the same thing:

1 Corinthians 4:17

¹⁷ For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

Bible classes thwart this. They are assemblies of the church, but the women are not remaining silent in such assemblies!

1 CORINTHIANS 14

(Analysis Continued)

The seriousness of these regulations.

1 Corinthians 14:37-38 (NIV)

³⁷ If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. ³⁸ If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored.

These are instructions from the Lord. We ignore anyone who does not abide by these rules.

- Sometimes unbelieving women speak out in the assemblies of the church and brethren cannot help it. If these women refuse to remain silent, they are merely ignored.
- There is a vast difference between a woman speaking out against the will of the leaders and a woman speaking out because the leaders invited her to speak!

These rules apply to every public assembly conducted by the church for the purpose of teaching the word.

1 Corinthians 14:26

²⁶ How is it then, brethren? **Whenever¹² you come together**, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

"WHENEVER you come together" – Any and every time the church gathers people together for the purpose of teaching, "all things [must] be done for edification." The rules that follow (vv27-40) were given so that whenever the church gathered people for teaching, edification would occur. The rules of this chapter apply to every public gathering of the church without exception.

1 Corinthians 14:33-35

³³ ... As in all the [assemblies]¹³ of the saints, ³⁴ let your women keep silent in the [assemblies], for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. ³⁵ And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

As noted previously (RULE #5), in all assemblies conducted by the church, women are to remain silent. These rules apply to every public assembly convened by the church for the purpose of teaching. There is no exception.

- a) In every assembly, men speaking in foreign languages must either have a translator or remain silent.
- b) In every assembly, the men teaching must speak one at a time.
- c) In every assembly, God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.
- d) In every assembly, women must remain silent and may not even ask questions.
- e) In every assembly, the people must be assembled together in one place and remain assembled.

Not only did the church at Corinth have to abide by these rules, but also every congregation in every city had to follow suit:

1 Corinthians 4:17

¹⁷ For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

In every church visited and established by the apostles, they were all taught the same things – including how to assemble people and how to conduct those assemblies.

¹² Greek: *ὅταν* – "at the time that, whenever," (Joseph H. Thayer, Thayer's Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament, Zondervan, 1974 edition, p. 458).

¹³ Thayer, op cit., p. 195-196.

To disprove that all assemblies in all congregations had to abide by these rules in 1 Cor 14, all anyone needs to do is produce a single scripture showing: "When the church came together for the purpose of teaching the Bible, the people were divided into classes for this teaching, and some were taught by women." Unless one can produce such a passage, the fact remains that every assembly in every congregation must assemble the people together into one place with men only, speaking one at a time, to the audience. Generic authority for "teaching" will not work to justify classes because specific instructions were given to assemble the people in one place and keep them together in one place.

Class advocates generally say this chapter does not apply today.

You need to ask why class advocates oppose this chapter and why do they say it does not apply.

- a) Do they oppose it because if it did apply classes would be wrong?
- b) In apostolic times, when these rules were first given, would classes have been wrong?
 - If "yes," then obviously classes were not used during apostolic times.
 - If "no," then why do class advocates oppose brethren turning to this chapter and saying it applies today?

The fact that class advocates try to eliminate all or part of 1 Cor 14 ought to signal an alarm. Evidently, there is something in this chapter that bothers them. Evidently, they see that if these rules did apply, classes would be wrong.

If the generic command to "Go teach" justifies classes, no one should fear and oppose 1 Cor 14. However, if 1 Cor 14 would forbid simultaneous classes, the generic command, "Go teach," may not be used to authorize classes!

SUMMARY

In summary, classes are wrong because:

- 1) Instead of keeping the assembled people together in one place (1 Cor 14:23, 26), classes divide the people into many places.

- 2) Instead of having the teachers speak one at a time (1 Cor 14:31), classes have all the teachers speaking simultaneously.
- 3) Instead of the leaders overseeing and passing judgment on what is taught (1 Cor 14:29), classes create simultaneous assemblies in which it is impossible for elders to oversee and judge the teaching.
- 4) Instead of requiring women to remain silent and ask questions privately at home (1 Cor 14:33b-35), classes are often conducted by women and in every class women are allowed to ask questions.
- 5) Instead of ignoring women who would speak out in congregational assemblies and ignoring teachers who would teach simultaneously (1 Cor 14:38), classes invite and recognize women who speak and teachers who speak simultaneously.

Classes are not wrong just because they are not explicitly mentioned in the scriptures. They are wrong because they violate what is written. They are not only "unscriptural," but also "anti-scriptural."

SECTION 5:
1 Timothy 2 (Analyzed)

First Timothy 2 is believed by many to contain instructions regulating assemblies of the church.¹⁴ This is a mistake. The chapter is dealing with the conduct of men and women in any public setting, not just in worship assemblies.

Women are forbidden in this chapter to be public teachers of the word whether the assembly is convened and conducted by the church or not!

1 Timothy 2:11-14

¹¹ Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. ¹² And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. ¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

This passage forbids women from being teachers of the word in any public capacity. This is not discussing just "church assemblies."

QUESTION: How do you know this is not discussing "worship services"?

A: Look at the context:

1 Timothy 2:8

⁸ I desire therefore that the men pray **everywhere**, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;

This is speaking about what men may do "everywhere" – not just what they can do in "church assemblies."

Two words are translated "*man*" in the English Bible:

- **ἄνθρωπος** – this word sometimes means "mankind"; it can be used generically and includes both men and women.
- **ἄνθρωπος** – this word strictly means a man; the male specifically; not the female.

1 Timothy 2:8 uses this second term (**ἄνθρωπος**) and is discussing specifically what men can do in any place.

¹⁴ The NIV, for example, has the heading above this chapter, "Instructions on Worship." The NKJV has the heading above verse 8, "Men and Women in the Church."

1 Timothy 2:9-10

⁹ in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, ¹⁰ but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.

In contrast to men, women are instructed to clothe and conduct themselves modestly and with shamefacedness. Christian women are not to be the center of public attention. They are not to be "on stage" performing and attracting attention to themselves.¹⁵

This passage is discussing conduct in public, not just conduct in "church assemblies."¹⁶

ARGUMENT: If this concerns only conduct in public, then a woman does not have to dress modestly in private!

REPLY: Exactly right. In private, behind closed doors and with just her husband present, a woman does not have to dress or conduct herself modestly. However, when she comes out of the door into public view, she must clothe and conduct herself with modesty!

Shall we argue that 1 Tim 2:9-10 is discussing conduct only in a "church assembly"? Does a woman have to dress and act with discretion only in "church assemblies," but not on other public occasions? The entire context of 1 Timothy 2 is dealing with public conduct in general and not "church assemblies" only.

1 Timothy 2:11-12

¹¹ Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. ¹² And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.

This passage gives us three bits of information:

- a) The woman may not teach in any public capacity.
- b) The woman may not "exercise the authority of a man."¹⁷
- c) The woman must learn in silence with subjection.

¹⁵ This would seem to eliminate beauty pageants, talent shows, cheer leading, public dancing, and other such activities where women are placed on "center stage."

¹⁶ R. L. Whiteside, a defender of Bible classes admitted this passage included more than merely public worship services. He wrote, "For a woman to occupy the lecture platform is as much a violation of God's word as for her to occupy the pulpit. See 1 Tim 2:8-15. This scripture refers to her conduct every day." (Whiteside-Clark Discussion, published by Inys Whiteside, Denton, TX, 1969, p. 34.)

¹⁷ αὐθεντεῖν ἄνδρός – "to exercise authority of a man." (Alfred Marshall, The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, Zondervan, 1968, via, Zondervan's Parallel NT in Greek & English, p. 615.)

This is why it would be wrong for a woman to preach on the radio, TV, or to a PTA meeting. It would be wrong for a woman to rent a building, advertise publicly and teach publicly as an individual. Women are not to be public teachers of the word. God has reserved this role for men.

In public, women are to dress and conduct themselves modestly – not to become the center of attention – not to stand in public and address an audience!

QUESTION: Why does the Lord require women to be silent, not just in public church assemblies, but also in every public capacity? Why can't a woman, in public, teach, ask questions, or translate? Why must they remain silent?

A: Because God reserved the office of teaching for the man!

1 Timothy 2:13-14

¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve. ¹⁴ And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

Here are the divine reasons why a woman cannot address a public audience. People may not like it, or agree with it, but those are the reasons.

ARGUMENT: Think of all the opportunities that Christian women have to teach the truth and by insisting that they can never teach publicly, untold thousands of souls could be lost on Judgment Day!

REPLY: Think of all the souls we could save if we did not insist the law of God be kept:

- Men and women could work on Lord's Day and not assemble at all.
- Women could speak in all the services.
- Sprinkling could save more than immersion in hospital situations.

The point is, we cannot "do evil that good may come" (Rom 3:8). The "end" of a thing does not justify the "means" used to get there.

SECTION 6: **THE EVOLUTION OF BIBLE CLASSES**

When Bible classes first began to be used they appeared rather innocent, but as with any human innovation, "evolution" occurred. Bible classes did not originate from the Bible. This is evident by the almost universal effort of advocates to justify Bible classes with "generic authority." If classes were in use during Bible days "specific authority" could be given; actual cases of simultaneous Bible classes with women teaching some of those classes could be cited and produced as a divine example, but such is not the case.

Bible classes were first known as "Sunday School." When controversy set in, it was believed that changing the name from "Sunday School" to "Bible classes" would help settle the contention. However, changing the name did little to quell the agitation they created.

"Sunday School" originated with Robert Raikes. The World Book Encyclopedia records the following:

"Sunday School, an observance usually connected with Protestant churches, teaches Bible study and religion. Such schools may have existed as early as the 1500's. But the present-day Sunday-school movement was started in Gloucester, England, by the publisher Robert Raikes. In 1780, he launched his 'Ragged School.' He tried to aid the children of the poor in his community by teaching them reading, writing, and the principles of religion."¹⁸

Those who are honest in recording history will admit that churches of Christ borrowed the idea of Sunday school from the denominations that were already using them. In 1967, "The Twentieth Century Christian," a periodical published by churches of Christ who utilize the Sunday School, printed the following admission:

"One wonders whether the larger causes plaguing the denominational world may not also be at work elsewhere. Churches of Christ borrowed from denominational neighbors the Sunday School idea when it was hale and hearty. One wonders whether churches of Christ shall have sufficient dedication, imagination, and resourcefulness to see the idea to its full potential now that it has come upon bad times. If they shall not have, the tragic consequences will say more about the health of the churches of Christ than about the worth of the Sunday school idea."¹⁹

This frank and honest admission by the "Twentieth Century Christian" is confirmed by the fact that congregations of the church of Christ began to give out attendance certificates to their

¹⁸ World Book Encyclopedia, World Book, Inc., 1979 edition, vol. 18, p. 790.

¹⁹ Via: Alfred Newberry, The Divine Pattern Advocate, published by the author, p. 61.

pupils with the portrait of Robert Raikes himself affixed and the caption underneath, "Founder of Sunday Schools, 1780."²⁰

William S. Banowsky, a well-known preacher among churches of Christ utilizing Bible classes, wrote the following:

"While long granting that one of the most vital sources of edification was through the systematic study of the Bible, churches of Christ were very slow to organize Sunday Schools in their local congregations. In 1786, just three years after Great Britain declared the thirteen colonies to be a free and independent nation, the first Sunday School was started on this side of the Atlantic."²¹

"The Sunday School got off to a belated start among disciples. In its first years the Restoration movement was nurtured almost exclusively by evangelistic preaching. No need for a Sunday School was felt. Later, convictions prohibiting conference assemblies denied the movement the ideas and stimulation to be gained through participation in the National Sunday School Conventions. Because of the close ties between the Sunday School movement and denominationalism, the disciples assumed an early posture of belligerent opposition. 'I have for some time,' wrote Alexander Campbell in 1824, 'viewed both "Bible societies" and "Sunday Schools," as sort of recruiting establishments to fill up the ranks of those sects which take the lead in them.' Although he held this position for some years, in time Campbell changed his mind."²²

"Like Campbell, Barton W. Stone also first opposed, then later approved the Sunday School. It was his ultimate judgment that the school was a legitimate work of the church, not an 'outside institution.' Although the Sunday School was never a prominent issue in the dissension leading to the disciples' division, the conservative elements of the brotherhood were most hesitant to so readily dismiss their suspicions. By 1850, however, the Sunday Schools had gained a strong foothold among the more progressive congregations. And while refusing to align themselves with the Sunday School Union, the conservatives also slowly followed suit. By 1900, a great majority of the congregations had made provisions for at least a crude system of Sunday morning Bible study—though in most instances, very crude indeed."²³

After the majority of congregations accepted the class system, the next controversy was women teachers. As in the case with classes themselves, women teachers were gradually accepted.

²⁰ See photocopy: **Certificate of attendance utilized by Nashville "Church of Christ**, p. 119.

²¹ William S. Banowsky, The Mirror of a Movement, Christian Publishing Co., 1965, p. 232.

²² Banowsky, op cit., p. 233.

²³ Banowsky, op cit., p. 234.

Next came women lecturers in which hundreds of women and children are assembled into an auditorium.

- a) Nationwide advertisements are circulated.
- b) Hundreds of women come and attend these "women only" lectures.²⁴

Next has come women missionaries! On the front page of the July 1985 issue of "The Christian Chronicle," a headline reads, "MONTSEERRAT Single women complete first year's work" On page 10, a half-page article details the work of Sandy Hartman and Claryce Arnold.

"One year ago this month they moved to Montserrat to begin work as American missionaries ... For nearly two years Sandy and Claryce drove thousands of miles, speaking to ladies' classes, singles' classes, elders and foreign mission committees. Despite discouraging times, they refused to give up. 'It wasn't easy on elderships either. They didn't want to discourage us, and yet they didn't know how their congregations would respond to the idea of women missionaries' ... Roger Dickson, a longtime missionary in the Caribbean region, ... wrote, 'Let the brotherhood know what a fantastic job Claryce and Sandy are doing – better than most missionaries. They are truly worthy servants. When churches have servants as worthy as they are, they deserve to be fully supported.'"²⁵

One wonders where it will all stop.

²⁴ The Fort Worth Lectures, Questions Men Ask About God, edited by Eddie Whitten, 1987, lists four women who participated in the lectureship, pp. 319-353. Where will it all end?

²⁵ Via: Alfred Newberry, op cit., p. 85.

SECTION 7: **ARGUMENTS CONSIDERED**

Now it is time to consider the common arguments made in defense of Bible classes. Consider each argument carefully as well as the reply that follows.

ARGUMENT #1: Moses and Jethro

Ex 18:13-27 and Dt 1:12-18 shows rulers were to "judge the people at all seasons." Moses and Jethro set up simultaneous courts and people were thus taught in simultaneous Bible classes.²⁶

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of classes? If so, why do most class advocates attempt to justify classes by "generic" authority when they could simply turn to this example and show us "specific" authority?

Second: Moses and Jethro both realized this newly devised system of judging must be authorized by God:

Exodus 18:23

²³ "If you do this thing, **and God so commands you**, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace."

Notice the general command to "judge" did not authorize setting up simultaneous courts. Moses had to have specific authority for this.

Likewise, the command to "teach" does not automatically include setting up simultaneous classes.

Third: Would this passage justify classes in the church today? Suppose these Israelites used mechanical instruments in these simultaneous courts. Would that justify mechanical instruments in the church today? Of course not.

²⁶ This reasoning was used by W. Curtis Porter, Porter-Waters Debate, Lambert Book House, 1952, pp. 181-182.

ARGUMENT #2: Seventy elders prophesy

Num 11:25 provides an example of simultaneous teaching. While 68 elders stood with Moses around the tabernacle, two other elders were prophesying within the camp and were simultaneously teaching the people.²⁷

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of classes? If so, why do most class advocates attempt to justify classes by "generic" authority when they could simply turn to this example and show us "specific" authority?

Second: Would this passage justify classes in the church today? Suppose these Israelites used mechanical instruments. Would that justify mechanical instruments in the church today? Of course not.

Third: If this is parallel to modern day Bible classes, which group of elders could a woman teach since women can teach some classes?

ARGUMENT #3: Israel on two mountains

Dt 27:11-26 shows Israel meeting on two separate mountains (two classes) and the Levites (plural) spoke to both. This is parallel to modern day Bible classes.²⁸

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of classes? If so, why do most class advocates attempt to justify classes by "generic" authority when they could simply turn to this example and show us "specific" authority?

²⁷ Cf. L. W. Hayhurst used this argument in: Debate on the Bible Class Question; A Discussion Between L. W. Hayhurst, Logan Buchanan, Alva Johnson, and Van Bonneau, published by J. R. Chisholm and Jimmy Wood, 1950, p. 81.

²⁸ According to Van Bonneau this argument was commonly used in his day. See Van Bonneau, *Teaching The Word*, (tract reprinted by the Mission Hills Church of Christ, c/o Dan Wissinger, 1398 S. Berkshire St., Springfield, MO 65804), pp. 5-6.

Second: Would this passage justify classes in the church today? Suppose these Israelites used mechanical instruments on these two mountains. Would that justify mechanical instruments in the church today? Of course not.

Third: When Joshua obeyed these instructions, one man at a time spoke to one audience. No hint of simultaneous Bible classes.

