

# LEADERSHIP IN CONGREGATIONS WITHOUT ELDERS (2)

## IV. SOME GUIDELINES IN MAKING DECISIONS FOR THE CONGREGATION

**Does the decision have God's approval?** It is the case that some decisions are made which have no authority from God. The men do not have a right to make any decision which violates the teaching of God's word. When a decision is being considered, if it does not meet the test of being authorized by God, it should be discarded, taken off the table immediately, with no exceptions. Just today [Dec. 8] I saw a local church's signboard, both sides of which promoted the religious celebration of Christmas. There is no biblical authority for such celebration, so whoever made the decision to put up this sign did so without God's authority. This decision did not meet the test and should never have even been considered in the first place.

**Decisions must not be made on the basis of utilitarianism.** Concluding that something "will work," is not an authorized basis for deciding to proceed with it. The apostle Paul was slanderously accused of saying, "Let us do evil that good may come" (Rom. 3:8). We would run out of room if we made a list of all the things people presently do in the name of religion, which things are in reality what Paul was unjustly accused of promoting — doing evil that good may come.

Many congregations have been swept up in the entertainment craze thinking erroneously that this evil will work out for good. But the sad fact is that this evil [unauthorized worship] is a violation of the "doctrine of Christ" with regard to true worship (John 4:24).

More and more of our brethren are fellowshiping people in man-made religions. Their comeback is, "We might win them over." The evil of violating God's law on fellowship (Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11) is ignored. It is the thinking of man, not the teaching of God's word that causes people to engage in this evil.

Opinions must not be made matters of faith. It is not too unusual for people to have opinions which they treat as matters of faith. Faith must come from the hearing of God's word (Rom. 10:17), not from opinions of men. Opinions must be treated as such, and brethren should be able to come together on matters of opinion. If something is truly a matter of opinion rather than a matter of faith, it is only fair for the majority to be considered.

**Matters of faith must not be classed as opinion.** That the true worship authorized by Christ (John 4:24) does not authorize the use of mechanical instruments of music is a matter of faith. But more and more of our brethren are calling the use of the instruments as "opinion," when it is clearly a violation of the "doctrine of Christ."

Even though these suggestions may serve as guidelines for congregations without elders, the same is true with regard to congregations with elders. Many of the same problems that occur in the absence of elders occur also where there are elders. The fault is with the people, not with God. That people turn away their ears from God's word in religious faith and practice is not something new. It happened in the early days of the church and will no doubt happen as long as time stands.

**Decisions are to be made by "the men," not just a man or a few men.** Faithful men of the congregation, in the absence of elders, have a real responsibility to take part in the decision-making. For the men to make a decision for the congregation it is necessary that the men come together for that purpose. The "Men's Business Meeting" is an area in need of improvement.

There are sensible rules for having a profitable discussion of business matters. Such rules are often followed in secular discussions of business matters. The same thing can be done with brethren in the absence of elders. The Lord's work is a business which is more important than any secular business.

I have personally been involved in business meetings of brethren, which were carried out in a very effective manner; this, however, is not the case in many instances. To be successful, there is the need for someone to serve as the chairman of the meeting. Brethren are allowed to bring up

various business matters to be discussed by all who have a desire to participate. In the first place, it should be determined whether or not the matter discussed is a matter of faith or of opinion. This is very important.

**Detailed minutes of business meetings should be kept.** Unless proper minutes of meetings are made, faithful sisters and others may be kept in the dark with regard to decisions which are made by the men. Though precluded from being decision-makers, who would argue that sisters do not have a right to know what is going on within the church?

When brethren act in a fair manner, and with the utmost respect for the teaching of God's word, a consensus can be reached. It should always be uppermost in the minds of brethren, as to what is in the best interest of the congregation from a scriptural standpoint, rather than what may suit individuals.

I have likewise been personally involved in business meetings which were in no sense of the term successful. This did not have to be the case, and would not have been if some sensible rules had been followed. We shall note some things which contribute to the lack of success in many business meetings.

## V. THINGS WHICH HINDER THE MAKING OF GOD APPROVED DECISIONS

Paul warns of the "devices" and "wiles" of the devil. (2 Cor. 2:11; Eph. 6:11). When things go wrong within the church, the problem can be traced to the evil influence of the Devil. The Devil works through men. His aim is to conquer and he is so devious in his efforts. His efforts some times have great appeal. Paul, warning of "false apostles" and "deceitful workers," said, "And no marvel: for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:13-14). He goes on to say, "Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed into ministers of righteousness..." (v. 15).

**Walter W. Pigg** *from Banner of Truth*

*To be continued...*

## **BIRTHDAY**

Jameson Gragg, 03-01.

## **ILL**

**Sunday:** Lauren and Lindsey Brown, Janice and Jessica Carter (PM), Joy and Natalie Parish, Tom Tucker.

**Wednesday:** Lindsey Brown, Jessica Carter, Chris Edwards. Millie Robertson had outpatient tests for her heart on Friday. Ralph Franklin was released from the hospital in Pineville, Louisiana last week.

**Those battling cancer:** Jamal Abyad, Diane Cannon, David Cole, and Ledgia Campbell. Please remember these in your prayers, as well as: Meredith Greer, Millie Robertson, Allen Scott, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

## **HOME BOUND**

Bob Adams resides at Room D-4 of the Johnson County Nursing Center in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

## **OUT OF TOWN**

George Thomas was out of town on business Wednesday. Jeremy Keifer was out of town last week. John and Barbara James left on Thursday for a month of vacation in Arizona.

## **POT LUCK DINNER**

Our monthly Pot Luck Dinner will be held next Sunday, March 4, following our AM worship. Please plan to come and enjoy the good food and good company!

## **MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING**

Our monthly Men's Business Meeting will be held on Sunday, March 11, following our AM worship. All men of the congregation are encouraged to attend this meeting.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Sunday AM, 46; Sunday PM, 36; Wednesday PM, 31.

*"Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do."* **1 Thessalonians 5:11**

## **Those To Serve**

February 25, 2007

**BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Nelson**

### **MORNING WORSHIP**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS..... Joel Nelson**

**SONG LEADER..... George Thomas**

**OPENING PRAYER ..... Steve Brown**

**PRESIDE..... John Carter**

**ASSIST..... Allen Scott**

**ASSIST..... John James**

**CLOSING PRAYER..... Gary Cole**

### **EVENING WORSHIP**

**OPENING PRAYER ..... John Cody Carter**

**CLOSING PRAYER..... John Dodson**

**LORD'S SUPPER..... John Carter**

### **WEDNESDAY 28th**

**SONG LEADER..... George Thomas**

**INVITATION ..... Jeff Nemechek**

## **WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

### **Sunday**

Bible Study ..... 9:30 AM

Morning Worship ..... 10:30 AM

Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

### **Wednesday**

Ladies Bible Study ..... 10:00 AM

Bible Study ..... 7:00 PM

**Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher**

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