

Social Gospel - cont.

the physical and social and they want to copy it. Some brethren get side-tracked from the true mission of the church that is laid out in the NT. And, as much I as I hate to admit it, some brethren are just worldly-minded. They have turned to worldly means and methods to practice their religion.

What Are the Results?

What happens when “well-meaning” and “good-hearted” brethren change the work of the local church and preach and practice a social gospel? Well, first, they do that which is unauthorized and sinful. Second, they burden the church and waste the Lord’s money on man-made projects. Third, they lose their focus and actually cause the lost to remain lost in their sin. Finally, they fail and will be rejected by God (Matthew 15:13).

Gospel Reminders

Brethren, let us all remember that the one and only true, NT gospel is God’s calling power (2 Thessalonians 2:14), drawing power (John 6:44-45), convicting power (Acts 2:37), saving power (Romans 1:16-17), and sustaining power (Romans 16:25).

Social Gospel - cont.

Let us remember to preach the whole gospel (Acts 20:20-27). Don’t change the gospel (Galatians 1:6-9) or the mission of the Lord’s church (1 Timothy 3:15). Don’t forget the real problem in the world is sin (Luke 19:10) and don’t forget our focus is to bring people to Jesus (Luke 10:42; John 4:34; 6:26-27).

- Chris Reeves -

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

The Social Gospel - Part 2

In last week's bulletin, I began a brief introduction to the liberal religious movement called the Social Gospel. It was, and remains, a movement which focuses primarily on helping people in the world physically more than spiritually. Addressing social problems, not the sin problem, is the main agenda of the Social Gospel.

In today's bulletin, I want to examine how the Social Gospel has affected many Churches of Christ and then close with a reminder of what the true gospel really is.

Six Errors of the Social Gospel

1. It is born of liberal infidelity and a shaken faith. The Social Gospel which was prominent in the late 1800's and early 1900's, came from religious people that denied the inspiration and the miracles of the Bible.

2. It perverts the mission of Christ (Matthew 1:21; Luke 2:10). The mission of Christ was to save mankind from the sickness of sin, whereas the mission of the Social Gospel is to save mankind from their social ills.

3. It perverts the nature of the gospel (1 Corinthians 1:21). The nature of

the gospel to save believers from their sin, whereas the nature of the Social Gospel is to save the poor from their ignorance.

4. It perverts the nature of the kingdom (John 18:36-37). The kingdom of Christ is a spiritual, heavenly kingdom, whereas the kingdom of the Social Gospel is a physical, earthly society.

5. It perverts the mission of the church (1 Timothy 3:15). The mission of the church is to uphold the truth, whereas the mission of the Social Gospel is to educate the ignorant.

6. It perverts the one hope of the gospel (Ephesians 4:4). The one hope of the true gospel is to be saved from sin and go to heaven, whereas the one hope of the Social Gospel is to be saved from society's ills and go to an earthly utopia.

The Social Gospel and Churches of Christ

Unfortunately, some Churches of Christ even began to use the "social gospel" approach beginning in the 1950's and 1960's. These brethren kept preaching the true, NT gospel, but they added the "social gospel" approach to their mission. Today, these Churches of Christ have many programs that are unauthorized and

are not a part of original mission of the church. They have the following:

Elaborate dining halls, gymnasiums, youth camps, retreats, colleges, universities, hospitals, day-care, hobby classes, weight loss programs, talent shows, scout troops, athletic teams, youth trips to amusement parks, social programs, family programs, medical clinics, skating parties, coffee and donuts, shelters, food and clothes banks, youth ministers, job training, etc., etc.

Why the Social Gospel?

Since many brethren today engage in the social gospel, the question needs to be asked: Why are brethren so excited about and engaged in the social gospel? Let's consider a few reasons.

Many brethren are discontent with the current work of the church as it is outlined in the NT. They want something more than "just" evangelism for the lost, edification for the saved, and benevolence for the needy saints. These brethren lack faith in the current biblical work of the church.

Other brethren want to be like the denominations. They see what all the denominations are doing in the area of