Joshua 8:33-35

³³ Then **all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark** before the priests, the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them were in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. ³⁴ And afterward **he read** all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the Book of the Law. ³⁵ There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all **the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the strangers who were living among them.**

ARGUMENT #4: Deborah and Huldah

Deborah the judge (Judges 4:4) and Huldah the prophetess (2 Kings 22:13-20) were women teachers. Women Bible class teachers today fulfill the same role as these women. The "anti-class" position would not allow a Deborah or Huldah in the church today.²⁹

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of classes? If so, why do most class advocates attempt to justify classes by "generic" authority when they could simply turn to this example and show us "specific" authority?

Second: Would this passage justify classes in the church today? Suppose these prophetesses used mechanical instruments. Would that justify mechanical instruments in the church today? Of course not.

Third: Both Deborah and Huldah taught men. Most Bible class advocates will not usually allow women to do this.

²⁹ Cf. Logan Buchanan used this argument in: [Debate on the Bible Class Question](#), op cit., pp. 128-130.

Fourth: Where are the simultaneous Bible classes that supposedly took place?

Fifth: Women may teach, but only in private (1 Cor 14:34-35; 1 Tim 2:12; Acts 20:20).

ARGUMENT #5: Large crowd of Nehemiah 8

The crowd in Neh 8 was so large that thirteen men were employed teaching simultaneous classes.³⁰

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of classes? If so, why do most class advocates attempt to justify classes by "generic" authority when they could simply turn to this example and show us "specific" authority?

Second: Would this passage justify classes in the church today? Suppose these Israelites used mechanical instruments. Would that justify mechanical instruments in the church today? Of course not.

Third: Several verses in this passage prove there were no simultaneous classes being taught:

Nehemiah 8

¹ Now **all the people gathered together as one man** in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded Israel.

⁴ So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and **beside him, at his right hand**, stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. ⁵ And **Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people**, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up.

⁸ So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.

The evidence points to one common assembly with men speaking one at a time to help the audience understand the reading of the scriptures. Simultaneous classes cannot be justified by use of this passage.

³⁰ This reasoning was used by R. L. Whiteside, Whiteside-Clark Discussion, op cit., pp. 24, 33.

ARGUMENT #6: Anna went about Jerusalem telling about Christ

In Lk 2:38 Anna spoke about Christ to everyone in Jerusalem who was looking for redemption. Herein is the idea of Bible classes.³¹

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of classes? If so, why do most class advocates attempt to justify classes by "generic" authority when they could simply turn to this example and show us "specific" authority?

Second: Would this passage justify classes in the church today? Suppose these Israelites used mechanical instruments. Would that justify mechanical instruments in the church today? Of course not.

Third: Did Anna speak to women and children only, or also to men? If she spoke to men as the text indicates, and if this is a Bible class, then she was teaching classes of men. However, most class advocates would not allow women to teach classes with men in them.

Fourth: Where are simultaneous classes being conducted?

ARGUMENT #7: Twelve year old Jesus

At twelve years old Jesus was asking and answering questions in a Jewish school in such an arrangement that was not out of place for His mother to ask questions (Lk 2:42-50).³²

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of classes? If so, why do most class advocates attempt to justify classes by "generic" authority when they could simply turn to this example and show us "specific" authority?

Second: Would this passage justify classes in the church today? Suppose these Israelites used mechanical instruments. Would that justify mechanical instruments in the church today? Of course not.

³¹ Cf. Buchanan, op cit., pp. 130-131.

³² Cf. Buchanan, op cit., p. 18.

Third: Where are the simultaneous classes? The evidence here is one common assembly.

Fourth: The question before us (i.e. the Bible Class question) is what the church can or cannot do, not what a Jewish school did or did not do.

Fifth: Which class could Mary, the mother of Jesus, teach since class advocates allow women to teach some of their classes? Would she be allowed to, not only ask questions in this "class," but also to teach the "class"?

ARGUMENT #8: Jesus explains a parable

In Mt 13:36 Jesus took His disciples into a house and explained to them a parable. This is group teaching parallel to modern day Bible classes.³³

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of a Bible class? If so, why appeal to a "generic" command such as, "Go teach," like most class advocates? Why not turn to this specific example of a "class" and use it to authorize classes?

Second: Was the public invited to attend the discussion in the house as the public is invited to attend Bible classes?

Third: In as much as women may teach some classes, would they have been allowed to teach the "class" of Mt 13:36?

Fourth: Where are other classes being taught simultaneously? Mt 13:36 points to a single group being taught by one man.

Fifth: Was this a record of the church assembling people to be taught in classes, or is it rather an individual teaching in a private home?

³³ Porter, op cit., p. 184.

ARGUMENT #9: The transfiguration

In Mk 9:2-14 we see Jesus taking a small group up the mountain and teaching them while another group was being taught simultaneously by the disciples who remained behind. In principle, this is what is done in modern day Bible classes.³⁴

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of a Bible class? If so, why appeal to a "generic" command such as, "Go teach," like most class advocates? Why not turn to this specific example of a "class" and use it to authorize classes?

Second: In as much as women may teach some classes, which one of these "classes" would women have been allowed to teach? The "class" on the mountain or the "class" at the foot of the mountain?

Third: Was the public invited to attend the "class" on the mountain as the public is invited to attend Bible classes?

Fourth: Remember, an individual man taking someone aside for a private discussion is not the same as the church conducting classes for the public to attend.

Fifth: The two groups mentioned in Mk 9 are radically different in nature. The group on the mountain was very private, but the group at the foot of the mountain was very public.

Sixth: There is no simultaneous teaching taking place. The day after Jesus and the three disciples supposedly had this "private class" they descended the mountain and found the others engaged in a public debate (Lk 9:37). One group meeting on one day and another group meeting the next day falls far short of proving that a church may conduct simultaneous Bible classes with women teaching some of those classes!

ARGUMENT #10: Mary and other women

In Mt 28:7 Mary and other women were told to go tell disciples about the resurrected Lord. Thus, it is not wrong for women to teach a small group about the Lord and that's all that takes place in a Bible class.³⁵

³⁴ Porter, op cit., p. 183.

³⁵ Cf. Hayhurst, op cit., p. 159.

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of classes? If so, why do most class advocates attempt to justify classes by "generic" authority when they could simply turn to this example and show us "specific" authority?

Second: In Mt 28:10 these women were instructed to tell "brethren" about the risen Lord. In Mk 16:7 they were specifically told to tell Peter about the resurrection. If this argument authorizes Bible classes, then it authorizes women teaching classes of men, but most class advocates will not allow such.

Third: Where and when did Mary and other women (a) invite the public to come together, (b) classify them, and (c) teach simultaneous Bible classes?

ARGUMENT #11: Classes on Pentecost?

In Acts 2 the multitude heard the twelve apostles speaking (present tense) in many languages. This implies there were simultaneous classes being conducted.³⁶

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of a Bible class? If so, why appeal to a "generic" command such as, "Go teach," like most class advocates? Why not turn to this specific example of a "class" and use it to authorize classes?

Second: Notice what the text specifically says:

Acts 2

⁶ And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.

¹⁴ But **Peter**, standing up with the eleven, **raised his voice and said** to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.

This is one audience with men speaking one at a time to that audience. No simultaneous classes are evident.

³⁶ Porter, op cit., pp. 148-149, 172.

Third: The present tense of the verb proves nothing. For example, someone might say, "Brother Smith and Brother Jones are discussing (present tense) the Bible class issue tonight in Dallas, Texas." Both men may or may not be speaking at the same time although the present tense is utilized. In Lk 2:46 Jesus was "listening to them and asking them questions." The present tense of "listening" and "asking" does not imply that all present were speaking at the same time.

ARGUMENT #12: Joel's prophecy about "Daughters"

Acts 2:17-18 says that sons and daughters would prophesy so they must have had some arrangement, such as classes, in order to prophesy.³⁷

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of classes? If so, why do most class advocates attempt to justify classes by "generic" authority when they could simply turn to this example and show us "specific" authority?

Second: Daughters could prophesy at home in private and fulfill the requirements of Joel's prophecy. Nowhere is it stated that daughters must prophesy in a public assembly or in classes.

- We know these daughters did not prophesy in the common assembly of the church because Christian women were forbidden to speak in such an assembly (1 Cor 14:33b-35).
- We know they did not prophesy in any other public assembly because Christian women were not to become the spokesmen of the church in any public capacity (1 Tim 2:12). (See: [Error! Reference source not found.](#)[Error! Reference source not found.](#)[1 Timothy 2 \(Analyzed\)](#), p. 48).
- In private and individually they could prophesy. Priscilla helped teach Apollos privately (Acts 18:26). Philip's daughters prophesied in the home privately (Acts 21:8-9).

Third: If Joel's prophecy in Acts 2:17-18 proves Bible classes were necessary, then classes are not a liberty, but an essential requirement. However, most class advocates will not go so far as to say classes are mandatory.

³⁷ This reasoning was used by Roy H. Lanier, [Whitten-Lanier Debate](#), published by Roy H. Lanier, Nd., p. 91.

Fourth: If classes were necessary for the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, why are there no records, no commandments, no necessary inferences, and no examples of the apostles utilizing such classes?

ARGUMENT #13: Classes in Acts 5?

In Acts 5:25 the Bible says, "The men (plural) whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people." A plurality of men can teach (present tense) only by simultaneously teaching classes.³⁸

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of a Bible class? If so, why appeal to a "generic" command such as, "Go teach," like most class advocates? Why not turn to this specific example of a "class" and use it to authorize classes?

Second: The present tense of the verb proves nothing. For example, someone might say, "Brother Smith and Brother Jones are discussing (present tense) the Bible class issue tonight in Dallas, Texas." Both men may or may not be speaking at the same time although the present tense is utilized. In Lk 2:46 Jesus was "listening to them and asking them questions." The present tense of "listening" and "asking" does not imply that all present were speaking at the same time.

Third: When one man is appointed as a spokesman for a group and speaks on behalf of the group, it is correct to say, "They (plural) spoke." Peter was the spokesman on behalf of the apostles (Acts 3:12-26), yet the priests were grieved because, "They taught the people and preached in Jesus" (Acts 4:1-2).

ARGUMENT #14: Sapphira answered questions in a class?

In Acts 5:1-11 Peter called together a class and asked Sapphira questions and she answered these questions in the class. Thus we can have Bible classes today.³⁹

³⁸ Cf. Lanier, op cit., pp. 23-24.

³⁹ Cf. Lanier, op cit., p. 25.

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of a Bible class? If so, why appeal to a "generic" command such as, "Go teach," like most class advocates? Why not turn to this specific example of a "class" and use it to authorize classes?

Second: Where are the simultaneous classes in this passage?

- Where is an assembly of the church being divided into classes for teaching?
- Where are women teaching some of those classes?

Third: Was this "class" advertised publicly and was the public invited to attend this "class" similar to modern day Bible classes? Would accommodations have been made for everyone who came?

Fourth: Class advocates usually reject the rules of 1 Cor 14:26-40 because miraculous gifts are being used in the chapter. Yet, with this argument, class-advocates are turning to a passage involving the exercise of miraculous power and use it to justify classes. This is inconsistent to say the very least.

ARGUMENT #15: Classes in Acts 15?

In Acts 15:4-6 we have a group assembled by the church that is smaller than the whole group. This small group was the private gathering that Paul spoke of in Gal 2:2 and is parallel to modern day Bible classes.⁴⁰

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of a Bible class? If so, why appeal to a "generic" command such as, "Go teach," like most class advocates? Why not turn to this specific example of a "class" and use it to authorize classes?

Second: Where are the simultaneous classes in this passage?

Acts 15

⁶ Now **the apostles and elders came together** to consider this matter.

⁴⁰ Cf. Porter, op cit., pp. 145-146, 176; Elmer Moore, "Bible Classes and Literature," Florida College Annual Lectures, Cogdill Foundation Pub., 1982, p. 147.

¹² Then **all the multitude** kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles.

²² Then it pleased **the apostles and elders, with the whole church**, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas ...

²⁵ it seemed good to us, **being assembled with one accord**, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

This proves only one common assembly with men speaking one at a time.

- Where is an assembly of the church being divided into classes for teaching?
- Where are women teaching some of those classes?

Third: The fact is, Acts 15 does not record the private meeting mentioned by Paul in Gal 2:2.

Fourth: It is not denied that brethren may discuss matters privately as done in Gal 2:2, but how "private" would Paul's meeting have been if all men in town had been invited to attend? When everyone is invited to attend a Bible class it is not a private affair as per Gal 2:2.

ARGUMENT #16: Lydia and other women

In Acts 16:13 Lydia and other women met together to teach one another and have prayer. This is all that is done in Bible classes.⁴¹

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of classes? If so, why do most class advocates attempt to justify classes by "generic" authority when they could simply turn to this example and show us "specific" authority?

Second: When these women were meeting together in Acts 16:13 they were not yet baptized. They did not yet form the church. Where is any evidence that the church assembled the public, classified them, and then taught them in simultaneous Bible classes with women doing some of the teaching?

⁴¹ Unpublished argument.

ARGUMENT #17: The school of Tyrannus

The "idea" of Bible classes is found in Acts 19:8-9 when Paul taught in the school of Tyrannus.⁴²

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of a Bible class? If so, why appeal to a "generic" command such as, "Go teach," like most class advocates? Why not turn to this specific example of a "class" and use it to authorize classes?

Second: Where are the simultaneous Bible classes with women teaching some of those classes?

Third: Notice carefully the text:

Acts 19:8-9

⁸ And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. ⁹ But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

Verse 9 says three things:

- Some Jews in the synagogue became radically opposed to Paul.
- For the spiritual welfare of the Christians, Paul separated the Christians from these Jews.
- Paul went daily to the school of Tyrannus where he continued to preach the gospel.

The scriptures do not oppose the use of a schoolroom or school building for preaching the gospel, but they do oppose inviting the public to hear the gospel, dividing those people into simultaneous classes, and allowing women to teach some of those classes. (See **In summary, classes are wrong** , **Error! Reference source not found.****Error! Reference source not found.**p. **46**).

⁴² Unpublished argument.

ARGUMENT #18: The Ephesian elders formed a class? (version 1)

When the elders at Ephesus were called together by Paul (Acts 20:17-20) we see a group less than the whole church being taught. This is all that modern day Bible classes are: A group less than the entire church being taught the scriptures.⁴³

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of a Bible class? If so, why appeal to a "generic" command such as, "Go teach," like most class advocates? Why not turn to this specific example of a "class" and use it to authorize classes?

Second: Where are the simultaneous Bible classes with women teaching some of those classes?

Third: This gathering in Acts 20:17 is very private. The public was not invited to attend. In contrast, classes are for the benefit of the public. The entire public community is invited.

Fourth: Notice the following comparison between the meeting of Acts 20 and modern Bible classes:

THE ACTS 20 MEETING	BIBLE CLASSES
There was no public announcement inviting the public to attend.	Classes are announced publicly to invite the public.
This was not a church called assembly, but rather a private assembly called by an individual (Paul).	Classes are neither private assemblies, nor the work of individuals.
There was no simultaneous teaching. This was one man speaking to one common assembly.	Classes form simultaneous teaching that violates specific commands for teaching. (See In summary, classes are wrong p. 46).

⁴³ Cf. Moore, op cit., p. 147.

ARGUMENT #19: The Ephesian elders formed a class? (version 2)

Here Paul called the elders together. It would have been wrong for a woman to teach this group of men. Yet, "Anti" brethren say a woman can teach any man, or group of men in private. Therefore, there are private groups where a woman may not teach and this is like our classes.⁴⁴

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of a Bible class? If so, why appeal to a "generic" command such as, "Go teach," like most class advocates? Why not turn to this specific example of a "class" and use it to authorize classes?

Second: Where are the simultaneous Bible classes with women teaching some of those classes?

Third: This gathering in Acts 20:17 is very private. The public was not invited to attend. In contrast, classes are for the benefit of the public. The entire public community is invited.

Fourth: We have examples of women teaching even a group of apostles in private (Mt 28:7-10; Mk 16:7-11; Lk 24:9-10; Jn 20:18). To say a woman cannot teach a private group of men just because they are leaders of the church is wrong.

Fifth: While we agree a woman may not domineer apostles or other leaders, this does not remove the fact that in private she may teach any man – even men "mighty in scriptures" (Acts 18:24-26).

1 Tim 2:12 forbids a woman from exercising the "authority of a man" in public capacities; other passages forbid her from domineering men in private (Eph 5:22-24; Col. 3:18; Heb 13:7, 17).

ARGUMENT #20: "Public places and private places"

Acts 20:20 refers, not to public and private teaching, but public places and private places.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Cf. Odom, op cit., p. 11.

⁴⁵ Cf. Moore, op cit., pp. 147, 150.

REPLY

First: "Publicly," as used in Acts 20:20 is an adverb describing action. This adverb describes how the teaching was done, not where the teaching was done. If the place where the teaching took place was under consideration, the adjective "public" would have been used rather than the adverb "publicly."

Second: Are classes "private places" where a woman can teach a man as was done in Acts 18:36? If not, why not?

Third: Does the word "private" mean "private places" in the following passages:

- Mt 1:18
- Mt 2:7
- Acts 23:19
- Gal 2:2

Fourth: See answer given to "**ARGUMENT #33: Classes are private,**" (p. 80).

