

# Deja vu, All Over Again

## By Maurice Barnett

*It will be shown in this article:*

- 1. The basic argument for societies among brethren over the past 150 years has been a focus on the “universal church.”**
- 2. With that foundation laid, emphasis was placed on “expediency.”**
- 3. All proponents of societies over 150 years have used the same arguments and tactics and have shown the same attitude.**
- 4. The *Guardian of Truth Foundation* is no exception. It is more than just a business and more than just “individuals working together.”**
- 5. The *Guardian of Truth Foundation* has made the arguments and laid the groundwork for church support of human societies.**

I’ve been here before. All of those who experienced the institutional battle of fifty and more years ago, should readily see what is happening. We are facing the same attitudes, tactics and arguments used by the advocates of missionary and benevolent societies of the forties, fifties and sixties. Even the mean-spirited personal attacks upon us are reminiscent of the likes of Sterl Watson, W.L. Totty, Don Rudd and John O’Dowd. Yet, such an experience was not exclusive for my generation. Brethren stretching all the way back to before the *American Christian Missionary Society* was formed in 1849 faced the same.

I can understand that many of the present generation can easily fall prey to human schemes. This may be because of lack of knowledge, no background in the institutional issues of the past, an indifference to how work is carried out, a lack of faith in God’s plans, or some other reasons. What does surprise me is the number of brethren who went through the battle of fifty years ago who now seem to be embracing what they once said they opposed. Or, at least, what we *thought* they opposed. My judgment, then and now, has been that some in the past had only accepted certain conclusions without understanding how those conclusions were

reached; they never grasped the issues. Others have changed their convictions, while some have just been selective about what they opposed or accepted. Our modern controversy is a reflection of events from the first half of the nineteenth century and the years following. And, that was rooted in the influence of Alexander Campbell.

Campbell's insistence on speaking only where the Bible speaks, an open denunciation of denominationalism with all its accoutrements along with an early denunciation of Bible societies, was readily accepted by multiplied thousands of people. For instance, here is what Campbell said in the very first article of the first edition of the *Christian Baptist*, August, 1823. Note especially the last two sentences—

"The order of their assemblies was uniformly the same. It did not vary with moons and seasons. It did not change as dress, nor fluctuate as the manners of the times. Their devotion did not diversify itself into the endless forms of modern times. They had no monthly concerts for prayer; no solemn convocations; no great fasts, nor preparation, nor thanksgiving days. Their churches were not fractured into missionary societies, Bible societies, education societies; nor did they dream of organizing such in the world. The head of a believing household was not in those days a president or manager of a board of foreign missions; his wife, the president of some female education society; his eldest son, the recording secretary of some domestic Bible society; his eldest daughter, the corresponding secretary of a mite society; his servant maid, the vice-president of a rag society; and his little daughter, a tutoress of a Sunday School. They knew nothing of the hobbies of modern times. In their church capacity alone they moved. They neither transformed themselves into any other kind of association, nor did they fracture and sever themselves into divers societies."

However, beginning about 1830, a slightly different side of Campbell became increasingly evident as he tended toward rationalism. It may be that he had only opposed certain kinds of societies, though that actually placed him in a contradiction. He approved of district and state "Cooperation Meetings" that proliferated from 1833 on. He defended the principles that eventually developed into the *American Christian Missionary Society* in 1849. With the influence that Campbell possessed, he *could* have blunted the liberal tendencies of the time and saved untold numbers from apostasy, but he did not. His descent into rationalism is well illustrated in the following defense of the *Missionary Society*—

"Whatever is the duty of one church is the duty of all churches, in similar circumstances. But a combination or co-operation of churches is essential to accomplish some of the great objects of Christian piety and humanity. To raise a house, to build a city, demands more than individual effort. So to plant churches in Pagan lands, and to found new religious and Christian communities, where no churches are, calls for

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combined and concentrated help. . . If in the affairs of this world, there are legislative, judiciary, and executive departments necessary; if the Jews had their councils and their Sanhedrim, as well as their law and their prophets, why should it be thought unscriptural, irrational or improper, for Christians to have their deliberative bodies, their conventions, for the sake of the concentration of their energies in the accomplishment of their duties to themselves and to the world? . . . I do not place meeting-houses, pews or hymn books, on a footing with civil government or the church of God. But what does that reasoning prove? That we must not have any thing that does not stand on a footing with the church of God! The building of a meeting house is as conventional as a Bible Society or a missionary society; and he that opposes the one, should on all his premises and logic, oppose the other." *Millennial Harbinger*, September, 1850, pp. 500-501.

