

CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT OF EVANGELISM

The church of the Lord in the ancient city of Philippi was one that was both benevolent (helping the needy) and evangelistic (preaching the gospel to the lost). The church there had “*fellowship in the gospel from the first day*” with the apostle Paul (Philippians 1:5). This means that from the very earliest stage of that congregation’s existence (its beginning is recorded in Acts 16), it had financially supported Paul when he preached the gospel. And, it continued to do so until the time that Paul wrote the book of Philippians (Philippians 1:5). Philippians 4:14-16 shows that a church (in this case, it was the one in Philippi) sent support “*once and again*” to a preacher (in this case, it was Paul) when he was preaching in another city (Thessalonica).

In Acts 18, we read about Paul’s work of preaching the gospel in Corinth. For part of the time that Paul was preaching in that infamous city, some of his faithful co-laborers were not with him. He was at first working there as a tentmaker (Acts 18:3). Then in Acts 18:5, it is written, “*And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.*” When Paul later wrote to the saints in Corinth, he spoke of those two brethren coming and bringing support from Macedonia. Here is what is recorded about that situation in 2 Corinthians 11:7-9:

“Have I committed an offence . . . because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.”

Let us make some observations on the information given in the above paragraph.

First, when Paul preached in Corinth, he received “wages” for his preaching. Jesus taught that a laborer is worthy of his hire (Luke 10:7).

Second, when Paul preached in Corinth, he did *not* receive financial support from the church there. He had the authority to receive it, and the church had the authority to provide it, but Paul chose not to have such an arrangement.

Third, when Paul preached in Corinth, he received wages from churches. Thus, it is scriptural for a preacher to receive wages/support from more than one congregation, and, at the same time, it is scriptural for more than one church to send support to the same preacher or same evangelistic work.

Fourth, it is scriptural for congregations to support the preaching of the gospel in a place outside of its own local area. In this case, churches of Macedonia (the region that included Berea, Philippi, and Thessalonica) sent support to a preacher (Paul) that was preaching in southern Greece.

Fifth, on this occasion, churches in one continent sent support to a preacher that by birth was from another continent (the sending churches of Macedonia were in Europe, while the receiving preacher, Paul, was born in Tarsus, which is part of Asia). Thus, it is acceptable for a church or churches that are located in one continent to send support to a preacher from another continent. We dare not say that such action is mandatory, but we must admit that it is acceptable. It may not always be expedient, but it is authorized.

One more thing. The Bible records that Paul, as a preacher working in Corinth, received funds from churches. Their support ended up “in his hands.” *How* that support reached him is not stated. We know that two brothers, Timothy and Silas, brought it. However, the details are not stated. Since that is true, no one today should try and bind the details of how support should be arranged, sent, and received. Some have stated that the funds were sent “directly” from the supporting churches to Paul. The Bible does not say so. It may be that is just what took place, and it is certainly scriptural for a church to decide to send its support “directly to the preacher,” but

assuming that such is what took place in this instance (2 Corinthians 11:7-9) does not *prove* it to be the case.

More than once when we were working overseas, I had occasion to write a letter of thanks to congregations that had sent us funds to help us in a particular matter. I honestly told them in such a letter something like this, “*We have received the funds* that you sent. Thank you for . . .” Does that mean that they sent the funds directly to us without anything or anyone being involved? No. Here is what actually took place in many instances. A brother from the sending church would write and mail a check to a congregation in the U.S. that served as our “sponsors,” that is, a local, autonomous church that received and helped disburse funds that were contributed to our work. The receiving church in the U.S. would then send the funds to me. Sometimes that meant that it wrote a check and mailed it to me overseas. In other cases, our receiving church would send a check to a brother or family in the States that was preparing to come work overseas in our area. They, then, would cash the check, bring the funds with them, and literally place them in our hands. In such a case, yes, we could say to a particular church that made a contribution to our work, “*We received the money that you sent to us . . .*” Had it come directly to us? No. I say again, the fact that Paul stated that he *received* the funds from the churches of Macedonia in no way proves that those funds were sent *directly* to him.

Every congregation ought to be excited about the prospect of taking the gospel of our salvation (Ephesians 1:13) to lost souls near and far. May those that lead us and make decisions about how funds contributed on the first day of the week should be used, be ever ready to support the faithful proclamation of the word.

Roger Campbell from West End Watchman

“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!”
Romans 10:15

ANNIVERSARY

Jim and Wanda Wilson, 10-11.

BIRTHDAYS

Kathleen Camp, 10-13; Marion Stone, 10-14.

ILL

Sunday: Gary Cole, Janice Carter (PM), Chris Edwards (PM). **Wednesday:** Chris Edwards, Millie Robertson. Jamal Abyad will have tests and possibly surgery for lung cancer at Houston, TX on Monday, October 9. David Cole is undergoing radiation treatment in Tennessee. Ron Wood is in the ICU at the Mayo Clinic in Florida.

Those battling cancer: Jamal Abyad, Diane Cannon, David Cole, Ledgia Campbell and Ron Wood. Please remember these, as well as: Janice Carter, Lynda Cole, Meredith Greer, Millie Robertson, Allen Scott, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

HOME BOUND

Bob Adams is in 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

Jeremy Keifer is in Sapulpa, OK visiting with relatives. The James' were at Clinton, KS last Sunday. The Scott's were visiting relatives at Clinton, MO last Sunday.

MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING

The regularly scheduled Men's Business Meeting will be held this Sunday following our AM worship.

LADIES CLASS

The Ladies Bible Class has resumed it's normal schedule of meeting each Wednesday at 10:00 AM. All ladies are encouraged to attend these classes.

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 52; Sunday PM, 32; Wednesday PM, 40.

Those To Serve

October 8, 2006

BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Parish

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS..... Joel Nelson
SONG LEADER..... George Thomas
OPENING PRAYER Gary Cole
PRESIDE..... John Dodson
ASSIST.....Allen Scott
ASSIST.....David Adams
CLOSING PRAYER..... Ken Greer

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER Myron Nebergall
CLOSING PRAYER..... Jeff Nemechek
LORD'S SUPPER..... John Dodson

WEDNESDAY 11th

SONG LEADER..... John Cody Carter
INVITATION Ted Thrasher

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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