ARGUMENT #21: Philip's daughters prophesied

In Acts 21:9 Philip's daughters prophesied and the church must make some such arrangement that would allow Christian women today to do the same thing.⁴⁶

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of classes? If so, why do most class advocates attempt to justify classes by "generic" authority when they could simply turn to this example and show us "specific" authority?

Second: These daughters prophesied in the home. No evidence is found in the text that they invited the public together, assembled them into classes, and then simultaneously taught such classes.

Third: Where are the simultaneous classes that are supposedly being taught?

⁴⁶ Cf. Lanier, op cit., p. 39.

ARGUMENT #22: Rom 16 and women servants

Rom 16:1-2 speaks of women who are servants of the church. The church functions only in (a) evangelism, (b) edification, and (c) benevolence. Therefore, the church had to have some arrangement that would allow the women servants to serve in evangelism.⁴⁷

REPLY

First: This argument says that classes become mandatory and essential in order for the church to carry out all of its teaching obligations. However, most class advocates would not go so far as to say that classes are mandatory.

Second: It must be shown that the women servants of Rom 16 could not fulfill their duties and obligations through the common assembly and in private life.

Third: It must be further shown that, to assist in the area of evangelism, women must be put in charge of a class and allowed to instruct such public assemblies that have been called together for hearing the Bible.

Because this argument lacks supporting evidence, it proves nothing and serves only as a "smoke screen" to confuse the unsuspecting.

ARGUMENT #23: 1 Cor 11:1-16 shows that women prophesied

1 Cor 11:1-16 shows that women prophesied. Thus, the church must make some such arrangement that would allow women today to teach.⁴⁸

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of classes? If so, why do most class advocates attempt to justify classes by "generic" authority when they could simply turn to this example and show us "specific" authority?

⁴⁷ Cf. Lanier, op cit., pp. 25, 92-93.

⁴⁸ Cf. Buchanan, op cit., pp. 16, 62-63, 93.

Second: This argument recognizes that the word "prophecy" can include the teaching and preaching of uninspired people today. This nullifies the efforts of class advocates who argue that 1 Cor 14 no longer applies because it deals with matters in the miraculous era.

Third: The prophesying mentioned in this text may be fulfilled in private homes without the church providing any arrangements. Individuals may provide their own private arrangements without the church being responsible.

Fourth: Where is proof of simultaneous Bible classes with women doing some of the teaching? Read 1 Cor 11:1-16 in its entirety and no evidence for classes can be found.

ARGUMENT #24: Classes are essential?

(a) The gift of prophecy was given to the church, not the home (1 Cor 12:28). (b) Those women prophesied and taught the church (1 Cor 14:4, "He that prophesies edifies the church.") (c) We necessarily infer that these women prophets spoke in some other kind of meeting than when the whole church had "come together into one place." 1 Cor 14 absolutely demands women teachers and arrangements for them to teach.⁴⁹

REPLY

First: This argument makes classes mandatory. That is, churches sin if they do not have classes. Few class advocates are willing to go this far.

Second: 1 Cor 12:28 does not teach that the only place the gift of prophecy can be exercised is in an assembly convened and conducted by the church.

Third: When Paul wrote, "He who prophesies edifies the church," (1 Cor 14:4), he was contrasting the gift of prophecy with the gift of tongues. If tongues are spoken in the assembly without a translation being made, no one is edified except the tongue speaker himself. By contrast, if a man prophesies in "plain English" the entire church is edified.

This comparison falls far short of proving, "When the church comes together for the purpose of teaching, it is scriptural to divide into classes for this teaching, some of which may be taught by women."

⁴⁹ Cf. Buchanan, op cit., p. 16.

Fourth: All assemblies conducted by the church in which the public is called from their homes must be conducted by the rules of 1 Cor 14:26-40. (1 Cor 14:33b-35; see **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. 44; see **In summary, classes are wrong** , p. 46).

ARGUMENT #25: 1 Cor 14 applies to miraculous age

1 Cor 14 cannot be used today because it belongs in the miraculous age of the apostles. This age is now past and so are these regulations.⁵⁰

REPLY

First: On what grounds would women preachers be forbidden if this chapter no longer applies?

Second: Would preachers speaking in foreign languages today be required to use a translator? If so, upon what grounds – if this chapter no longer applies?

Third: Notice the following chart:

INSPIRED MEN	UNINSPIRED MEN
If inspired tongue speakers had to follow the rules of 1 Cor 14, then ...	Are uninspired tongue speakers ⁵¹ exempt from the rules?
If inspired prophets had to follow the rules, then ...	Are uninspired preachers exempt from the rules?
If wives of inspired men had to remain silent, then ...	Are wives of uninspired men exempt from the rules?
If wives of inspired men could not even ask questions, then ...	Are wives of uninspired men exempt from the rules?

ARGUMENT #26: We can only have 2 or 3 speakers?

If 1 Cor 14:26-40 still applies today, then we can have only two or three speakers during an assembly. Do the "Anti" brethren really want this? Do they practice and insist upon this part of the chapter?

⁵⁰ Cf. Lanier, op cit., p. 78; Moore, op cit., p. 148.

⁵¹ I.e., men who speak in foreign languages naturally because they were born in a foreign country and studied a foreign language.

REPLY

It is a mistake to conclude that a limit was placed on the number of men who could speak during the assembly. This is a misunderstanding of the rule. Notice verse 31 allows any man present in the assembly to speak if he wishes:

1 Corinthians 14:31

³¹ For **you can all prophesy** one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

No limit is being placed upon the number of speakers during an assembly. Instead, the Lord has devised a way to allow every man in the assembly to have an opportunity to exercise his talents. Notice verse 26:

1 Corinthians 14:26

²⁶ How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

Each man could speak, but only one could speak at a time – "one by one" (verse 27). Likewise, the prophets had to speak one at a time (verse 30). See a full discussion of these verses earlier in this book (**A CLOSER LOOK AT THE RULES**, p. 40)

The modern-day "pastor system" which allows only a select few, professionally trained men, to address the audience is completely foreign to scripture. Any brother present, who possesses the talent to edify, is to be allowed to exercise his gift if he so chooses.

ARGUMENT #27: Only prophets' wives must remain silent?

When Paul wrote 1 Cor 14:34-35 he was speaking to the prophets and thus, "Let your women remain silent," means only the wives of the prophets must remain silent. This does not mean that every single woman must remain silent. If a woman is unmarried, or is married to an unbelieving husband, they may ask questions in the assembly to learn. Only prophets' wives were told to remain silent.

REPLY

While it is true that Paul was speaking to the prophets and tongue speakers when he wrote 1 Cor 14:34-35, this present argument is overlooking the real question that needs to be asked: *Why were the wives of the prophets told to remain silent?*

To answer this question many have assumed that the prophets' wives were causing a disturbance at Corinth and Paul had to hush them up in order to maintain order in the assembly. However, this interpretation is pure speculation without a shred of evidence. The passage, when allowed to speak for itself, tells exactly why the wives of the prophets were to remain silent:

1 Corinthians 14:34-35

³⁴ Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. ³⁵ And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

Why can't the prophets' wives speak or ask questions in the assembly? Because "*it is shameful for women to speak in church.*" In other words, because it is shameful for any woman to speak in the assembly, the wives of the prophets must remain silent. If unmarried women, or women with unbelieving husbands, have questions, they may not ask questions in the public assembly because "*it is a shame for women to speak in church.*" They must simply wait until a private opportunity to ask their questions to the leaders of the church.

Bible classes are public assemblies of the church that not only encourage women to ask questions, but women are often put in charge of classes to teach. Such arrangements violate the regulations the Lord gave for all public assemblies conducted by the church.

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. 44.
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. 46.
- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. 24.

ARGUMENT #28: Does 1 Cor 14 apply just in church assemblies?

If 1 Cor 14 applies just to assemblies conducted by the church, does this mean, "God is not the author of confusion only in assemblies conducted by the church"? Does it mean, "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets only in assemblies conducted by the church"?⁵²

REPLY

Yes, this is exactly what this means. The rules of 1 Cor 14:26-40 apply in every single public assembly conducted by the church for teaching the word. There is not a single exception. (See **"These rules apply to every public assembly,"** p. 44.)

First: God has been the author of confusion outside the assembly when it suited His purposes. Example: Tower of Babel incident. "Babel" means "confusion" (Gen. 11:9).

Second: God has caused some prophets to lose control of themselves outside the assembly when it suited His purposes. Balaam lost control of what he was saying (Num 24:2; Dt 23:4-5); King Saul lost control of what he was doing (1 Sam. 19:23-24); Nebuchadnezzar lost control of what he was doing for about seven years (Dan. 4).

Third: Outside the assembly, men speaking in foreign languages do not have to remain silent if no translator is present.

Fourth: Outside the assembly prophets may speak simultaneously.

Fifth: Outside the assembly women may speak provided they do not violate other passages such as 1 Tim 2:11-12. (See **1 Timothy 2 (Analyzed)**, p. 48).

ARGUMENT #29: 1 Cor 14 has some general principles that apply today

1 Cor 14 has some general principles that apply today like "God is not the author of confusion" and "women must remain silent," but specific regulations for tongue speakers and prophets no longer apply.⁵³

⁵² This type of reasoning was used by Hiram Hutto, in the *Cutter-Hutto Debate*, 4th Affirmative speech. This debate was held September 13-17, 1976 in Athens, AL.

⁵³ Unpublished response used by some to rescue the part of 1 Cor 14 that appeals to them while rejecting the other parts that would forbid Bible classes.

REPLY

First: When uninspired men speak in tongues (foreign languages) must there be a translator present? If so, what scripture requires such? If the answer is 1 Cor 14:27-28, then the other regulations of this chapter also apply today.

Second: When several uninspired preachers wish to speak in the common assembly, are they permitted to all speak at the same time, or must they speak one at a time? What scripture regulates this situation? If the answer is 1 Cor 14:29-33, then the other regulations of this chapter also apply today.

Third: See "**ARGUMENT #25: 1 Cor 14 applies to miraculous age**," p. 72.

ARGUMENT #30: Was 1 Cor 14 given to regulate classes?

Was 1 Cor 14 given to regulate classes? If "yes," then this proves the New Testament church had classes. If "no," then do not use it to regulate our classes.⁵⁴

REPLY

Apply this logic to any innovation and you readily see the argument is not valid.

Example: Was 1 Peter 5:2 given to regulate missionary societies? If "yes," then this proves the New Testament church had such societies. If "no," then do not use it to regulate our societies.

The point to be remembered is that 1 Cor 14 was given to regulate all assemblies conducted by the church. (See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. 44). Bible classes violate these rules. (See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. 46).

ARGUMENT #31: Dividing the common assembly makes the parts private?

When the common assembly is divided into classes, each part (class) is now private and the rules of 1 Cor 14 do not apply.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ This reasoning was used by David Bonner, Feb. 27, 1987 in debate with Joe Hisle in Seminole, OK.

⁵⁵ Cf. Buchanan, op cit., p. 57.

REPLY

First: If the parts are truly private, then a woman ought to be allowed to teach any part of this divided assembly because in private a woman may teach anyone, including men (Acts 18:26). However, most class advocates say a woman may not teach a class with men in it.

- Class advocates fear to say their classes are public for then they must explain why they are violating the rules for the public assembly (1 Cor 14; see **A CLOSER LOOK AT THE RULES**, p. 40).
- They also fear to say their classes are totally private, for then a woman could teach a class with men in it (cf. Acts 18:26).

Classes, by the admission of those who use them, fit into a quasi-semi-public/semi-private category that is entirely foreign to anything found in the scriptures.

Second: If the parts are truly private, could we put two of these parts (classes) together and allow a woman to teach the newly formed group? Could twenty of these private parts be combined together and a woman be allowed to teach these twenty private parts that have converged? This argument eventually leads to a woman preaching to virtually the entire church provided one part is left out in order to keep it "private."

Third: When classes are advertised publicly and everyone in town is invited to attend, they cease to be private gatherings. Classes are public gatherings of the church that violate specific rules of assembly. (See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. 46).

ARGUMENT #32: Classes are not the assembly

The rules of teaching found in 1 Cor 14 apply only when the "whole church is come together into one place" and Bible classes are not the "whole church come together into one place." Therefore: (a) We do not have to all stay together in one place. (b) The teachers do not have to speak one at a time. (c) The women do not have to remain silent.⁵⁶

REPLY

First: This type of reasoning would not be tolerated in regards to other items of worship.

⁵⁶ Cf. Hutto, op cit., 1st affirmative speech. See also **ARGUMENT #31: Dividing the common assembly makes the parts private?**, p. 70.

Take the communion as an example. Suppose someone argued: The rules of communion found in 1 Cor 11 apply only when the "whole church is come together into one place" and simultaneous communion groups are not the "whole church come together into one place. Therefore:

- We may have communion on any day of the week provided of course that we are not all together in one place, because the rule concerning the first day of the week applies only when the whole church comes together into one place.
- We may use milk and cookies for communion, because the rule concerning unleavened bread and fruit of the vine applies only when the whole church comes together into one place.

CLASS ADVOCATES' "REASONING" REGARDING CLASSES	PARALLEL "REASONING" FOR COMMUNION
1) The rules of 1 Cor 14 apply only when "the whole church comes together."	1) The rules for communion apply only when "the whole church comes together into one place" (1 Cor 11:17-34).
2) When we have Bible classes the entire church is not all together!	2) If we assemble people into groups the entire church is not all together!
3) Therefore we do not have to go by the rules of 1 Cor 14 when we assemble in groups.	3) Therefore we do not have to go by those rules that ordinarily would govern the communion.
4) The fact that there is no example of any other type of church assembly than a common assembly does not matter.	4) The fact that there is no example of observing the communion in any other way does not matter.

Others could argue just as "logically" that the rules for the collection (1 Cor 16:1-2) and the rules for singing (1 Cor 14:15; Eph 5:19) apply just when the church is assembled together in one place. If, however, men do not want to abide by such restrictions, they may avoid them by dividing into classes.

These arguments all assume the same thing. They are assuming there are two types of assemblies offered in the NT from which to choose:

- If the brethren wish, they may assemble people into one "main" assembly in order to teach them. In this case, since everyone is together, the rules of 1 Cor 14 must be followed. The rules governing the communion in 1 Cor 11 must be followed. The rules governing collection of money in 1 Cor 16 must be followed. The rules governing singing in 1 Cor 14 and Eph 5 must be followed. To violate any of these rules would be sinful.

- However, if the brethren wish, to have simultaneous teaching, women speakers, Monday night communion with cookies and milk, Bingo parties to raise church funds, or mechanical instruments of music, then they may assemble people into groups, or classes. Now, the rules that govern worship are completely irrelevant and may be completely ignored. No sin is committed by violating these rules, because the rules do not apply when the church is divided into groups.

Second: All assemblies conducted by the church in which the public is called from their homes must be conducted by the rules of 1 Cor 14:26-40. (See especially 1 Cor 14:33b-35; 4:17.

- See **A CLOSER LOOK AT THE RULES**, p. 40.
- See **In summary, classes are wrong** , p. 46.
- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. 44.

Third: This argument makes the common assembly an "option." If brethren decide to "come together into one place," then they must abide by the rules of 1 Cor 14. However, if the brethren decide they do not want to follow the rules, they may evade them by dividing into classes! In essence the rules would be as follows:

- The tongue speakers must have interpreters if the whole church is come together into one place, but if the whole church is divided into classes there is no longer a public assembly in any sense and this is not necessary.
- The prophets must speak one at a time if the whole church is come together into one place, but if the whole church is divided into classes there is no longer a public assembly in any sense and this is not necessary.
- The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets if the whole church is come together into one place, but if the whole church is divided into classes there is no longer a public assembly in any sense and this is not necessary.

QUESTION: When did God ever give rules and leave it to men to decide: "If we want to obey these rules, we must assemble people together in a "main" assembly, but if we do not want to go by the rules, we can simply arrange people into groups and the rules are now nullified. The choice is ours. We are free to do as we choose."?

Matthew 15:6

⁶ ... Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.

Fourth: The common assembly is virtually eliminated with this reasoning.

- The common assembly is not needed when men argue that "communion is individual" – just between God and man. Why not remain at home and commune just with God individually?
- The common assembly for teaching is not needed because the class method is "superior" and teaches people on "their own level."
- If the rules of 1 Cor 14 seem unduly restrictive, they may be evaded completely by dividing the people and since the church is no longer "come together into one place" these rules may be ignored.

Why have a common assembly at all?

Fifth: This argument admits that classes do not follow the rules found in 1 Cor 14.

- See **ARGUMENT #33: Classes are private**, p. 80.

ARGUMENT #33: Classes are private

Classes are private and therefore the rules of 1 Cor 14, which governs public assemblies, do not apply.⁵⁷

REPLY

First: This "reasoning" would not be tolerated in regards to other items of worship. For example:

- Could we apply this same "reasoning" to communion? Do the rules for communion apply only to public assemblies? If the church were assembled into "private Bible classes" could the rules governing the communion be ignored?
- Could we apply this same "reasoning" to collection? Do the rules for collection apply only to public assemblies? If the church were assembled into "private Bible classes" could the rules governing the collection be ignored?
- Could we apply this same "reasoning" to singing? Do the rules for singing apply only to public assemblies? If the church were assembled into "private Bible classes" could the rules governing the singing be ignored?