Human reasoning took the place of scripture. Having no *specific* authority, Campbell claimed the Societies were based on the same authority as constructing a meeting house for church assembling. Campbell's rationalism actually went beyond merely a claim of *expediency* to then assert it to be a *requirement*. It was at the time, and has always been, a mystery to faithful brethren as to why the great Alexander Campbell failed to understand so elementary a principle of hermeneutics as the nature of specific instruction and expediencies. It may well be that Campbell, like so many others, was inconsistent with his application of Bible principles. But, whether in complete ignorance or inconsistency, his arguments were driven by the all too common desire of men to justify what they want instead of what God wants.

Notice Campbell rightly says that once one accepts the society to be the same as building a meeting house, he cannot, logically, oppose one without opposing the other. That is why it is so dangerous to take the first step in that direction. Very soon, other departures soon follow based on the same arguments. Campbell's assertion is based on the logical fallacy that the society and a meeting house are both alike and thus authorized in Scripture. Such reasoning did not escape the notice of many brethren.

While there is a legitimate place for *expediencies*, they must be *advantageous to specific instruction*. It is one thing to *claim* expediency and another to *prove it*. As it happened, and was expected after Campbell, "expediency" became the trumpeted defense of every departure from truth beginning in the 1830s to the present.

Nearly six years after the quotation from Campbell we just looked at, Benjamin Franklin set forth the differing points of view as opposition to the society increased. He said—

"We are perfectly aware that if we wish to put the Christian communities into the power of men, to control them, wield them, and make them engines to honor man, we need some kind of an organization,

beyond the simple organization of the New Testament; but the simple, independent church, for keeping the ordinances, religious instruction, and saving the world, is all-sufficient for the good of the saints and the glory of God. Indeed, one of the principal reasons why this question of organization has perplexed the minds of so many is, that they are looking for, and trying to make out of something unknown to the whole New Testament. They overlook the simple, easy and common-sense arrangement of the New Testament, and complain that we have no arrangement. It is amusing to see the different routes by which brethren have attempted to arrive at the same conclusion, on this point. One brother sets out gravely to show scripture authority for such an organization as is desirable, and claims that he finds abundant authority for it. Another looks over the matter, and is satisfied that he has failed. He throws all that plan aside, and claims that the whole matter is left to human prudence and discretion, and that we need no authority for it, any more than to build a house of worship or send out a missionary to a certain field of labor." *American Christian Review*, Vol. I (April, 1856), p. 116.

Franklin accepted the society at the beginning, though with nagging doubts. He tried his best to understand and defend it. At times through those years, Franklin would publish statements, as in the *Review* just noted, that cut the ground from beneath the Society. In late 1866, the doubts crystallized into opposition; he could no longer make any defense of the society. For the rest of his life, he openly opposed it. The following is taken from a sermon he preached just months before his death in 1878—

"What has the wisdom of men done for us, in departing from the original church as a model? One class of men have claimed that their human organizations, made by uninspired men, are scriptural, and can be sustained by Scripture; and they enter the arena, open the bible, and undertake the proof. . . . But men have become weary of the tedious process of hunting for Scripture; and another class, and a much larger one, admit that there is no Scripture for any of them; but they are left free to form any kind of a conference, association, co-operation, or confederation, they may see fit; or, as expressed in a paper at hand, that the Scriptures leave God's people free to adopt whatever plan of general organization and co-operation may seem to them best calculated to promote the unity and prosperity of the churches. This assumes that the Lord has given no law, or rule; no 'plan of general organization and co-operation;' and as he has given no law, we are left free to adopt any law that may seem best!

