

THE FOLSOM
VIEW

“...HAVING THE EYES OF YOUR HEART ENLIGHTENED...” EPHESIANS 1:18

A PUBLICATION OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST MEETING AT 900 E. NATOMA, FOLSOM, CA 95630

The Consequence of Confusion

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Have you ever had the occasion to be involved in a business operation that lacked real organization? I'm talking about those situations in which the operators have an idea about what they want to do and how to do it, but are not quite organized enough to the point that anything ever gets done. Most often, the problem is not that they do not have the capability to accomplish the tasks and goals, but that somewhere down the line, the tasks and goals have not been communicated effectively to all the employees, and more than a few are confused as to their proper role in the organization, with some just not knowing anything at all about what they should be doing. The consequence of the confusion is that nothing—or at least very little—gets done, and an organization that could have been successful fails.

Sad to say, such confusion is often the cause of many local churches not accomplishing much in the work they should be doing. Many members of local churches of Christ are confused as to their part in the work of the local church, and as a result, much work is being neglected and much is left undone.

Part of the confusion has come about because individuals do not know the Scriptures well enough to know their part and their responsibilities. But some of the confusion has come about because those who are teaching and leading them have deceived them (either intentionally or unin-

tentionally) by saying that whatever the individual Christian can do the church can do. The end result of that argument is that local churches have abrogated the individual's responsibilities by creating additional organizations, attaching it to the local body, and then going to great lengths to convince the members that the work they each should have been doing as individual Christians is now being accomplished through these unauthorized additions to the church Christ established.

Think about it for a minute: When your leaders tell you that you do not have to personally lift a finger (except to write a check or donate a sum of money) to accomplish some of the Christian's duties, how likely is it that the members will personally get involved in fulfilling those responsibilities? If I have been told all my life that “we”

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(the local church) are helping “widows and orphans” (vicariously, through another organization other than the local church itself, such as an orphans' home or “old folks” home), or if I am told “we” are bringing the gospel to the world (vicariously, through a missionary society), or if I am told “we” are feeding the hungry (vicari-

ously, through a “food bank”), how likely will I be to help someone out when they come to me directly? The end result is that individuals have handed over their responsibilities to others to fulfill, and as long as they pay to have it done (no matter how small the amount they may actually contribute), they can rest at ease with the assurance they have “done their duty.” This attitude is more common than what you may think, sad to say.

This is not a problem confined to the matter of human institutions, either. When it comes to hospitality, some apparently think the same way, for when they have an opportunity to show true hospitality, they will gladly point the needy one to a hotel, or, in some cases, literally take them by the arm to talk to the elders or to the preacher because they see it as “their job,” not one of personal obligation.

And what about evangelism? This attitude is seen often when this subject arises. Though many will not come right out and say it, their actions belie their true feelings: that is “the preacher’s job.” Believing they have fulfilled their duty to “*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*” (Mark 16:15), they sit back and wait for “the preacher” to do it, never thinking about their own inactivity in this field. Some are offended when others say they are lacking in their responsibility to teach the lost, and will unashamedly point to their monthly report about how much “they” are “paying the preacher” or how much “they” spent (as a local church) on advertising or tracts or Bible class material or radio ads or billboards or whatever source of communication to which “they” have contributed.

Brethren, it pains me to have to write this about us, but it is true, nonetheless. This is a shameful attitude that has prevented us from accomplishing the deeds that we, as individuals, should be doing and, worse, we believe we are actually doing it. While many Christians are out there taking this meaningful and urgent task upon themselves (as they should), many others are neglecting shirking their responsibilities and convincing themselves (and others) that “they” are really working hard to do all the things the Lord would have us do.

Let us not be confused as to our individual responsibilities, brethren. Not a one of us is going to get into heaven because someone else did what we were commanded to do or because we paid for them to do it. In the end, “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). We will be judged for what we, as individuals, have either done or left undone (cf. Matt.

25:31-46). The consequence of this confusion will be lost souls. So, what are you doing?



Online Common Sense

Facebook, e-mail and other web experiences are a fact of life these days. Parents need to be extra-vigilant to make

sure their children are engaging in safe practices while online. Here are some common sense rules to follow:

Never tell anyone your full name, address, phone number, city or any other personal information about yourself or your family.

Watch what you put on your profile. Don't put your date of birth, especially the year. Remember you are not required to put any information on the profile you don't want to.

If anyone IM's you or e-mails you and asks where you go to school, where you live or any other personal questions you don't feel comfortable with, do not hesitate to say, “ I'm sorry, I don't give out personal information” or “My parents have asked me not to tell that.”

If someone sends you a e-mail form with personal information about themselves on it and suggests you fill one out just like it, be alerted and don't do it. Who knows to where and to whom it will be forwarded!

If you go into chat rooms and anyone pressures you to talk to them, won't leave you alone or asks for personal information, leave the room immediately!

If you ever get suggestive, angry or abusive messages tell your parents at once and contact the Internet provider you use and seek assistance.

Don't respond to e-mail from people you don't know. If you believe you've received something strange, tell your parents.

Never agree to meet anyone face-to-face that you have talked with online.