⁵⁷ Cf. **ARGUMENT #44: Classes are restricted**, p. 86; **ARGUMENT #31: Dividing the common assembly makes the parts private?**, p. 70.

Second: This argument recognizes the fact that 1 Cor 14 governs public assemblies of the church today. This contradicts and nullifies the idea that 1 Cor 14 applies only to the miraculous age of the first century.

If the classes are public, then:

- The public assembly has been divided in direct violation to God's law (1 Cor 14; Heb 10:25).
- Women are teaching in public assemblies of the church in direct violation to God's law (1 Cor 14:34-35).
- Several men are speaking at the same time in direct violation to God's law (1 Cor 14:31).

Third: The definitions of "public" and "private" reveal that classes are public gatherings of the church.

publicly – "in a manner observable by or in a place accessible to the public: OPENLY"⁵⁸

public – "exposed to general view: open"⁵⁹

private – "not known or intended to be known publicly: secret"⁶⁰

These two particular definitions agree with the usage found in Acts 20:20.

Acts 20:20

²⁰ "how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house,

Because the most common type of private teaching took place in a private home, the phrase "house to house" is used. If classes are as private as "house to house" teaching, may the things done in a house be done in the Bible classes? For example, since a woman can teach a man privately at home (Acts 18:26), can a woman teach men in Bible classes? If not, why not?

Fourth: If the classes are private classes, then why are they being advertised to the public? Are private events usually advertised in newspapers and street signs with the words "EVERYONE WELCOME" appended?

Fifth: How private are these classes? Can any woman in town enter any class?⁶¹ Can any child in town enter any class?⁶² Can any man in town enter any class provided the teaching is being done by a man?⁶³

⁵⁸ Webster, op cit.

⁵⁹ Webster, op cit.

⁶⁰ Webster, op cit.

We are being asked to believe that if the class is taught by a female, not everyone is allowed in the class and the class is therefore private. If, however, the class is being taught by a male, anyone in town is allowed in the class. Whether the class is public or private depends upon the gender of the instructor!

Sixth: Bert Thompson, a former preacher among churches utilizing Bible classes, admitted that classes are public:

Public error demands public correction! And so if some ACU professors are willing to publicly (in the classroom) call Genesis 1-2 a "myth"; ... then let it be duly noted that some among us will rise up in righteous indignation when the souls of our very children are endangered under the cloak of 'academic freedom' or "higher education."⁶⁴

Seventh: Notice where the word privately is used elsewhere in the New Testament:

- Joseph was minded to put Mary away "privately" (Mt 1:19). Was "EVERYONE WELCOME" to attend this event? Would provisions have been made for everyone who came?
- Herod took the wise men aside "privately" and inquired about the baby Jesus (Mt 2:7). Was "EVERYONE WELCOME" to attend this event?
- Paul was beaten "openly" and the civil authorities were trying to thrust him out "secretly" (Acts 16:37). Was "EVERYONE WELCOME" to attend the "release ceremony"?
- The chief captain took Paul's nephew aside "privately" to hear the message about an assassination plot (Acts 23:19). Was "EVERYONE WELCOME" to attend this event?
- Paul spoke "privately" with men of reputation (Gal 2:2). Was "EVERYONE WELCOME" to attend this event?

⁶¹ On what grounds would a woman be barred from attending a men's class with her husband, or a child's class with her child, or any other class?

⁶² On what grounds would a child be barred from attending a class with his parent?

⁶³ On what grounds would a man be barred from attending a woman's class with his wife if a man were teaching the class? For that matter, on what grounds would a man be barred from attending with his wife if a woman were teaching the class?

⁶⁴ Bert Thompson, op cit., p. ix. (Punctuation and emphasis his.)

ARGUMENT #34: Classes are the work of individuals, not the congregation

Since classes are the work of individuals, not the congregation, the rules of 1 Cor 14 do not apply because those rules apply only to the work of congregations, not the work of individuals.⁶⁵

REPLY

First: Could we apply this same reasoning to communion? Do the rules for communion apply only to assemblies conducted by the church? If the church were assembled into "private Bible classes" conducted by individuals, could the rules governing the communion be ignored?

Second: Could we apply this same reasoning to collection? Do the rules for collection apply only to assemblies conducted by the church? If the church were assembled into "private Bible classes" conducted by individuals, could the rules governing the collection be ignored?

Third: Could we apply this same reasoning to singing? Do the rules for singing apply only to assemblies conducted by the church? If the church were assembled into "private Bible classes" conducted by individuals, could the rules governing the singing be ignored?

ARGUMENT #35: A group smaller than the whole church

If a group is found that is smaller than the whole church come together, then classes have been proven. Gal 2:2 is a group smaller than the whole church come together.⁶⁶ Therefore, classes are scriptural.

REPLY

Finding a little group somewhere will not satisfy the proposition under debate. Consider each part of the proposition under discussion:

First: "*When the church comes together*" – this is the proposition under discussion. The church coming together is a public assembly involving the entire church.

Second: "*For the purpose of teaching*" – this is the teaching that ordinarily would be done in one common assembly with men only doing the teaching.

⁶⁵ Cf. **ARGUMENT #32: Classes are not the assembly**, p. 71; **ARGUMENT #33: Classes are private**, p. 74.

⁶⁶ Cf. Moore, op cit., pp. 147, 150-151.

Third: "It is scriptural to divide into classes for this teaching" – the teaching that would have been done by men only speaking one at a time to one audience will now be done by many people simultaneously speaking to many groups.

Fourth: "Some of which may be taught by women" – had the people all remained in one group the women would not have been allowed to ask questions, but now some of this same teaching will be done by women.

Gal 2:2 does not begin to prove any of this proposition.

ARGUMENT #36: "Teaching over a man"

1 Timothy 2:12 is not saying a woman cannot teach, but rather it is saying a woman cannot teach "over a man."⁶⁷

REPLY

The phrase "usurp authority over" (KJV) all comes from one Greek verb (αὐθεντέω) and means to "domineer."

Αὐθεντέω, ὦ, ἴ. ἦσω, (to be αὐ-
θέντης, one acting by his own au-
thority or power, *contr fr.* αὐτοέντης,
one who executes with his own
hand) to have authority over, do-
mineer, 1 Ti. 2. 12. N. ἴ.

68

The word "man" (ἄνθρωπος) is in the genitive case and should be properly translated "of a man."

12 διδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω,
but 'to teach 'a woman 'I do not permit,
οὐδὲ αὐθεντεῖν ἀνδρός, ἀλλ' εἶναι ἐν
not to exercise of(over) a man, but to be in
authority

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⁶⁷ Cf. Porter, op cit., p. 207.

⁶⁸ Photocopy from: Greenfield, op cit.

⁶⁹ Photocopy from: Alfred Marshall, op cit.

As noted in the above interlinear translation, the word "(over)" is being supplied by translators and if it is retained, it properly belongs under the word **αὐθεντεῖν** ("to exercise authority over") rather than **ἀνδρός** ("of a man"). By omitting the supplied word "(over)," the passage is simply saying two things:

- a) A Christian woman may not teach.
- b) She may not exercise the authority of a man

In 1 Tim 2:9-10, Christian women are instructed to clothe themselves in public with modest clothing and with shamefacedness. They are not to be the center of public attention. This is why in any public capacity a Christian woman may not teach. Becoming a public spokesman and teaching publicly makes the woman the center of attention. Rather than being the center of attention (a public spokesman and a public leader), the woman is to be modest, shamefaced, reserved, and a silent, submissive learner.

Herein is the fatal mistake made by class advocates. They believe a woman may teach in any public capacity provided no man is present. This is missing the point entirely. Whether men are present or not, is beside the point. God did not intend for a woman to be the center of public attention. In public capacities, rather than being the leader and spokesman, she is to be a silent learner, modestly clothed and away from public focus. Note the following contrast:

CLASS ADVOCATES	THE BIBLE
A woman may teach and lead in any public capacity provided no man is present.	<p>In public the woman is not to be the center of attention.</p> <p>1) She must be clothed modestly with shamefacedness so as not to attract undue attention to herself.</p> <p>2) She is not to be a public spokesman and thereby draw attention to herself.</p> <p>3) She is not to be a public leader in any capacity, exercising the authority properly invested with men.</p>

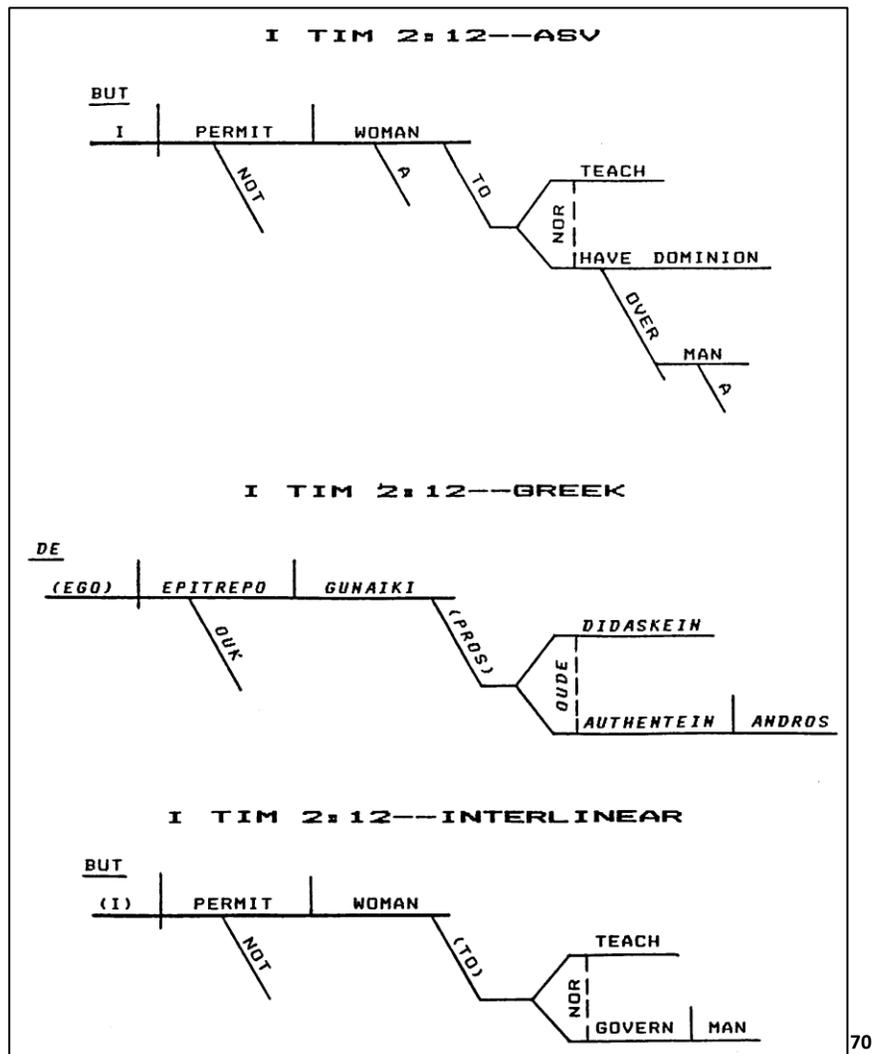
This is why a woman may not teach a "Bible class." Bible classes are public assemblies. The public has been invited and assembled, and in direct defiance to 1 Tim 2:9-15, Christian women are becoming public spokesmen and public leaders.

- The man's proper role from the beginning of creation was to be the leader.

- The woman's proper role was to be a helper, not a leader.

God reserved the privilege of being a public spokesman for the man. In public capacities the woman is to be a silent learner. In private she may ask questions (1 Cor 14:35); she may teach children (2 Tim 1:5); she may teach women (Tit 2:3-4); she may even teach men privately (Acts 18:26).

The idea of a woman teaching "over the man" is illogical as well as grammatically incorrect. The following three grammatical diagrams clearly reveal this:



Clearly there are two separate restrictions being placed upon women. Though related, they remain separate and distinct. Women are restricted from being (a) public spokesmen on behalf

⁷⁰ Sentence diagram is photocopied from Divine Pattern Advocate, op cit., pp. 80-81.

of the church and (b) public leaders. God intended from the very beginning that man would lead and woman would be a helper (Gen. 2:18).

APPLICATION: Even if Bible classes were not assemblies conducted by the church they are still public assemblies and in such assemblies women are not to be the leaders. In public assemblies of any kind women are to be modest, "shamefaced," and silent learners. They must not become the center of attention by teaching, or asking questions, but must wait for a private occasion when they may ask and teach (1 Cor 14:35; Acts 18:26; 2 Tim 1:5).

ARGUMENT #37: Does 1 Tim 2:12 apply to public situations only?

If 1 Tim 2:12 applies to public situations only, then may a woman in private "usurp authority over a man"?⁷¹

REPLY

First: This passage is forbidding only public teaching of the word. Women are not to be public spokesmen of the church. Remember:

- Elders are to be men only.
- All apostles were men only.
- In Bible days, all public spokesmen of the church were men only.

Second: As noted in ARGUMENT #36, 1 Tim 2:12 is not teaching "over a man," but "of a man." That is, the passage is literally saying, "Do not exercise the authority of a man." When 1 Tim 2:12 forbids women from "exercising the authority of a man," the Lord was specifically speaking of public leadership roles that properly belong to men. (See **ARGUMENT #36: "Teaching over a man" p. 84**),

Third: If someone is worried that women will now have the right to domineer men, let it be remembered that 1 Tim 2:12 is not the only passage in the Bible. There are plenty of other passages forbidding women from domineering men (cf. Eph 5:22-24; Col. 3:18).

⁷¹ Unpublished rejoinder to the argument that 1 Tim 2:11-12 applies only to public situations. See the analysis of 1 Tim 2, p. 29.

ARGUMENT #38: "Silence" in 1 Tim 2:11 means "submissive"

"Silence" in 1 Tim 2:11 does not mean absolutely silent, but submissive as in 2 Th 3:12. Therefore, women may teach Bible classes provided they do so in a submissive way.⁷²

REPLY

First: It is true that "silence" (ἥσυχία) can mean "quiet manner of life," but it can also mean simply "silence." Thayer lists 1 Tim 2:11 under this second definition.

Second: If "silence" means "submissive," then Paul actually saying: "*Let a woman learn in submission with all submission.*" Such a redundant statement is obviously incorrect.

Third: The context of 2 Th 3:12 is different from the context of 1 Tim 2:11.

In context, 2 Th 3:12 "silence" is contrasted with "busybody" and means one should mind his own business rather than meddling in affairs belonging to another.

The context of 1 Tim 2:11 is contrasting "silence" with teaching and is distinct from "submission." In all public gatherings of any kind, whether conducted by the church or not, a woman is not to become a public spokesman on behalf of the Lord, His church, or His disciples. (See **1 Timothy 2 (Analyzed)**, p. 48).

ARGUMENT #39: Classes help women obey Titus 2:3-5?

Classes are simply arrangements made by the church to help women carry out the command to teach younger women (Titus 2:3-5).⁷³

REPLY

First: Is this argument saying the class system the only way older women can fulfill the command to teach younger women? If so, then classes are essential, but most class advocates would not go so far as to say classes are mandatory.

⁷² Cf. E. R. Harper, via Jerry Cutter, *The Teaching*, (tract published by Jerry Cutter), pp. 19-20.

⁷³ Cf. Porter, op cit., pp. 185-186.

Second: No arrangement may be made that violates specific commandments of the Lord in the process. Classes do just this: They violate specific commandments of the Lord.

- See **A CLOSER LOOK AT THE RULES**, p. 40.
- See **In summary, classes are wrong** , p. 46.
- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. 24

Third: Is the church obligated to arrange for every duty that individuals have?

- Christians must visit those in prison (Mt 25:36). Should we build "church prisons" to help?
- Christian girls are to marry and bear children (1 Tim 5:14). Should we start dating services and baby clinics?
- Christians are to lodge strangers (1 Tim 5:10). Should we build motels to help?

There are some duties individuals have and the church is not responsible for arranging to fulfill such obligations.

ARGUMENT #40: Chaste only in private?

If the teaching done by women in Titus 2:3-5 was private teaching only, does that mean they must be chaste only in private? Must they love their husbands and children only in private?⁷⁴

REPLY

The teaching was to take place privately, but the conduct taught was to be practiced everywhere. That is, the older women are to teach privately the younger women to be chaste at all times. Therefore, the answer to this argument is simply: No, women are not to be chaste only in private, nor are they to love their husbands and children only in private.

⁷⁴ Cf. Porter, op cit., p. 204.

ARGUMENT #41: Classes in Hebrews 5?

Heb 5:12-14 states the principle upon which classes are built. Classes are designed to give milk to babes and meat to the full-grown.⁷⁵

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of a Bible class? If so, why appeal to a "generic" command such as, "Go teach," like most class advocates? Why not turn to this specific example of a "class" and use it to authorize classes?

Second: Does the church have to have classes to teach babes? Is this argument saying classes are no longer a liberty, but a law? Most class advocates would not go this far.

Third: When everyone is assembled together and taught by men speaking one at a time, everyone learns what they need to know. Notice:

1 Corinthians 14:31

³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, **that all may learn** and all may be encouraged.

Simply put: Classes are not needed to impart milk to babes and meat to the mature.