"But, if the Lord has given no plan for the purposes here specified, why? Does the conclusion follow that we may adopt any that may seem best? Not by any means. More likely for the reason that he did not intend any such plan or organization, and that the whole affair is an arrogant assumption. I take it that he legislated where legislation was needed, and where he did not legislate, it was not needed, nor intended. Why did not the apostles and first Christians proceed on this freedom, and legislate where the Lord failed to legislate, and do this great work

which the Scriptures left the people of God free to do? The apostles understood it not in that way. The first Christians never understood it in that way. They never did it in that way. This is a long leap in the dark—it is a strange precedent!" *Gospel Preacher*, Vol. 2, p. 492.

On the other side of this issue was W.K. Pendleton, the most influential advocate of the *Society* at the time. Pendleton was the confirmed heir of Alexander Campbell, who had died in the Spring of 1866. Some of that prominence was no doubt due to Pendleton's having twice been Campbell's son-in-law. Campbell's approval of his son-in-law, shown in his elevation of Pendleton to positions of influence and power, clearly indicate the extent of Campbell's departure from the restoration stand he had taken decades before.

The veritable explosion of liberal projects can be dated to Pendleton's defense of the Society at the convention of 1866, the same year Franklin took his stand against it. Pendleton was President of Bethany College as well as editor of the *Millennial Harbinger*. His views settled the society issue for the leading liberals of the time. Historian, Earl West, gives us a synopsis of the apology for the *Society* given by Pendleton. Take special note of what West explains here. We will have occasion to refer to this again. West tells us—

"The basic apology for the Society Pendleton based upon his conception of the church universal, and in this he followed closely the reasoning of Alexander Campbell. No man is prepared to see the Society as Pendleton saw it without beginning where Pendleton began. First, he filled his mind with the thought of the church in its universal aspect, ignoring for the time being the local church. God gave to the church - in its universal sense - the responsibility to convert the world. But God did not give the *method* by which the church - in its universal sense - was to convert the world. Therefore, whatever method the church - in its universal sense - uses is acceptable. The method is a matter of expediency. The church universal is left free to decide for itself. . . . The church universal was charged with preaching to the world, but God did not provide its method; therefore, it was left to human expediency to devise the best plan. This, of course, completely overlooked the fact that the church universal was given a method, the method being the work of the local congregation." *Search for the Ancient Order*, Vol. 2, pp. 55, 62.

The "Christian Church," "Disciples of Christ," developed from this liberal element among brethren and they have traded on these exact same points of view since that time. Along with many other things they have claimed are authorized by the silence of the scriptures, both societies and instrumental music have been defended as *expediencies, aids, liberty*. Indeed, they have nowhere else to go.

In 1908, W.W. Otey debated J.B. Briney on the *Missionary Society*. Briney defended the many missionary organizations of the Disciples of Christ. The foundation of Briney's defense was based on the two principles that had been presented over fifty years before — The church universal and the authority of "expediency." On page 161 of the debate, Briney says—

"Now, the way in which the church is the pillar and ground of the truth, is to sustain it. Preach it in the world. Carry it to the children of men, unto the uttermost parts of the earth. This presents to our mind the great purpose and function of the body of Christ, or the church of the living God, or the kingdom of heaven. Now, my dear friends. I think it is obvious to every mind that in this regard the church cannot act as a whole. I take it that the term is used in this passage in its general sense, and as equivalent to the body of Christ. It is not an organized body, the church in this general sense, but it embraces all those who believe in and obey our blessed Lord. Now, I repeat that this body of Christ, or the church, in this comprehensive and general sense, cannot act in carrying out this commission, as a whole, that is, the whole church, everybody, cannot arise and go to preach the gospel. Well, now, how is it to be done then? And just here I lay down this principle, and it is to constitute the foundation of nearly my whole argument upon this question. I read as follows: 'When a thing is commanded to be done, and the method of doing it is not prescribed, those commanded are at liberty to use their best judgment in devising ways and means to carry out the command, and they are to act under the principle laid down by Paul in I. Cor. XIV., 39 and 40.'

At this same opening, Briney asserts that I Timothy 3:15 means that the *universal church* is the pillar and ground of the truth, not local churches as the context of the passage shows. The argument based on this is—*since no specific organization is included in the passage, the church universal is free to form any organization deemed expedient to carry out that universal work*. As Briney said, this is the foundation of his position. We saw this as it began with Campbell, was spurred by Pendleton, then picked up by others, adopted by the Christian Church, echoed in the institutional liberals of sixty years ago and now dumped in our laps in modern times. But let us look at one other lengthy presentation by Briney that is based on I Timothy 3:15, found on page 166 of the debate. It is in Briney's first affirmative—

"I am a part of that institution that is the pillar and the ground of the truth. I belong to that body upon which has been laid the obligation to carry this work on, and as a free man and as an individual responsible to God for my conduct and the use of my ability, I may take it upon myself to go here, or there, or elsewhere, at home or abroad, and tell the story of Jesus and His love. Well, any two may combine and send a

third, and say to that third, you go and stand before the people and preach to them the story of the Cross, while we stand behind you. We will support you in this work. As you do it, you may look to us and call upon us and draw upon us for whatever funds may be necessary in the carrying out of this mission. Well, if two may do this, then any number may do it. These two individuals can very readily confer with one another and without difficulty lay their plans and make their arrangements, and meet all the demands that the cause makes upon them. But here are a hundred men or five hundred men. They belong to this institution that is the pillar and ground of the truth. They live in different sections of the country. They confer with one another in this, that or the other way, and they convene for the purpose of considering the matter of sending the Gospel into the world. And their conferences result in the formation of themselves into an organization that decently and in order they may engage in this great and important work. Now they must have system. They must have some regularity. There must be some stability about them in the accomplishment of their work, and that this may be the case, they choose their president, they choose their secretary, they choose their treasurer, they chose their board of directors and thus set in motion the machinery, if I may so speak, for what is necessary to begin this work and carry it on regularly and systematically to the accomplishment of the end in view. Well, when you have that you have a missionary organization."

The arguments sound so very modern, do they not? Well, the same interpretation of I Timothy 3:15, with the attendant arguments, *just as Briney made them here*, are being used today for the same purpose of justifying human organizations for evangelism and worship. When we look back to see where these positions led people a century ago, we should be able to see that they will lead in the very same direction today. Seed planted will produce after its kind.

Outside of Briney's assertions on silence, expediency and I Timothy 3:15, the very first arguments he used in the debate with Otey were also arguments we are hearing today – Jesus was the President and Director, Judas was the treasurer and the apostles with the seventy made up an evangelism society before the church ever existed, page 169; there was a benevolent society within the church at Jerusalem when seven men were chosen to see to the care of the Grecian widows, pages 169-170; the group of teachers in the church at Antioch made a teaching society and especially Paul and Barnabas were chosen to do missionary work, being sent forth by this group that made up the teaching society, pages, 172-174, and other such assertions. Get the debate and read it for yourself. Arguments like these are no more valid today than they were at that time of the debate and have long ago been refuted.

At this point, let me throw in a question. Through the years up to and after 1900, who was it that caused division among brethren? Was it those who opposed the human organizations and instrumental music? Or, was it those who used the arguments we have just looked at in order to justify their liberal practices? It doesn't take a Solomon to answer that. Unless of course, if you take the same argumentative positions of Pendleton and Briney, then you will insist that those who *objected* to their practices were the ones who were causing division. The fact is, this is just what the liberals of the time insisted and caustically accused any who opposed them. In 1866, C.L. Loos wrote—

“Those few who have been of late days persistently and noisily denouncing missionary associations, have, by the unsanctified bitterness and rudeness of their attacks, given full evidence of the causes of their opposition—a lack of knowledge, of an enlightened piety and a true spiritual culture. To attempt to teach such men is well-nigh useless, as it is almost hopeless.” *Millennial Harbinger*, June 1866, p. 275.

This was echoed the following year by W.K. Pendleton—

“Let men who have missionary work. . . take counsel together. . . and let us not be disturbed, or distracted in our work, by outside railers, who seem to rejoice in nothing so much as their own success in preventing the preaching of the gospel.” *Millennial Harbinger*, May, 1867, p. 255.