Fourth: Differing age groups can be successfully taught in one common assembly without simultaneous classes being utilized. There is a "trickle down" effect when children are taught in a common assembly with adults.

Deuteronomy 31:12-13

¹² "Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, ¹³ and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess."

Fifth: How do elders, parents, and other church leaders know what is being taught to their children in segregated classes? Most class advocates will not allow a man in a class being taught by a woman. What assurance is there that babes, being taught by women, are being taught "milk" or even truth? One of the dangers of the class-system is: It sets up a teaching situation that cannot be monitored by parents or by church leaders.

⁷⁵ Cf. Lanier, op cit., pp. 77-78.

ARGUMENT #42: Bible gives categories for classes?

The Bible categorizes people: young, aged, mature, and novice. The Lord lays upon the elders of each congregation the duty of seeing that each class or group is properly fed.⁷⁶

REPLY

See response to the previous argument "ARGUMENT #41: Classes in Hebrews 5?"

ARGUMENT #43: Classes in synagogues?

History says the Jews had classes in the synagogues. Since Jesus taught in synagogues, He demonstrated His approval of classes.⁷⁷

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of a Bible class? If so, why appeal to a "generic" command such as, "Go teach," like most class advocates? Why not turn to this specific example of a "class" and use it to authorize classes?

Second: Notice the following typical scene of Jesus teaching in a synagogue:

Luke 4

¹⁶ So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.

²⁰ Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And **the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.**

Where are simultaneous classes being conducted with women teaching some of those classes? This is one man speaking to one audience.

Third: The very definition of "synagogue" disproves the use of a class system. "Synagogue" means "a collecting, gathering"⁷⁸; "an assembling together."⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Cf. Lanier, op cit., pp. 76-77.

⁷⁷ Cf. Buchanan, op cit., pp. 18-19.

⁷⁸ Greenfield, op cit.

⁷⁹ Thayer, op cit., p. 600.

Fourth: Consider these relevant questions:

- Which of these synagogues could a woman teach since women may teach some classes?
- All items of worship could be conducted in each separate synagogue. Can all items of worship be conducted in each modern day Bible class? Most class advocates would say no.

ARGUMENT #44: Classes are restricted

Bible classes are not public because restrictions are in place as to who can go into each class. Webster says "private" means, "intended for or restricted to the use of a particular person, group, or class." Thus, classes are private.⁸⁰

REPLY

First: Bible classes are not private even by Webster's definition.

- Sam's Wholesale Club is a "private" club by Webster's definition because it is "restricted" to only members who have paid dues.
- In contrast, any and every person showing up at the church building will be put into some class. No one will be left out. Though restrictions may be placed on some classes, jointly they provide teaching for any and everyone who comes.

Second: On what grounds will elders and church leaders keep people out of classes?⁸¹

- If a man insists on attending a class with his wife to observe what she is being taught, on what grounds will he be kept out? Who will enforce such restrictions? Shall bodily force be exercised to remove a man who insists on observing what his wife is taught?
- If a father insists on attending a class with his teenaged daughter to observe what he is being taught, on what grounds will he be kept out? Who will keep him out? What measures will be taken to ensure that he does not enter the class?

⁸⁰ Cf. Moore, op cit., pp. 146-147. See **ARGUMENT #33: Classes are private**, p. 74

⁸¹ See Tom Thrasher's answer to question #7, p. 119.

Remember: Class advocates commonly accuse "Anti" brethren of "making laws where God has made none." When they say their classes are restricted, ask them for scripture that gives them the right to restrict a husband, or father from entering with his family and observing what his family is being taught. Observe who is making laws God did not make.

Third: Restrictions as to who may attend a particular class do not by themselves make the class "private." Restrictions are in place as to who may attend an Atlanta Braves' baseball game,⁸² but a Braves' baseball game is not private.

Whether classes are public or private hinges on several points:

- Is the public aware of the event?
- Is the public invited to attend the event?
- Will provisions be made to accommodate any and everyone who attends?

Bible classes pass all these tests and are therefore public assemblies of the church in direct violation to the rules for the assembly.

- See **A CLOSER LOOK AT THE RULES**, p. 40.
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. 46.

ARGUMENT #45: Classes are like "public restrooms"?

Classes are like "public restrooms"? – Classes are both public and private like a "public restroom." When a person walks into a public restroom it is public. When he closes the door, it is private.⁸³

REPLY

First: See the following related arguments:

- **"ARGUMENT #31: Dividing the common assembly makes the parts private?"** p. 76.
- **"ARGUMENT #32: Classes are not the assembly,"** p. 77.

⁸² I.e., only those with a ticket.

⁸³ Cf. Moore, op cit., p. 146-147.

- "ARGUMENT #33: Classes are private," p. 80.
- "ARGUMENT #44: Classes are restricted," p. 92.

Some pertinent questions need to be asked in regards to this argument:

- If shutting the doors on a public restroom makes the restroom private, does shutting the door of a Bible class make it private? If so, could a woman teach a "private class" of men? After all, if Bible classes are as "private" as house-to-house teaching, a woman ought to be able to teach men in a class (cf. Acts 18:26).
- Does the "main assembly" of the congregation become "private" when the doors of the church building are shut? If not, why do classes become private when their doors are shut? If so, would a woman be allowed to speak to the "private main assembly"?

ARGUMENT #46: Classes do not violate the command to teach?

Classes do not violate the command to teach? – Classes do not violate the command to teach?⁸⁴

REPLY

This argument is missing the point entirely. Classes are not a method of teaching, but a method of grouping. One might as well argue:

- Classes do not violate the command to be baptized.
- Classes do not violate the command to pray.
- Classes do not violate the command to obey your parents.
- Classes do not violate the command to love your enemy.

The point is, classes do violate the commands given to regulate all public assemblies of the church.

First: Men speaking in tongues without translators does not violate the command to "teach," but this does violate the command to use translators (1 Cor 14:27-28).

⁸⁴ Cf. Lanier, op cit., pp. 49-50; Hutto, op cit., 4th affirmative speech.

Second: Men speaking simultaneously in the assembly does not violate the command to "teach," but this does violate the command to speak one-man-at-a-time (1 Cor 14:31).

Third: Women preaching does not violate the command to "teach," but this does violate the command for women to remain silent in all assemblies conducted by the church (1 Cor 14:33b-35).

Fourth: Dividing into classes does not violate the command to "teach," but this does violate the command to "come together into one place" (1 Cor 14:23-24; Heb 10:25) with men only speaking one at a time to the audience (1 Cor 14:26-40).

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#)
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. **46**.
- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. **24**

ARGUMENT #47: Six criteria for teaching

Six criteria for teaching – For any teaching to take place there must be: a teacher, a student, material, a time, a place, and an arrangement. God has bound the teacher (a Christian), the student (all men), and the material (the gospel), but He has not bound the time, place, or the arrangement. Therefore, we are at liberty to use the class arrangement if we so choose.⁸⁵

REPLY

First: The above list conveniently lumps two items together under the heading "arrangement." Included in this is the "method of teaching" and the "method of grouping." These are two separate items.

⁸⁵ Cf. Moore, op cit., p. 150; Hutto, op cit., 1st affirmative speech.

METHODS OF GROUPING	METHODS OF TEACHING
1) A common assembly	1) Lecture method
2) Classification	2) Question and answer method
	3) Debate method
	4) Demonstration method

While God did not bind the method of "teaching," He did bind the method of "grouping." He also bound certain rules upon the church when they group people in assemblies for public teaching of the word. All public assemblies conducted by the church must follow the rules for the assembly.

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#)
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. **46**.
- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. **24**

ARGUMENT #48: A church *MAY* use classes

A church *MAY* use classes – A church is not required to use classes, but it may use them if it so chooses.⁸⁶

REPLY

First: This admits that classes are not to be found in New Testament scriptures. If classes were in the New Testament scriptures, they would be mandatory and an essential part of God's pattern for the church.

Second: Classes may not be used because they violate specific commandments.

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#)
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. **46**.
- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. **24**

⁸⁶ This reasoning was used by G. H. P. Showalter, The Showalter-Clark Discussion on the Lord's Day Bible School, Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1940, pp. 12-13.

ARGUMENT #49: Classes are authorized by generic authority

Classes are authorized by generic authority – Classes are authorized by generic authority.⁸⁷

REPLY

First: This argument admits there is no specific authority for classes.

- No explicit command.
- No explicit example.

When a class advocate uses the "generic" authority argument we should never see them turning to an explicit example in the Bible to find a class.

Second: The major problem with this reasoning is that simultaneous Bible classes, with women teaching some of those classes, violates commands of the Bible.

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#)
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. **46**.
- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. **24**

Generic authority will not work to justify classes because explicit instructions were given to assemble people in one place and keep them together in one place (1 Cor 14:26-40).

ARGUMENT #50: "Anti" brethren are opposed to teaching?

"Anti" brethren are opposed to teaching? – When "anti" brethren oppose Bible classes they are opposed to teaching the scriptures, because that is all we do in classes.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Cf. Porter, op cit., pp. 176-177.

⁸⁸ This is the essence of most argumentation used to justify classes; cf. Buchanan's chart on p. 68 of his debate with Van Bonneau as an example of this reasoning (Buchanan, op cit).

REPLY

First: We do not oppose teaching. We oppose methods of grouping people that violate specific commands given by the Lord.

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#)
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. **46**.
- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. **24**

Notice:

Deuteronomy 31:12-13

¹² "Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law,

¹³ "and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess."

- If Moses divided the assembly into classes to teach the people, would he have been doing what God said? No, for the Lord explicitly said the people must be gathered together.
- If Moses did not divide the people into classes for teaching, would it have meant he was opposed to teaching the Scriptures? No, it would only have meant he was opposed to violating commands of God.

Second: Many class advocates admit there is no specific example of simultaneous classes in the Bible. Does this mean the apostles and early disciples were opposed to teaching simply because they did not utilize the class system? The answer is no. It merely means they opposed violating commands given by God.

ARGUMENT #51: Syllogism 1 – What the church can do, women can do⁸⁹

Syllogism 1 – What the church can do, women can do – (a) Whatever the church can do, and women can do, the church can use women to do. (b) The church can teach women and women can teach women. (c) Therefore, the church can use women to teach women.⁹⁰

REPLY

First: Neither the church, nor individuals have a right to teach in such a way that violates specific commands of the Lord. Classes violate specific commands of the Lord.

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#).
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. **46**.
- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. **24**

Second: By inserting a man into the syllogism most class advocates would reject the conclusion.
Example:

- Whatever the church can do, and women can do, the church can use women to do.
- The church can teach men, and women can teach men (Acts 18:26).
- Therefore, the church can use women to teach men.

Remember: Most class advocates reject the idea that women may teach men in their classes.

⁸⁹ A syllogism is a deductive argument composed of three elements: (a) a major premise, (b) a minor premise, and (c) a conclusion. An example of a syllogism is: (a) All mammals are warm-blooded. (b) All dogs are mammals. (c) Therefore, all dogs are warm-blooded. In this example, the sentence, "All mammals are warm-blooded," is called the "major premise." The sentence, "All dogs are mammals," is called the "minor premise." Finally, the sentence, "Therefore, all dogs are warm-blooded," is called the "conclusion." If the major and minor premises are true, and the rules for syllogisms are correctly followed, then the conclusion will also be true.

⁹⁰ Cf. Bonner, op cit; Hutto, op cit., 1st affirmative speech.

ARGUMENT #52: Syllogism 2 – An arrangement authorized by command, example, or necessary inference

Syllogism 2 – An arrangement authorized by command, example, or necessary – (a) An arrangement that does not violate New Testament principles is an arrangement that is authorized by command, example, or necessary inference. (b) The class arrangement does not violate any New Testament principle. (c) Therefore, the class arrangement is authorized by command, example, or necessary inference.⁹¹

REPLY

First: This syllogism is "begging the question." The minor premise⁹² is being assumed true. Herein lies the problem: Classes do violate New Testament principles.

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#)
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. **46**.
- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. **24**

Second: If the conclusion in this syllogism is valid, then let any class advocate produce a command, example, or necessary inference for classes and the entire controversy will end.

ARGUMENT #53: Classes are expedient?

Classes are expedient?⁹³

REPLY

First: Before saying classes are an expedient way of carrying out the Lord's command, it must first be shown that they do not violate any command. Herein lies the problem with classes. They do violate commands given by the Lord.

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#)

⁹¹ Cf. Bonner, op cit; Moore, op cit., p. 151.

⁹² I.e., point (b) "The class arrangement does not violate any New Testament principle."

⁹³ This is the essence of most affirmative argumentation to justify classes. Cf. Moore, op cit., pp. 141-150.

- See **In summary, classes are wrong** , p. 46.
- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. 24

Second: Are classes really "expedient" or "advantageous"? Consider the following problems that come with classes:

- a) **How will the people be classified?** Every attempt to classify students in one way leaves them totally unclassified in another way. For example:
- **Physical age:** Not everyone having the same physical age has the same learning abilities. Our public school system is bewildered about how to handle a fast learner who is in a class with slow learners. No advantage is gained by grouping all students into classes by physical age.
 - **Spiritual age:** If the students are divided by "spiritual age," the physical age will have nothing to do with it. An 80-year-old man recently baptized could be sitting next to a 13 year old who was recently baptized. We had this already in the common assembly. A 13 year old who was reared by Christian parents may know more about the Bible to begin with than an 80-year-old man who had no Bible training in his life. Not everyone of the same "spiritual age" has the same learning abilities. Some are slow learners and some fast. No significant gain is made by grouping people according to "spiritual age."
 - **Bible knowledge:** Grouping by Bible knowledge would seem more reasonable, but there are problems with this. Who shall sit in judgment of people's Bible knowledge and send each person into his or her appropriate class? How shall the "judge" determine the knowledge of each student? Shall it be based on factual knowledge or doctrinal knowledge? Furthermore, what test will be used to measure the amount of knowledge in either area? Would feelings be hurt with jealousy and envy being fostered? Would an unhealthy attitude develop between those who have great Bible knowledge and those who do not know as much? Knowledge has a way of "puffing up" (1 Cor 8:1). Rather than benefiting a congregation, classification according to Bible knowledge has the potential of causing great damage.
 - **I-Q:** Grouping by I-Q has no reference to physical age, "spiritual age," or to actual knowledge already possessed. I-Q is strictly a measure of one's ability to learn and grasp new concepts. A child of 5 years old could have the I-Q of a 50-year-old adult. Thus: Adult and children would be mixed together into the same groups if grouped by the I-Q method. Spiritual adults would be mixed with spiritual babes. This we also had to begin with in the common assembly. No significant gain is made by classifying on the basis of I-Q.

If classes are truly "expedient" then those who make the argument owe an explanation as to how they are expedient. There is no convincing evidence suggesting that any significant gain is made by classifying people rather than leaving them grouped together in the common assembly.

- b) **How will parents, elders, and other leaders oversee what is taught in simultaneous classes?**
- c) **How will fathers, elders, and other leaders oversee what is taught by women teachers** inasmuch as men are not usually allowed to be present in a classes taught by women?
- d) **When does a boy become a man and may no longer be taught by a woman instructor?** Remember, most class advocates will not allow women to teach men in a class.

ARGUMENT #54: Classes are merely a method of teaching?

Classes are merely a method of teaching?⁹⁴

REPLY

First: Classifying people into groups is not a method of "teaching," but rather a method of "grouping." After people have been grouped, a method of "teaching" must still be chosen in order to instruct the group(s). Notice the following chart illustrating "methods of grouping" with "methods of teaching."

METHODS OF GROUPING	METHODS OF TEACHING
(1) A common assembly	(1) Lecture method
(2) Classification	(2) Question and answer method
	(3) Debate method
	(4) Demonstration method

⁹⁴ Cf. Moore, op cit., pp. 140-151. Rather than "method of teaching," Moore uses the expression, "arrangement of teaching."

Second: Classes are a method of "grouping" that violates specific commands of the Lord.

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#)
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. **46**.
- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. **24**

ARGUMENT #55: Classes are the best method of teaching?

Classes are the best method of teaching?⁹⁵

REPLY

First: See "**ARGUMENT #54: Classes are merely a method of teaching?**" p. **102**.

Second: Why not use classes for all teaching that is done and eliminate teaching done in a common assembly altogether?

Third: This argument says God chose an inferior method of teaching for the church. Jesus and His apostles utilized an inferior method of teaching when they used the common assembly (cf. Mt 5-7; Acts 2).

ARGUMENT #56: Children must be taught

Children must be taught – Children must be taught the scriptures and that is all that classes do: teach children and others.⁹⁶

REPLY

First: Children need to be taught, but they may not be taught in such a way that specific commands of God are violated in the process. Classes do just that: They violate specific commands of God.

⁹⁵ Unpublished argument.

⁹⁶ Unpublished argument.

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#)
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. **46**.
- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. **24**

Second: Children may be taught by parents at home (Eph 6:4) and they may also learn in the common assembly.

Deuteronomy 31:12-13

¹² "Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law,
¹³ "and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess."

Isaiah 55:10-11

¹⁰ "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater,
¹¹ So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

These passages point out a "trickle-down" effect of teaching. Adults get the teaching they need while children gain what they need from the public teaching of the word in a common assembly.

Third: The scriptures explicitly state when the rules of 1 Cor 14:26-40 are followed, "All learn."

1 Corinthians 14:31

³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, that **all** may **learn** and all may be encouraged.