These were typical of charges made against any opposition to the societies; such accusations were quite unjustified. Also characteristic of this is the letter from J.B. Briney to Daniel Sommer in 1902, 35 years after the statements from Loos and Pendleton in the *Harbinger*. Conservatives had tried to get public discussions of differences between them and the “progressives.” Sommer had been pressing Briney to debate his liberal views. Briney was admitted by both sides to be the most effective, capable debater that the liberals had since Campbell. Briney's response to Sommer was as follows—

“If such conditions do exist, I am obliged to regard you as a factionist, and your churches as factions, and therefore not entitled to recognition. In the body of Christ you would be entitled to your opinions. . . . But when you create a schism with your opinions, and carry off a faction, you place yourself under the severest censure of Scripture, and forfeit all claims upon the consideration of the brethren.” Quoted in *W.W. Otey, Contender For The Faith*, by Cecil Willis, p. 155.

Since those early days, Sommer's name has been used by promoters of human institutions and organizations as a name of prejudice to smear an opponent. *Sommerite* is thrown around with abandon. It is done with

the same language and for the same purpose—to quarantine an opponent and to evade dealing with the issues involved. In the January, 1949 issue of the *Bible Banner*, Charles Campbell reviews W.L. Totty, saying—

“During the current controversy regarding the church being imposed upon by the college for financial support, W.L. Totty who preaches for the Garfield Heights church in Indianapolis, Indiana, has constantly charged some of us who have opposed this modern heresy, with changing our attitude toward the anti-college brethren and the system commonly referred to as Sommerism, however, the truth is, as the facts will positively prove, no man ever more completely reversed himself on any proposition than he has on the question of the church supporting the college. For example, while Brother Totty has been writing to the aged Brother W.W. Otey and defiantly challenging him to deny that, ‘The New Testament law of expediency permits a church of Christ to contribute to a Bible College and orphans home.’”

The charge of “*Sommerite*” has been a tactic to quarantine an opponent for the last hundred years. And, *expediency* has been used as the attempt to biblically justify their projects. *Where you find the one, you find the other.*

Thus, the “yellow tag of quarantine” is applied. Briney tried to dismiss the opposition as not worthy of recognition. A year after Briney’s response to Sommer, the following caustic denunciation of critics was made during a debate on instrumental music. Keep in mind that Stark also defended the *Missionary Society* and was just as caustic on that subject. He said—

“No doubt things he is incapable of comprehending look foolish to him. Let the reader turn back to my argument on who causes the division among us. Of course they would not divide if they could have their own way. The committee who advised the removal of the organ from the Seventeenth and Olive Street Church, St. Louis, were in favor of instrumental music, but, knowing the stubbornness and hatefulness of those opposed, advised putting it out at the time; but it was afterwards put in, and is now used by all the churches in St. Louis, with no discord. Who made the fuss at the beginning? It was evidently the fogies, who found that when it was used in the family of all the saints, it could not be kept out of the assembly.” J.Carroll Stark from the Stark/Warlick Debate on instrumental music, 1903, page 138.

In the beginning of his first affirmative, the first speech of the debate, Stark spent a great deal of time accusing those who objected to instrumental music in worship as being the ones who were causing division among brethren. That is what he meant by telling the reader to go back to his previous argument explaining just who was causing division.

Such accusations, like those of Loos, Pendleton, Briney and Stark were being presented years after them, as we just noticed with W.L.Totty, when some brethren started pushing for human societies all over again. The “yellow tag of quarantine” was trotted out by the liberals early in the

1950s in order to smear and isolate the opposition. The editorial page of the *Gospel Advocate* of December 9, 1954 quoted, with the approval of the editor, the following suggestion by one brother—

“I trust you will not consider me presumptuous if I suggest that perhaps the writers for the *Gospel Advocate* might wisely spearhead a movement to quarantine those preachers who today are sowing seeds of discord among the brotherhood and to thus prevent further divisions.”

Mike Willis and Dan King are the modern counterparts of these individuals from the past. No one has been more caustic in their responses to critics than have Mike and Dan while they use the same arguments of justification for the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* as were used for the liberal practices of the past.

But, the tactics of the society advocates went beyond vicious personal attacks. Charges were leveled against the critics in various ways—

“But advocates of the Society never tired of putting the Society on the plane of expediency, and then insisting that the whole controversy over missionary societies was one of which plan to adopt. As a means of justifying themselves, charges of inconsistency were laid at the door of the Society’s enemies who, it was said, were guilty themselves of working through human organizations.” Earl West, *The Search For The Ancient Order*, vol. 2, p. 62.