Fourth: This argument suggests classes are essential for the church to fulfill its obligations. Most class advocates would not go so far as to say classes were mandatory.

ARGUMENT #57: Singing and teaching

Singing and teaching – In the public assembly a woman can sing. When she sings she is teaching. Therefore, if she can teach when she sings, she can teach a class of children or women.⁹⁷

REPLY

First: Women sing in the common assembly when the entire church is gathered together into one place. This argument is saying that since a woman teaches when she sings, she may teach a class of children or women. Here's the question that ought to be asked: Since women sing in the common assembly, may women teach that common assembly with the entire church gathered together in one place?

- If "yes," then female preachers should not be opposed.
- If "no," this argument does not prove simultaneous classes with women teaching some of those classes.

Second: The rules governing teaching do not govern singing. Teaching requires that men only speak one at a time to the audience (1 Cor 14:29-31). However, singing is done by everyone together at the same time. Notice the following Old Testament prophecy concerning the Lord's church:

Isalah 52:7-9

⁷ How beautiful upon the mountains
Are the feet of him who brings good news,
Who proclaims peace,
Who brings glad tidings of good things,
Who proclaims salvation,
Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"
⁸ Your watchmen shall lift up their voices,
With their voices **they shall sing together**;
For they shall see eye to eye
When the LORD brings back Zion.
⁹ Break forth into joy, **sing together**,
You waste places of Jerusalem!
For the LORD has comforted His people,
He has redeemed Jerusalem.

⁹⁷ Cf. Porter, op cit., pp. 212-213.

According to Rom 10:15, this prophecy was concerning the era of the New Testament and the Lord's church. It is therefore scriptural for everyone to sing simultaneously. Jesus and His apostles did so (Mt 26:30).

The point to remember is that singing together is scriptural, but the teaching must be done by men only speaking one at a time to the common assembly. Singing and teaching are not parallel. The rules that govern speaking and teaching in the services do not govern singing.

Third: In Eph 5:19 Paul was not equating singing with speaking. He was merely stating that when songs are sung in worship to God, they must impart spiritual thoughts to the ones worshipping. This same principle is taught in 1 Cor 14:15:

1 Corinthians 14:15

¹⁵ What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.

Fourth: In Col. 3:16 Paul was not equating singing with speaking. The uninspired punctuation of this passage in the KJV leaves a false impression as to what is actually being said. By examining *Marshall's Greek Interlinear* it becomes clear Paul was teaching three things:

- Let the word of Christ dwell in you.
- Teach and admonish one another in all wisdom.
- Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with grace in your hearts.⁹⁸

ARGUMENT #58: Chalkboards, charts, songbooks, microphone system, overhead projectors, and electric lights

Chalkboards, charts, songbooks, microphone system, overhead projectors, and electric lights – Where is your authority for chalkboards, charts, songbooks, electric lights, PA systems, and other things which are not mentioned in the scriptures? If you can have these things that are not specifically mentioned, then we can have Bible classes too, although they are not specifically mentioned.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ The correct meaning of this passage is demonstrated by brother Newberry, op cit., p. 89.

⁹⁹ Cf. Porter, op cit., p. 178. This type of reasoning was also used by Thomas Thrasher to justify individual communion cups in: *The Bailey-Thrasher Debate*, a debate between Allen Bailey and Thomas Thrasher, August 7, 1993 in Athens, AL, 1st affirmative speech.

REPLY

Although none of these items are specifically mentioned in scriptures, they are acceptable because they do not violate any specific commands. Bible classes, on the other hand, do violate specific commands.

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#)
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. **46**.
- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. **24**
- See **ARGUMENT #69: Everything must be specified to be authorized?** p. **120**.

Generic authority will not work to justify classes because explicit instructions are given to assemble the people in one place and keep them together in one place (1 Cor 14:26-40).

ARGUMENT #59: Radio, TV, and answering machines

Radio, TV, and answering machines – Classes are parallel to radio, TV, and answering machine programs that teach the gospel. If you accept these, why will you not accept Bible classes?¹⁰⁰

REPLY

First: Radio, TV, and answering machine programs constitute public teaching. This argument admits Bible classes are public assemblies.

Second: If simultaneous classes are not parallel to radio, TV, and answering machine programs, then there is no argument.

"Parallel" – "something equal or similar in all essential particulars"¹⁰¹

Notice the following chart that effectively demonstrates that radio programs and other similar programs are not parallel to classes in "all essential particulars."

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Moore, op cit., p. 143.

¹⁰¹ Webster, op cit.

RADIO	CLASSES
No assembly	An assembly required
No classification	Classification
No segregation	Segregation
No women teachers	Women teachers
Elders can oversee	Limited or no elder oversight

Third: If Radio, TV, and other programs are parallel with classes, could a woman teach on some radio programs? Some TV programs? Some answering machine programs? After all, women can teach some classes. May they teach some of these public programs? If not, why not? Most class advocates would not agree that a woman could teach on such programs.

Fourth: Classes violate explicit commands given by the Lord, but radio, TV, and other programs do not violate any commands (either explicit commands or implicit commands).

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#)
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. **46**.
- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. **24**

Generic authority will not work to justify classes because explicit instructions were given to assemble the people in one place and keep them together in one place (1 Cor 14:26-40).

ARGUMENT #60: Two congregations in close proximity

Two congregations in close proximity – May two congregations exist in the same city and teach the gospel in their common assemblies simultaneously? Okay, let's move these congregations onto the same block. Is it still scriptural? Okay, let's move these two congregations next door to each other. If that is scriptural, then a congregation may have simultaneous classes to teach the word.¹⁰²

REPLY

First: This argument admits that simultaneous Bible classes are equivalent to the common assembly of the church. Many class advocates do not want to admit class teaching is equivalent to the common assembly.

¹⁰² Cf. Porter, op cit., p. 184-185.

Second: If two congregations stood beside each other, would it be scriptural for each congregation to eat the communion in its own assembly? If so, could the communion be eaten in Bible classes? After all, this argument says Bible classes are equivalent to two separate congregations standing beside each other. Most class advocates would not agree the communion could be eaten inside the classes.

Third: Since women may teach some Bible classes, which of the two congregations above could a woman teach? Most class advocates would not allow her to teach either.

On the surface the above argument sounds very convincing, but close examination reveals a world of difference between two autonomous congregations and Bible classes.

ARGUMENT #61: A woman teaching in the church building

A woman teaching in the church building – If a woman can teach in her home, can she teach under a tree between her home and the church building? Can she move on down into the building itself?¹⁰³

REPLY

First: This argument assumes we object to classes because they are held in the church building. That is not why we object. We object because classes violate explicit commands given by the Lord.

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#).
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. **46**.
- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. **24**

Second: As for the illustration, a woman can teach a man under a tree halfway between her house and the church building (cf. Acts 18:26). She can teach a man privately in the church building. Most class advocates, however, would not agree that a woman could teach a man in a Bible class.

¹⁰³ Unpublished argument.

ARGUMENT #62: Teaching in dressing rooms

Teaching in dressing rooms – The assembly is divided for baptism, and women speak in the dressing room. Therefore, it is scriptural for women to speak in a divided assembly.¹⁰⁴

REPLY

First: This argument teaches that simultaneous classes may be conducted while the common assembly is in progress. Most class advocates would not agree with this.

(NOTE: This argument is flawed because it assumes a baptism may be performed during a worship assembly of the church. Baptism during a worship assembly has no scriptural authorization.)

Second: Bible classes are not parallel with dressing rooms.

"Parallel" – "something equal or similar in all essential particulars"¹⁰⁵

Notice the following chart that reveals the distinctions between classes and dressing rooms:

CLASSES	DRESSING ROOMS
Everyone in town invited to classes.	Only a select few are allowed in the dressing rooms.
Classes are for teaching.	Dressing rooms are for dressing.
People must stay dressed.	People undress.
Men and women are allowed in the same class.	A mixed audience of men and women is not allowed in the dressing room.

Classes are obviously very public, whereas a dressing room is a very private thing. The two are not parallel.

ARGUMENT #63: Similarity is not identity

Similarity is not identity – Similarity does not mean identity. Just because classes are similar in some ways to "Children's church" or to denominational Sunday schools, they are not identical and such a comparison is unfair.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Porter, op cit., p. 175-176; Hutto, op cit., 4th affirmative speech.

¹⁰⁵ Webster, op cit.

REPLY

First: "Children's church" and denominational Sunday schools are more than simply similar. They are parallel in every essential aspect. Consider the following chart:

BIBLE CLASSES	"CHILDREN'S CHURCH" DENOMINATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOLS
1. Public invited 2. Assembly divided 3. Prayer 4. Singing 5. "Overseen" by elders ¹⁰⁶ 6. Used to teach children.	1. Public invited 2. Assembly divided 3. Prayer 4. Singing 5. "Overseen" by elders 6. Used to teach children.

Because classes are parallel to "Children's church" and denominational Sunday schools, the objections to those innovations are equally relevant toward Bible classes.

Second: Consider now the parallel that exists between classes and the common assembly:

BIBLE CLASSES	COMMON ASSEMBLY
1. Public invited 2. Bible teaching 3. Prayer 4. Singing 5. No instruments 6. "Overseen" by elders ¹⁰⁷ 7. Refreshments forbidden	1. Public invited 2. Bible teaching 3. Prayer 4. Singing 5. No instruments 6. Overseen by elders 7. Refreshments forbidden

Because classes are parallel to the common assembly they constitute public assemblies that violate the commands regulating such.

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#)
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. **46**.

Third: In spite of arguing that "similarity does not prove identity," class advocates usually offer radio programs, T.V. programs, and Bible tracts as being parallel with classes. Consider the following chart:

¹⁰⁶ Meaning the elders approve of the practice.

¹⁰⁷ Meaning the elders approve of the practice.

BIBLE CLASSES	RADIO, TV, & TRACTS
1. Public invited from their homes and assembled into groups.	1. No assembly.
2. People are classified.	2. No classification.
3. Groups are segregated.	3. No segregation.
4. Women may teach some of the classes.	4. No women teachers.

Yet, in spite of these tremendous differences, class advocates believe they have a parallel and deny any parallel between classes and "Children's church" or denominational Sunday schools. To argue in this fashion is called "special pleading."¹⁰⁸

ARGUMENT #64: Talking in the vestibule

Talking in the vestibule – When people stand around in the vestibule discussing scripture, that is considered acceptable. However, when we want to organize things and add some order to these discussions the "anti" brethren say it is wrong.¹⁰⁹

REPLY

First: Women may teach men privately in the vestibule (cf. Acts 18:26), but most class advocates will not allow a woman to teach a man in a class. They recognized a distinction between class teaching and private conversation in a vestibule.

Second: The Bible recognizes a time when people are called to order and the congregation begins its services and a time when the assembly is dismissed (cf. 1 Cor 14:35; 11:34).

- What is done in private by an individual before services, whether at home or in a vestibule, is not the work of the church.
- What is done during a public assembly is the responsibility of the church.

¹⁰⁸ I.e., "misleading argument that presents one point or phase as if it covered the entire question at issue." (Webster, op cit.)

¹⁰⁹ Cf. D. J. Whitten after he "converted" from the "no-class" position over to the "pro-class" position, Whitten-Lanier Debate, op cit., p. 12.

During the time public assemblies are being conducted, there are certain rules that must always be followed.

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. **Error! Bookmark not defined..**

The scriptures know of no other type of assembly conducted by the church that does not abide by these rules.

ARGUMENT #65: The upper room

The upper room – If we must meet in an unclassified assembly like the one Jesus used, then we must also meet in an upper room like the one Jesus did.¹¹⁰

REPLY

First: This argument admits that in the Bible one man always spoke to one undivided assembly. This argument is saying, "Since we have to do what they did, do we have to use an upper room like they did?"

Second: This argument "begs the question." All that could possibly be "proven" by this argument is that perhaps we should begin meeting in upper rooms. This argument does not prove, "When the church comes together for the purpose of teaching the Bible, it is scriptural to divide into classes for this teaching, some of which may be taught by women."

Because this argument proves nothing in favor of the proposition, it serves only as a "smoke screen" to confuse the unsuspecting.

Third: This reasoning fails to distinguish between an example that must be followed and an "incidental" item.

example – "an instance ... serving to illustrate a rule or precept or to act as an exercise in the application of a rule"¹¹¹

incidental – "being likely to ensue as a chance or minor consequence ... syn. see accidental; ant. essential"¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Cf. Moore, op cit., pp. 142-143; Thrasher, op cit.

¹¹¹ Webster, op cit.

¹¹² Webster, op cit.

Notice that the antonym of incidental is "essential." An incidental is something that is unessential.

An example is an illustration of how to obey a rule. Thus, a binding example must have a background rule that it is illustrating. Now consider the upper room:

Background command: "He will show you a large upper room ... there make ready for us" (Mk 14:15).

Binding example: "His disciples went forth ... and found as he had said ... and made ready the passover" (Mk 14:16).

- If the disciples had prepared a ground level room, they would have disobeyed Jesus' command.
- If the disciples had prepared a basement, they would have disobeyed.
- If the disciples had prepared a table in the open air, they would have disobeyed.

The "example" of Mk 14:12-16 is a binding example for anyone who receives the command to "prepare an upper room for the passover."

QUESTION: Have we today received a command to "prepare a large upper room for teaching the word"? The answer is, "NO." Therefore, the upper room in Mk 14 is not binding.

If no command is produced which demands an upper room, then the upper room is merely an incidental; it is unnecessary.

Fourth: Jesus has "loosed" the place for worship:

John 4:21

²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.

Since Jesus loosed the place, the upper room is not binding.

Fifth: Roy Cogdill correctly enumerated the seven rules that must be met before an example is binding.¹¹³

- a) **Rule of uniformity** – i.e. there is no variation in the way an event was done.

¹¹³ Roy E. Cogdill, Walking By Faith, Cogdill Foundation Pub., 1976, pp. 22-28.

- b) **Rule of unity** – i.e. an action cannot violate another passage that God gave on the same subject.
- c) **Rule of universal application** – i.e. everything taught in the gospel of Christ must be within the realm of possibility for all people in all parts of the world to practice.
- d) **Law of materiality** – i.e. the practice must be "material," or relevant in carrying out the command of God.
- e) **Law of competence** – i.e. the evidence offered for a practice must be shown as competent to support the conclusion.
- f) **Law of limited application** – i.e. a practice can only be applied to the same circumstances as given by God.
- g) **Law of exclusion** – i.e. a practice is to be excluded when there is no explicit or implicit command requiring or permitting the practice under consideration.

Applying these seven rules to the upper room:

- a) **Rule of uniformity** – according to this rule, there must be no variation in an upper room being utilized for communion. We agree on this point. As far as we can tell, there is no variation. However, this point alone does not constitute a binding example. Let us see if the other six ingredients are present for this to be a binding example.
- b) **Rule of unity** – according to this rule, utilizing an upper room must not violate another passage that God has given on the same subject. We agree on this point. We now have two of the seven ingredients necessary in order to have a binding example. Let us see if the other five ingredients are present.
- c) **Rule of universal application** – according to this rule, an upper room must be within the realm of possibility for all people in all parts of the world to practice. Nomads in deserts and Eskimos in frozen tundra are not able to utilize an upper room. The upper room fails this vital test. If for no other reason, this point alone proves the upper room is not a binding example. However, let us continue looking at the other points.
- d) **Law of materiality** – according to this rule, an upper room must be a "material" or relevant part in carrying out the command of God. Jesus explicitly loosed the place of worship (Jn 4:21). Therefore, the upper room fails again as qualifying as a binding example.
- e) **Law of competence** – according to this rule, the evidence offered to for using the upper room must support the conclusion. The upper room was to fulfill a command in regards to the passover, not the Lord's supper (Mk 14:15). No command was ever given to "prepare a large upper room" in order to eat the communion. The upper room is, therefore, not a binding example. It fails another criteria.

- f) **Law of limited application** – according to this rule, the practice of using an upper room can only be applied to the same circumstances as given by God. The requirement for an upper room was given to the disciples eating the Old Testament passover with Jesus before He died. Again, the upper room fails the test of being a binding example for the church today because the church today does not eat the Old Testament passover.
- g) **Law of exclusion** – according to this rule, the practice of using an upper room is to be excluded if there is no explicit or implicit command requiring or permitting the practice under consideration. The upper room is permitted as a permission according to Acts 20:7-8. It was never given as a requirement. Therefore, an upper room is permitted, but not required. It fails the test of a "binding" example.

By applying these seven rules, it becomes obvious that the upper room is not a binding example that must be followed, but rather an incidental item.

Applying these seven rules to **one, undivided assembly**:

- a) **Rule of uniformity** – according to this rule, there must be no variation in the way public teaching of the church was conducted (one man at a time speaking to one audience). In every account of public teaching of the church, men only spoke one at a time to one audience. There is complete uniformity. One, undivided assembly has passed its first test to being a binding example for all public teaching of the church.
- b) **Rule of unity** – according to this rule, the practice of one undivided assembly with men only speaking must not violate any other passage that God gave on the subject of public teaching. It does not. Therefore, the second test toward being a binding example has been passed.
- c) **Rule of universal application** – according to this rule, every congregation in the world must be able to utilize one undivided assembly with men only speaking. This is possible. One undivided assembly has now passed three tests and is well on its way to being a binding example for all public teaching of the church.
- d) **Law of materiality** – according to this rule, the practice of one undivided assembly with men only speaking one at a time must be "material" or relevant in obeying the commands given by God. His command to "assemble together into one place" (1 Cor 14:23-24, 29-35; Heb 10:25) meets the test of "materiality."
- e) **Law of competence** – according to this rule, the evidence offered (1 Cor 4:17; 14:23-35; Heb 10:25) must support the claim that all assemblies of the church must be one undivided assembly with men only speaking one at a time. The evidence presented in this book is "competent" to prove this is true. (See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. 44).