“Again, advocates of the Society affirmed its opposers were inconsistent in that they printed papers while having no divine authority for such. Moses E. Lard was never too hearty a devotee of the Societies, although he could never refrain from the belief they did have a right to exist. To him, it was similar to a paper, so he wrote:

‘I am printing a *Quarterly*, the avowed object of which is the propagation and defense of the gospel. But this *Quarterly* is unknown to the New Testament. Should I therefore abandon it? Not an honest man in our ranks will affirm it. But this *Quarterly* has precisely the same origin which the Society has—human discretion, and not only proposes, but actually does, the same work. If, now, my *Quarterly* is right in itself, that is, if it has a just and legitimate existence, and may lawfully do the work it proposes, the man does not live who can show that a missionary society *per se* wrong, and may not cause the gospel to be preached. With emphasis, I plant myself here, and maintain that the same argument which would rebate a missionary society because it originates not in the New Testament, and would deny to it the right to cause the gospel to be preached, must of necessity rebate the *Quarterly*. **And in candor I must go further and say I have no respect for the dullness which perceives not the analogy nor the casuistry which denies to the resulting conclusion its just weight.** (emphasis mine, MB). ’” Earl West, *Search For The Ancient Order*, vol. II, pp. 64-65. Moses E. Lard quote from *Lard’s Quarterly*, Vol. IV, April, 1867, p. 151.

Note also that present advocates of human societies make exactly the same accusation against their critics: inconsistency in using “papers” to teach. As I have said before, the same arguments, attitudes and tactics are being repeated today by those who advocate human societies for evangelism and worship. More evidence of that will be detailed in pages to come.

Various issues plagued brethren from the 1920s to the 1940s, many of which were carbon copies of issues that had gone before. Human organizations, societies and schemes of various kinds were hotly disputed, from church support of colleges to homes for orphans, as well as doctrinal issues. There was rather a hiatus in the early forties during World War II. After that, these issues erupted again with renewed energy.

Events were crystallized with the introduction of the *Herald of Truth* at the beginning of the 1950s. Articles were written both pro and con; prominent figures took sides. Public debates were arranged. However, it was soon evident that the same attitudes, arguments, conduct and outcome would be the same as it had been a hundred years before. In a throwback to Alexander Campbell, J.D. Thomas contended in 1958—

“The sponsoring-church method is an expedient, advantageous method and has resulted in more mission work being done than was possible without it. It is in the same category as the Sunday-School method of teaching, and as the individual communion cup method of partaking of the fruit of the vine – there is no binding pattern that vitiates any of them. Each is the most expedient method yet devised for getting the pattern requirement (to which it is a specific) accomplished. And unless we use these scriptural, expedient methods we will be in the same class as a Texan who might start to New York to preach – riding a donkey! He would lose so much efficiency that he would actually work contrary to God’s purposes. Christians are supposed to *want* the kingdom to grow — and rapidly. They are logically obligated to use the most expedient scriptural methods possible.” *We Be Brethren*, p. 86.

That couldn’t have been better said by Campbell, Pendleton, Loos or Briney so long before. Emphasis is placed on “see how much *good* is being done.” That is naught but “the end justifies the means” viewpoint of classic *rationalism* that entangled Campbell.

But, what are some of the “biblical” arguments used by Thomas? Here is a sample, one that we still hear at the present time *and for the same purpose*—

“At Ephesus, Paul ‘reasoned daily in the school of Tyrannus’ as a means of teaching God’s will (Acts 19:9). Paul’s decision to make use of a private school as an expedient means of preaching the gospel was

no doubt optional to him." *We Be Brethren*, p. 61.

The fact is, Paul did not join the faculty of any organization, school or otherwise. There is no evidence that the "school of Tyrannus" was some "private school" teaching either secular or religious subjects. Consulting commentaries and "experts" will uncover only speculation about what it refers to. The "experts" use "probably," "perhaps," "maybe," "it is supposed," and other such terms to preface their imaginings. As a sample, here are a couple of commentators on the subject—

"Who this Tyrannus was, is not known. It is probable that he was a Jew, who was engaged in this employment, and who might not be unfavorable to Christians. In his school, or in the room which he occupied for teaching, Paul instructed the people when he was driven from the synagogue. Christians at that time had no churches, and they were obliged to assemble in any place where it might be convenient to conduct public worship." Barnes Commentary on Acts.

"It was a bold step to gather the disciples in 'the school of Tyrannus.' He was probably a Greek professor of rhetoric or lecturer on philosophy, and Paul may have hired his hall, to the horror, no doubt, of the Rabbis. It was a complete breaking with the synagogue and a bold appeal to the heathen public." McClaren's Exposition on Acts.

One commentator says that Tyrannus was probably a Greek and another that he was a Jew. No one has any idea as to the identity of Tyrannus, whether or not he was even alive at the time, the nature of the "school," where or what the "school" was or any other details. It is only speculation. All we know is that it was a *place* in the city which carried that name. We are all aware that even at present time, there are any number of congregations across this country that rent rooms or auditoriums in schools, movie theatres and business buildings in which they have Lord's day assemblies or even gospel meetings. That does not prove a local church has become a part of *Harkins Theater* because they rent space for meetings. Or to say that a certain individual preached for two years in *Harkins Theater* means that he joined the business organization with that name. Like J.D. Thomas, brethren imagine "organizations" where there are none, as well as refuse to recognize organizations where they do exist.

In the mid-1950s, liberal brethren formed *The Gospel Press*. It was an imaginative enterprise to produce articles for national magazines. It would be supported solely by individuals, an attempt to activate the universal church; local churches were excluded from sending money to the organization. However, it had no more merit nor scriptural authority than the *Herald of Truth*. It wasn't long before they began accepting money from local churches. They used the same arguments for societies

that were used before and only limited, at first, their support to come from the universal church. They used the “individuals only” ploy at the time in an attempt to calm those who opposed the Herald of Truth. When that did not work as they thought, they then started asking for congregational support. The justification for their organization remained the same either way. So, it does not impress me when brethren form a human organization for evangelism and insist that it will be supported by individuals only while using the same arguments that every other such project has used. Such organization then reproduce themselves and soon find that the arguments they have been using will justify getting into local church treasuries. *Look at history!*

W.W. Otey, in an article titled “Then and Now,” *Gospel Guardian*, May 27, 1954, said the following. It is certainly true of then and *now*—

“In that fight of yester-year the digressives confused tuning forks, song-books, religious journals, and meeting houses with instrumental music and the societies. They attacked the character of the men who opposed them; they hated every man and publication who dared speak a word against what they were doing . . . . Again, I know of no case where those who started on a course of innovation ever yielded for the sake of peace and unity. I wish I could express some hope that the worst will not come. But I have little on which to base such a hope. More than sixty years ago, men of faith begged the innovationists to give up the things which they themselves said were mere matters of opinion and thus save the church from ruin. I have no recollection of even one man who did so; but actually they jeered and laughed at the brethren who entreated them . . . . The thing now troubling the church is the same thing that troubled the church then—**INSTITUTIONALISM**. That grows out of trying to make the church function **universally**. Our digressive brethren reached their full-grown institutional status only after many, many years of development.”

Otey could not have described current conditions any better! Just go down line by line of what he says and make the comparison as to arguments, tactics and the attitudes we are hearing today.

### The Present Time

A valid question is, “what is the work of the church?” Are we speaking of the universal or local churches? Mike Willis affirms that he knows the differences. Here is what he says on page 128 of their book—

“Let us remember what is wrong with the missionary society—that it was supported by church contributions to do the work God gave the church to do. It was a human institution supported by church contributions which did the work of those churches which made contributions to it.”

In the first place, the missionary society was supported by *both* individuals *and* congregations, not congregations alone. Secondly, the society was a human institution doing the work of the local churches, which Mike admits to. But, what is the work God gave the local churches to do? Supporting gospel preaching? That is what was involved in the missionary society and Mike says the society, a human institution, had no right to do the work God gave local churches to do. Yet, Mike defends the right of human institutions to do work that God gave local churches to do as long as no money from local church treasuries support the human institution. Thus, with his argumentation it is not that it is a human institution doing work God gave local churches to do that makes it wrong.