- f) **Law of limited application** – according to this rule, the rules of the assembly must be applied to the exact same thing God applied it – to a congregation of saints assembling people for the purpose of teaching the word (1 Cor 14:23-24). One, undivided assembly passes this requirement.
- g) **Law of exclusion** – according to this rule, one, undivided assembly is to be excluded if there is no explicit or implicit command requiring or permitting the practice. However, there are explicit instructions requiring one, undivided assembly. (See point "e) Law of competence" above.)

The upper room fails the test of being a "binding example." One, undivided assembly with men only speaking one at a time passes the test. Therefore, one, undivided assembly is required as a binding example; an upper room is not binding.

ARGUMENT #66: Mosheim's History

Mosheim's History – Classes existed long before Robert Raikes. Mosheim and Origen both speak of Bible classes hundreds of years before Raikes ever lived.¹¹⁴

REPLY

First: A photocopy of Mosheim's History is found on p. **137**. Mosheim wrote:

There can be no doubt, but that the children of Christians were carefully trained up from their infancy, and were early put to reading the sacred books and learning the principles of religion. For this purpose, schools were erected everywhere from the beginning.¹¹⁵

However, note the following comments found in the footnotes of Mosheim's History:

The proofs referred to here and in the text, are quite insufficient to evince, that in the first century, or even in the former part of the second, Christians established regular schools for their children, and academies for their young men.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Moore, op cit., pp. 143-144.

¹¹⁵ John Lawrence Von Mosheim, Institutes of Ecclesiastical History Ancient and Modern, Robert Carter & Brothers, 1874, Vol. 1, pp. 81.

¹¹⁶ Mosheim, op cit., p. 81.

Furthermore:

- No mention of simultaneous classes is found.
- No mention is found of women teaching some of those classes.

Second: A photocopy of what Origen knew is found on p. **139**. Notice these "classes" which existed in the days of Origen:

The second institution was the catechumenate, which flourished in the Church for some three centuries, say from A.D. 150 to 450. At a time when adult converts from paganism were coming into the Church in great numbers, the catechumenate may be said to represent adult Christian education with a threefold purpose: to provide a period of moral probation during which the candidate's sincerity could be tested; to give instruction in the Bible and the doctrines of the Church; and to admit the candidate into a limited but genuine Christian fellowship while he was preparing for baptism. As already indicated, part of the instruction was given during the worship service, but often there was careful instruction at other times also, individually or in groups. One was expected to remain in a catechumen for two or three years.¹¹⁷

Notice several things about these "classes":

- No mention of simultaneous classes is found.
- No mention is made of women teaching some of those classes.
- A catechism is being taught to candidates for baptism in which the candidates are on probation to prove their worthiness for baptism. This probation must continue for two to three years. The point to remember is that there is no scripture for such "classes," or for what was being done inside the classes.

Third: In both cases (either Mosheim or Origen) these supposed "classes" come at least 50 years after the days of the apostles. An unscriptural practice is wrong whether started in the days of Origen or in the days of Robert Raikes. What we need is divine approval. We need to see apostles or prophets of God approving of such practices. There simply is no such support.

¹¹⁷ Via Philip Henry Lotz, Orientation in Religious Education, Abingdon Press, date unknown, pp. 16.

ARGUMENT #67: "Anti" brethren are inconsistent

"Anti" brethren are inconsistent – "Anti" brethren are inconsistent and that proves they are wrong. Someone who is right will be consistent.¹¹⁸

REPLY

If it is ever proven that "Anti" brethren are inconsistent, then the only thing proven is that "Anti" brethren are inconsistent in some point and perhaps wrong in that point. Inconsistency does not prove someone wrong on every point. Inconsistency on the part of some brethren does not prove one common assembly is not required.

First: To illustrate, Peter and Barnabas were inconsistent when they withdrew from the Gentiles and refused to associate with them (Gal 2:11-13). This proved they were inconsistent only in this one area, but not in everything they stood for.

Second: A father may spank his son for telling "big lies" but not spank him for telling "little white lies." The father may be inconsistent, but it does not prove he should never spank his son for lying. It only indicates the father should become more consistent in administering discipline.

Third: If the "Anti" brethren are truly inconsistent, it might be argued they need to improve themselves and become more consistent. It does not prove they are wrong in their position of one common assembly.

ARGUMENT #68: Making laws and causing division?

Making laws and causing division? – "Anti" people are making laws where God made none and are responsible for the resulting division.¹¹⁹

REPLY

First: The best way to prove "anti-class" people are making laws that God did not make is to find an explicit or implicit permission for simultaneous classes with women teaching some of those classes.

¹¹⁸ Thrasher, op cit., 1st negative speech.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Moore, op cit., p. 144.

Second: Bible classes are not wrong simply because they are not explicitly mentioned. They are wrong because they violate commandments given by the Lord.

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#).
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. **46**.
- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. **24**

Third: Consider the following remark by N. B. Hardeman:

If ... you can worship God acceptably without the organ – and still will not give it up, I must charge you with the responsibility of perpetuating division and strife against the pleadings and prayer of our Lord.¹²⁰

Again:

The man that injects the difference, the man that brings in the thing that causes the trouble is the man that makes the test of fellowship.¹²¹

This is true, of not only instrumental music, but concerning Bible classes as well. When brethren admit classes are not essential, that they may fulfill all their obligations to teach without using the class system, but for the sake of unity refuse to give classes up, then they are the ones who must be charged with causing division within the body of Christ.

ARGUMENT #69: Everything must be specified to be authorized?

Everything must be specified to be authorized? – "Anti" people demand that everything must be specified to be authorized.¹²²

REPLY

We do not believe this. We merely believe that violating commandments of God is wrong. Classes are wrong because they violate what the Lord explicitly commanded.

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#).
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. **46**.

¹²⁰ N. B. Hardeman, Boswell-Hardeman Discussion on Instrumental Music in the Worship, Guardian of Truth Foundation Pub., 1981 reprint edition, p. 62.

¹²¹ N. B. Hardeman, op cit., p. 181.

¹²² Cf. Moore, op cit., pp. 141-142.

- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. 24

Generic authority cannot justify classes because explicit instructions were given to assemble the people in one place and keep them together in one place (1 Cor 14:26-40).

ARGUMENT #70: "Anti" brethren are like Baptists

"Anti" brethren are like Baptists – "Anti" brethren add the word "only" to the Bible as Baptists add "only" to passages about faith. They say the "only" way the church can teach is in one undivided assembly.¹²³

REPLY

First: All assemblies conducted by the church must be conducted by the rules of 1 Cor 14:26-40. (See rules listed on p. 44).

Second: To disprove the above statement, all the class advocates have to do is:

- Produce a command for a different kind of assembly that operates under a different set of rules than 1 Cor 14.
- Produce an example of God's people using a different kind of assembly that operates under a different set of rules than 1 Cor 14.
- Produce a necessary inference for a different kind of assembly that operates under a different set of rules than 1 Cor 14.

If no such command, example, or necessary inference can be produced, then 1 Cor 14 is the only kind of public assembly the church may conduct and "anti" brethren are not the ones adding to the word of God.

¹²³ This argument was made by Jeff Asher, in the *Batthey-Asher Debate*, 6th Aff. speech, 4/21/89. This debate was held in Amarillo, TX and is recorded on audio cassette.

ARGUMENT #71: Nit-picking & Hair-splitting?

Nit-picking & Hair-splitting? – Insisting on one undivided assembly is nit-picking and hair-splitting. It is "straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel."¹²⁴

REPLY

The Bible never warns anyone from being too careful in following God's word. Just the opposite is true. Repeatedly we are warned to obey God's will in everything both great and small.

Matthew 5:19

¹⁹ "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Disobedience in the "least commandments" has never been a virtue. If "least commandments" were unnecessary to obey, God would never have given them.

Luke 16:10

¹⁰ "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

If we cannot keep even the "little" commandments, how will we ever be able to keep the big ones?

2 Corinthians 2:9

⁹ For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.

Could it be that God is testing our faithfulness and loyalty with these "little commandments"?

Luke 6:46

⁴⁶ "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?"

NOTE: If we are "straining out gnats and swallowing camels," then please tell us what the "camel" is that we are swallowing.

Some people think it is acceptable to swallow gnats! We do not want to swallow either gnats or camels and anyone showing us our error would be considered a friend.

¹²⁴ Cf. Boren, op cit., p. 1; Hutto, op cit., 3rd affirmative speech.

Matthew 23:23

²³ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. *These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.*

If it is not safe to follow all of God's commandments at all times and under all circumstances, it is not safe to follow the Bible at all.

A church of Christ can "speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where the Bible is silent" by always using one undivided assembly when teaching the word.

NOTE: The Bible does warn people about relying upon themselves rather than upon God. If we begin to harbor pride in our hearts and begin to think we are deserving of heaven, we are trusting, not in God, but in ourselves. This is wrong and is the sin that condemned the Pharisees. After carefully obeying God's word in every detail, small and great, we must humbly admit that we are undeserving of the rewards and blessings offered by God.

Luke 17:10

¹⁰ "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.' "

ARGUMENT #72: Lexicons and translations

Lexicons and translations – We should not use lexicons and different translations. We should use the KJV and let the scriptures speak for themselves.¹²⁵

REPLY

First: What passage teaches only KJV may be used? Be careful of "making laws where God made none" (cf. Rom 2:21-23).

Second: What passage teaches a lexicon (dictionary) to define words is sinful? Be careful of "making laws where God made none" (cf. Rom 2:21-23).

Third: Whether we like to admit it or not, we all depend upon lexicons, dictionaries and other linguistic aids. The men who translated the KJV:

¹²⁵ Unpublished argument.

- Had to select which Hebrew and Greek manuscripts to use in order to produce their translation. When we read the KJV we are relying upon these decisions made by these men.
- These translators had to decide how to translate each Hebrew and Greek word into English. When we read the KJV we are relying upon their decisions and scholarship.

Since the KJV was produced, hundreds, perhaps thousands of old Bible manuscripts and fragments have been found and have paved the way for a more accurate, complete and reliable Hebrew and Greek text. Furthermore, the English language has changed radically since 1611. Some English words have completely changed their meaning (e.g., "let," "suffer," "conversation," "Easter," etc.). We rely upon educated men and women to teach us these words now have different meanings than they had when first used in 1611.

We have a choice to make: (a) Either rely upon the translators to tell us what the Hebrew and Greek means, or (b) get the same tools they used and check it out for our own selves. Either way, we are relying upon the work done by mortal men when we read the Bible.

Fourth: Jesus and the apostles quoted from different translations. Sometimes they would quote from the original Hebrew text and at other times from the Septuagint. Were they sinning in so doing? Of course not.

Fifth: The prophets and apostles often quoted from uninspired books (cf. Acts 17:28) and referred God's people to uninspired historical records to verify what they were saying (cf. Num 21:14; Josh. 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:18; 2 Chron 35:4).

Sixth: Rules of grammar, which can only be learned from uninspired text books, were strictly observed and cited by divinely inspired writers. Two common examples include:

- The tense of verbs emphasized by Jesus (Mt 22:32).
- The number of nouns emphasized by Paul (Gal 3:16).

CONCLUSION: Information is not wrong just because it did not originate from an inspired writer, but it is wrong if it contradicts what an inspired writer said. If we reject definitions and translations, we must have a valid, logical reason for doing so rather than rejecting it simply because it is "uninspired," or because it contradicts what we want to believe.

ARGUMENT #73: I believe God providentially oversaw the production of the KJV

I believe God providentially oversaw the production of the KJV –
I believe God providentially oversaw the production of the KJV.
We should not be using any other translation.¹²⁶

REPLY

First: How does anyone know God providentially oversaw the translation of the KJV? Divine revelation is required to identify providence at work (cf. Esther 4:14) and divine revelation has ceased (1 Cor 13:8-12).

Second: How does anyone know God did not providentially oversee the translation of the ASV, NASV, NKJV or any other translation? If God could work providentially in 1611, why could He not do so in the 1900s?

Third: Are you afraid? Many, in making this argument, are saying in essence, "I'm afraid that if I go to the original sources to verify my conclusions, I will discover I'm wrong. I don't want to be wrong and I don't want to change."

Fourth: If a lexicon or translation gives a wrong definition or translation, show us the error and give us a reason for your accusation. Do not be dogmatic.

ARGUMENT #74: Fill in the blank

Fill in the blank:

In the blank line above, write down any Bible passage that may be given which supposedly exemplifies classes. After writing down the scripture reference, compare it to the following points:

REPLY

First: Is this an explicit example of a Bible class? If so, why appeal to a "generic authority" like most class advocates? Why not turn to this explicit example of a "class" and use it to authorize classes?

¹²⁶ Unpublished argument.

Second: Are simultaneous classes being taught, or does the reference involve only a single man speaking to a single audience?

Third: Is the supposed "class" advertised to the public and is the public invited to attend?

Fourth: Are any women teaching any of these supposed "classes"?

Fifth: Is this "class" that has supposedly been found, fulfilling all the requirements of the proposition being debated:

- Is the church coming together to teach the Bible?
- Is this assembly being divided into classes for "this" teaching?
- Are women teaching some of the classes?

For further information see:

- See **These rules apply to every public assembly**, p. [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#)
- See **In summary, classes are wrong**, p. **46**.
- See **EXPLICIT & IMPLICIT TEACHINGS**, p. **24**

SECTION 8:
WRITTEN QUESTIONS
(Part 1)

The following questions were submitted by George Battey and answered in writing by Tom Thrasher¹²⁷

Tom Thrasher's written responses

- 1) In Acts 20:20 Paul said he had taught the people "publicly" and from "house to house." Under which category do Bible classes fall: "public" or "house to house"?

Thrasher's reply: Thayer's definition of the word public (δημοσιος) is "belonging to the people or state, public ... publicly, in public places, in view of all ... by public authority, at the public expense ..." (page 132). The classes of the proposition do not appear to fit in this category. If "house to house" refers only to teaching done in houses, then the classes of the proposition do not necessarily fit in this category either, although these classes could be held in houses. Therefore, my answer is: neither one necessarily.¹²⁸

- 2) How old does a boy have to be before you will no longer allow him to be taught by a woman in a class? (Please give scripture for your answer if possible.)

Thrasher's reply: I do not specify a particular age, any more than I would specify a particular age at which a boy should be baptized. I know of no passage that gives an age for either.¹²⁹

- 3) Is there any rule contained in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 that still applies today? If so, which rule(s)?

Thrasher's reply: Yes, I believe the "rules" (principles) apply in our assemblies today, with the understanding that this particular text is dealing directly with assemblies in which spiritual gifts were being exercised. For example, I conclude that in our assemblies: (1) all things should be done unto edifying; (2) speakers should speak one at

¹²⁷ See photocopy of Thrasher's handwritten responses on p 127.

¹²⁸ In saying classes are neither public, nor private, Thrasher is hedging. The Bible reveals only two categories of teaching: public and from house to house (Acts 20:20; 5:42). He is freely admitting here that Bible classes fit into a category completely unknown to the scriptures. See, "*ARGUMENT #45: Classes are like public restrooms.*"

¹²⁹ This is a very dangerous admission. According to Thrasher's theory, it is sinful for a woman to teach a man in a Bible class, but Thrasher has not the slightest notion when a boy becomes a man and when sin begins to be committed as a woman teaches him.

a time; (3) women are to keep silence; (4) all things should be done decently and in order.¹³⁰

- 4) When Corinth was instructed to "come together" to eat the Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 11:33), did this mean "stay together" to eat the Lord's supper?

Thrasher's reply: Yes, if by "stay together" you mean that they were to do it while assembled.¹³¹

- 5) In classes that contain a mixture of both men and women, are women allowed to make comments from their seat that would be instructive to the class?

Thrasher's reply: Yes, women may make comments.¹³²

- a) If she may do this from her seat, could she move up to the front of the room and do the same thing?

Thrasher's reply: If by "move up to the front of the room" you mean merely that she is sitting in a different seat, yes. If by "move up to the front of the room" you mean she becomes the teacher in charge of the class, no.

- b) If she may stand up front and make instructive comments, could the male instructor sit down and allow the woman to remain standing in front of the class alone to make such comments?

Thrasher's reply: If she thereby becomes the teacher in charge of the class, no.¹³³

- 6) Are Bible classes mandatory, or may a congregation fulfill all of its obligations without using the class system?

Thrasher's reply: I believe that it is possible for a congregation to do its work of teaching the gospel without having classes as they are normally arranged, just as I believe that it is possible for a congregation to do its work of teaching the gospel without having; (1) a

¹³⁰ Since these rules apply today, Thrasher needs to explain why the rule for everyone to be "assembled together into one place" does not apply. See, "*RULE #1: The church must assemble the people together into one place,*" on p. 21.

¹³¹ If "come together" for communion means "stay together" for communion, Thrasher needs to explain why "come together" for the teaching does not mean "stay together" for the teaching. See, "*RULE #1: The church must assemble the people together into one place,*" on p. 21.

¹³² When women make instructive comments in a mixed class, are they not teaching the class? Thrasher needs to explain exactly when a woman begins teaching a class. Did he define "teach" in his proposition as "to impart knowledge"? If the woman "imparts knowledge" to the class is she not teaching the class?

¹³³ In other words, a woman can teach a class, but cannot become a teacher in the class. This is hedging.

radio or television program; (2) any literature besides the Bible; (3) church bulletins or tracts; (4) chalk boards or overhead projectors; (5) an amplifier system. I also believe that it is possible for a congregation to do its work without having a baptistry inside the building. I believe that it is possible for a congregation to worship without having song books. However, all of these things are authorized.¹³⁴

c) If they are mandatory, what scripture so teaches?

Thrasher's reply: See above.

d) If they are a liberty, what advantage do classes give over the general assembly?

Thrasher's reply: The issue is not "what advantage do classes give." The issue is: Are they scriptural? However, having been a school teacher for 24 years, I see potential advantages. For example, (1) material may be studied on different levels suitable to the students, and (2) more members become involved in the teaching process and develop their potentials more fully. Some things may be done more effectively in a class setting than in an assembly (school example).¹³⁵

7) Would elders of a congregation be allowed to sit in a class being taught by a woman and observe how and what she is teaching that class?

Thrasher's reply: Yes, if they are merely observing in order to fulfill their duty to oversee the work of the congregation. They do not thereby become participants in the class. If by "sit in a class" you imply that they are students in the class, no.¹³⁶

8) How are the elders of the church able to oversee all the classes that are being conducted simultaneously?

Thrasher's reply: Elders do not have to be physically present for every activity in order to be overseers of the congregation. They are responsible for seeing that the teaching program is scripturally conducted.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ See, "ARGUMENT #58: Chalkboards, charts, songbooks, microphone system, overhead projectors, and electric lights."

¹³⁵ See, "ARGUMENT #53: Classes are expedient"; see also, "ARGUMENT #54: Classes are the best method of teaching?"

¹³⁶ According to this "reasoning" an elder must take great care not to learn anything from the woman teaching the class. If she begins to "impart knowledge" to the elder, both he and she have sinned according to Thrasher (see his answer to question #10 (e)). In addition, the elder must take great care never to read, answer any questions, make any comments, or in any other way "participate" in the class lest both he and the woman teacher commit sin.

¹³⁷ In other words, elders are not able to oversee what is being taught in simultaneous classes. They just hope and trust that truth is being taught because they cannot be in every class at the same time.

9) May a woman, with a meek and submissive attitude, teach a man in private?

Thrasher's reply: Yes, Acts 18:26.

If so, may that same woman, with the same meek and submissive attitude, teach a class with men in it?

Thrasher's reply: If by "teach a class with men in it" you are referring to her being the teacher in charge of a class such as in the proposition, no (1 Timothy 2:12).¹³⁸

10) Since you agree it is wrong to make laws God has not made, if a husband insisted on entering a woman's class with his wife, and a father insisted on entering his daughter's class,¹³⁹ please answer the following:

a) On what grounds would you keep either man out?

Thrasher's reply: The classes under consideration are not designed for a man. One is a "woman's class" and the other a "daughter's class."¹⁴⁰

b) What scripture, if any, are these men violating if they enter the class?

Thrasher's reply: If by "enter the class" you mean insist upon being a participant in a class to which he is not invited, 1 Peter 5:5.¹⁴¹

c) Has the man sinned by going in?

Thrasher's reply: If by "going in" you mean that he insists upon being a participant in a class which was designed as a "woman's class" or a "daughter's class," and to which he was not invited, yes.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Classes, then, are not private teaching if a woman may not teach a class with men in it. The Bible knows of only two kinds of teaching: public and from house to house (Acts 20:20; 5:42). Classes do not fit under the "house to house" category or else women would be allowed to teach men in classes. They are therefore public assemblies and in violation of 1 Cor 14:26-40 and 1 Tim 2:11-12.

This answer is also evading the issue. *If a man were in charge of the class, could a woman do the teaching to this mixed audience?* If the man in charge tells the woman when to teach, when to read, and what to do, could she do the teaching under his oversight? The Bible answers, "No," because a woman is to be a silent learner in all public assemblies and in all assemblies conducted by the church. See rules for all assemblies on p. 20; see also the analysis of 1 Tim 2 on p. 29.

¹³⁹ Both classes being taught by a woman.

¹⁴⁰ Notice that no scriptural evidence is offered in answer to this question.

¹⁴¹ What right do elders have to make arbitrary rules that are not founded upon scripture and then bind them upon brethren? What about "not making laws where God has not made any"?

- d) If the woman teacher in the class continues to teach, does she sin in so doing and if so, why?

Thrasher's reply: Yes, if she violates 1 Timothy 2:12. She should not willfully teach in such a way as to violate any Bible principle.¹⁴³

- e) Is confession in order and if so, what should be confessed and who¹⁴⁴ should confess?

Thrasher's reply: Yes, if sin has occurred (1 John 1:9). All sins committed should be confessed, including violations of 1 Tim 2:12. The person who sins ought to confess the sin, whether the man or the woman or both.¹⁴⁵

More questions to consider:

- 1) For those who are seriously considering the validity of Bible classes, the following questions are submitted for consideration.
- 2) Did the rules 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 apply to all the assemblies conducted by the Corinthian congregation?¹⁴⁶
- 3) What passage, if any, indicates other assemblies were conducted by the Corinthian congregation that did not abide by the rules found in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40?
- 4) In the days when 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 applied, would the congregation at Corinth have been allowed to have Bible classes?
- 5) Was the assembly described in 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 a public assembly of the church for teaching the word of God?
- 6) When Corinth conducted assemblies by the rules of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40, could everyone in such an assembly (believers, unbelievers, mature, and immature) receive edification?¹⁴⁷

¹⁴² Thus, a husband or a father would not be allowed to accompany his wife or daughter to see what they are being taught. This entire class system strips a father and husband of his God-given right to oversee his own home.

¹⁴³ 1 Tim 2:12 forbids a woman from teaching in any public capacity. See a detailed analysis of this scripture on p. 29.

¹⁴⁴ The man who entered the class or the woman teacher who kept teaching.

¹⁴⁵ A husband, according to Thrasher, must make a confession of sin because he accompanied his wife to see what she was being taught. A father must likewise confess sin because he accompanied his daughter to observe what she is being taught. This manmade system has stripped men of the right to oversee their own homes.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. 1 Cor 14:33ff.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. 1 Cor 14:31.

- 7) Were the rules of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 given just to the Corinthian congregation, or were they also given to other congregations?¹⁴⁸
- 8) What scripture, if any, would allow a woman to preach on a public radio broadcast?
- 9) What scripture, if any, would make it wrong for a woman to teach a class with men in it?
- 10) If classes are private, would a woman be allowed to teach a man in that class like Priscilla taught Apollos?
- 11) What scripture, if any, specifically mentions Bible classes like those of the proposition?
- 12) Where is the Scripture that teaches a woman cannot teach before the church arranges into classes, cannot teach after returning from the classes, but may teach while in the classes?
- 13) If all the classes were taught by men, would any restrictions be placed on who could attend any specific class?¹⁴⁹
- 14) If classes are private, what Scripture, if any, would prohibit a woman from combining the classes and teaching everyone present?
- 15) Who will keep out the ones not welcome in a woman's class, and by what authority will they be kept out?
- 16) Is the command to "teach" absolutely and totally generic? In other words, may anyone teach in any place and in any fashion as he chooses, or are there some restrictions?
- 17) Why would it be wrong to observe all 5 items of worship in Bible classes?¹⁵⁰
- 18) What method of teaching is used after dividing the assembled people into classes?¹⁵¹
- 19) Would a woman be allowed to ask a question during the common assembly? If not, why not?¹⁵²
- 20) Would it be sinful for a foreign language to be spoken extensively in Bible classes without giving a translation?¹⁵³

¹⁴⁸ Cf. 1 Cor 4:17.

¹⁴⁹ The argument of most class advocates is: Classes are private because not just everyone can get into a woman's class. If this distinction were removed, what would make the classes private? Are classes private only because women teach some of them and not everyone is allowed into these classes?

¹⁵⁰ There are 5 items of worship: singing, praying, teaching, contribution, and communion. Most will admit the first three may be done in a class, but probably few would say the last may be done because the entire congregation needs to be together to contribute and commune. If the command to "come together" for communion (1 Cor 11:33) means "stay together," then why wouldn't the command to "come together" for the teaching (1 Cor 14:23ff; Heb 10:25) mean "stay together" for the teaching?

¹⁵¹ The point is, dividing into classes is not a "method of teaching" because no one has learned anything by simply being classified and put in a room. A "method" must be employed to teach now that everyone has been classified. A method of teaching would include: (a) the question and answer method, (b) the lecture method, (c) the demonstration method, etc.

¹⁵² If 1 Cor 14:34-35 is cited, then it is an admission that some of the rules of that chapter apply today. If some of those rules apply, then how and who shall decide which rules apply and which do not?

- 21) Would you oppose the serving of refreshments in the classes while studying the Bible?¹⁵⁴
- 22) What Scripture(s) best authorizes a general assembly of the entire church for the public teaching of the word?¹⁵⁵
- 23) Are Bible classes taught by generic or specific authority?¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ If it is wrong for foreign languages to be left untranslated in classes, then classes are not parallel to teaching in the home because it is not wrong for a man to speak in a foreign language in his home without giving a translation.

¹⁵⁴ If classes are truly a private work, there should not be opposition to this.

¹⁵⁵ Most would probably go to such passages as Heb 10:25 or Acts 20:20. Few would seek to justify the general public assembly under the "generic" command "to teach." By way of contrast, the best passage that can be given to authorize classes is "generic" authority; this tactic reveals the weakness of the class position.

¹⁵⁶ If by specific authority, classes would not be an option, but a requirement. If by generic authority, then let no one appeal to specific stories in the Bible and say, "There's an example of Bible classes."

WRITTEN QUESTIONS (Part 2)

The following questions were submitted by Tom Thrasher and answered in writing by George Battey.

Battey's written responses

- 1) Must all of the teaching done by a church be done when the whole church is gathered together in one group? ___ yes ___ no If yes, what verse so teaches? _____

Battey's Reply: The church may teach "publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). When teaching publicly, the rules governing all public assemblies (1 Cor 14:26-40) must be followed.

- 2) Is it scriptural for the church to teach the Bible to children? ___ yes ___ no If no, what verse so teaches? _____

Battey's Reply: The church may teach children both "publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). When teaching publicly, the rules governing all public assemblies (1 Cor 14:26-40) must be followed. Children can learn the law of God in an undivided assembly in the presence of adults (Dt 31:12-13; Josh. 8:34-35; 1 Cor 14:31) and without classes.

- 3) Can the church scripturally call together a special group for special training? ___ yes ___ no If yes, what verse so teaches? _____

Battey's Reply: The church may teach "publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). When teaching publicly, the rules governing all public assemblies (1 Cor 14:26-40) must be followed. If by "calling together a special group for special training" the rules of such public assemblies are violated, then no the church may not do this. If these rules are not violated, then yes the church may do this.

- 4) Is the church authorized to teach anything to anybody except in the assembly when the whole church is gathered together in one group? ___ yes ___ no Give a verse for your answer: _____

Battey's Reply: The church may teach "publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). If a congregation only teaches publicly and not from house to house, it has not fulfilled its responsibility. When teaching publicly, the rules governing all public assemblies (1 Cor 14:26-40) must be followed.

- 5) Is the church authorized to do any work that is not to be done in the assembly when the whole church is gathered together in one group? ___ yes ___ no Give a verse for your answer: _____

Bathey's Reply: The church does its work both "publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). If a congregation only operates in a public capacity and not from house to house, it has not fulfilled its responsibility. When performing any of its work, no specific command of God may be violated. When performing work done in a public assembly, the rules governing all public assemblies (1 Cor 14:26-40) must be followed.

- 6) Can two groups from the same church scripturally meet in separate places for simultaneous teaching? ___ yes ___ no If yes, what verse so teaches? _____

Bathey's Reply: If this "simultaneous teaching" is parallel to the classes of your proposition, then no, this may not be done. When the church teaches publicly the rules for all such public assemblies (1 Cor 14:26-40) must be followed.

- 7) May a woman scripturally teach a group of women or children if the teaching is arranged by the elders of the congregation? ___ yes ___ no If yes, what verse so teaches? _____

Bathey's Reply: It is interesting that only women and children are mentioned in this question. There are two kinds of teaching which the church may participate in: "public and from house to house" (Acts 20:20). In public a woman may teach no one, not even a child; she must "learn in silence" (1 Tim 2:11) and she may not even ask a question (1 Cor 14:34-35). In private a woman may teach anyone, even a man (Acts 18:26). Elders do not have a right to make arrangements for women to teach in any public capacity. If arrangements are made for private teaching, then men may be taught by women as well as other women and children.

- 8) May a congregation scripturally use a radio and/or television program to do some of its teaching? ___ yes ___ no If yes, what verse so teaches? _____

Bathey's Reply: Yes, a congregation may utilize either a radio or television program. The passages that would authorize this are Mt 28:19 and Mk 16:15. Unlike Bible classes, radio and television do not violate any specific teachings of the Bible. The rules of 1 Cor 14:26-40 are not violated, nor are the rules of any other passage.

NOTE: We are not opposed to Bible classes just because they are of recent origin, nor because they are not explicitly mentioned (1 Cor 14:26-40). Our objection to Bible classes is that they violate commands of the Bible. If they did not violate the commands of the Bible we would not be opposed.

- 9) May a teacher scripturally use a chalkboard and overhead projector when the teaching is arranged by the church? ___ yes ___ no If yes, what verse so teaches? _____

Battey's Reply: Yes, a congregation may utilize either a chalkboard or overhead projector. The passage that would authorize their use is 2 Tim 2:2. Unlike Bible classes, the use of chalkboards and overhead projectors do not violate any specific teachings of the Bible. The rules of 1 Cor 14:26-40 are not violated, nor are the rules of any other passage.

NOTE: As noted above, we are not opposed to Bible classes just because they are of recent origin, nor because they are not explicitly mentioned (1 Cor 14:26-40). Our objection to Bible classes is that they violate commands of the Bible. If they did not violate the commands of the Bible we would not be opposed.

- 10) Do you recognize that some things are authorized generically, that is, without being specifically mentioned? ___ yes ___ no

Battey's Reply: Yes, we recognized there is general authority. But when something is authorized by general authority, it cannot violate specific instructions and commands found in the Bible. If a practice or innovation violates specific Bible instructions, it is sinful to use the innovation, or to participate in the practice.

NOTE: As noted above, we are not opposed to Bible classes just because they are of recent origin, nor because they are not explicitly mentioned (1 Cor 14:26-40). Our objection to Bible classes is that they violate commands of the Bible. If they did not violate the commands of the Bible we would not be opposed.

In this stage of their preparation the catechumens were known as "hearers." At the end of this part of the service the catechumens were dismissed, and the faithful remained for the second part of the service, known as the *missa fidelium*, or mass of the faithful. This part of the service was sacramental in character, culminating in the celebration of the Eucharist.

The second institution was the catechumenate, which flourished in the Church for some three centuries, say (from A.D. 150 to 450). At a time when adult converts from paganism were coming into the Church in great numbers, the catechumenate may be said to represent adult Christian education with a threefold purpose: to provide a period of moral probation during which the candidate's sincerity could be tested; to give instruction in the Bible and the doctrines of the Church; and to admit the candidate into a limited but genuine Christian fellowship while he was preparing for baptism. As already indicated, part of the instruction was given during the worship service, but often there was careful instruction at other times also, individually or in groups. One was expected to remain a catechumen for two or three years.

Materials and methods used in the catechumenate varied greatly, but the plan as Origen knew it in about A.D. 248 may be illustrated by the following six steps: (1) A preliminary inquiry as to the candidate's occupation and moral character—many occupations were forbidden to a Christian. (2) Private instruction as needed by the candidate. (3) Admittance to the worship service as a "hearer." (4) Instruction outside the worship service in classes. (5) Further inquiry into the candidate's moral life. (6) Intensive instruction prior to baptism.

MEDIEVAL CHRISTIANITY

Consider first the situation of lay people in medieval times. After the disappearance of the catechumenate about A.D. 450 there was virtually no direct instruction of the laity during worship until the thirteenth century. Then confession was made obligatory at least once a year, and some priests began to instruct their people concerning the moral code, using catechisms as means of explaining the Ten Commandments, the Seven Deadly Sins, and the Seven Cardinal Virtues. But throughout the Middle Ages the laity received continuous informal education, through such means as observing and participating in worship; by learning some parts of the service, such as the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria; by receiving the sacraments which were understood to convey the grace of God to the needy soul; and by watching religious dramas which began to be performed about the tenth century, portraying such biblical themes as the nativity and the suffering of Christ. And there was a sort of floating popular theology—a mingling of doctrine and superstition—passed along much as

¹⁵⁷ Lotz, op cit., pp. 16-17.

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