The real question is, What is there that is peculiar to the local churches that would exclude a human institution from doing the same thing? Is there anything excluded? We will see in this article that Mike does not exclude anything peculiar to local churches, *including the Lord's Supper*. Further, the *GOTF* has laid the foundation of arguments that would *not exclude* local church contributions to human institutions to do such work of local churches as Mike says the missionary society was doing. We will also see that to establish their position they use the same arguments and tactics as those who created the missionary society. Let's look at the evidence.

To begin, I want to reinsert for emphasis the comments of Earl West that we looked at before. It involves points of view that have existed since the mid 1800s and we need to keep it in mind. He says—

"The basic apology for the Society Pendleton based upon his conception of the church universal, and in this he followed closely the reasoning of Alexander Campbell. No man is prepared to see the Society as Pendleton saw it without beginning where Pendleton began. First, he filled his mind with the thought of the church in its universal aspect, ignoring for the time being the local church. God gave to the church - in its universal sense - the responsibility to convert the world. But God did not give the *method* by which the church - in its universal sense - was to convert the world. Therefore, whatever method the church - in its universal sense - uses is acceptable. The method is a matter of expediency. The church universal is left free to decide for itself. . . . The church universal was charged with preaching to the world, but God did not provide its method; therefore, it was left to human expediency to devise the best plan. This, of course, completely overlooked the fact that the church universal was given a method, the method being the work of the local congregation." *Search for the Ancient Order*, Vol. 2, pp. 55, 62.

The journey toward human institutions has always begun with focusing

on the “universal” church in some aspect or another. Factually, “universal” is a term that identifies all of God’s people of all eras wherever they may be as each one relates to God as individuals. “Local” describes individual Christians organized in geographical locations and identified by their relationship with one another as a local congregation. However, we generally think of the universal church as referring to all *living* Christians, everywhere in the world, at any point in time.

With no organization of the whole universal church on the one hand and organizations of Christians in local congregations, the leaders of the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* propose what they consider to be an organization smaller than the universal church and other than the local church. Yet, their position is the same as that described by West. *It is the basis of their entire case for the Foundation’s current practices.*

The first claim made for the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* is that it is only “individuals” acting within the general framework of the universal church! As long as no organization is formed that ties together *all* Christians, *universally*, nor ties local churches together in support of something like the *Herald of Truth*, they are free to construct any organization they want. Such organizations would be simply *expediencies* of teach, preach, evangelism, worship or just to “let our light shine,” as one *GOTF* supporter publicly preached. Such an “organization” can do everything a local church can do. Though it is insisted that the *Foundation* does not meet on the first day of the week to sing, pray, preach, take up a contribution or observe the Lord’s Supper, there is nothing to stop them from doing all of that, considering their arguments. You think otherwise? Well, Mike tells us this on page 328 of their latest book—

“Let’s be sure that we see what is at stake in this discussion about collectivities. The *Guardian of Truth* is not the only collectivity that has collective singing, praying, or teaching the Bible. Once the principle is established by the new Sommerites, the application will have to be consistently applied and when it is other works presently being done will be attacked as well, if these brethren abide by the Bible command to apply the faith of Jesus Christ without partiality (1 Tim. 5: 20-21). Here is a partial list of examples in which I know other brethren are working collectively . . . Brethren partaking of the Lord’s supper while on a trip to an area in which there is no congregation.”

Mike uses the word “collective” to describe an *organization* like the local church or the *Guardian of Truth Foundation*, or *just two or more disciples doing something together*. Mike tells us that just individual

Christians can have the Lord's Supper *as a "collective"* that is not a local church but is still a "collective." And, the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* is such a "collective" of individuals, we are told. The *GOTF* may not have Sunday assemblies with singing, prayer, preaching, collection and the Lord's Supper at present time, but they have laid the foundation for it all and cannot condemn it! Indeed, here is part of what Mike said in a letter to brother Frost, printed in *Brotherhood Societies*, page 78—

"2. Is it sinful for some human organization to offer prayer at its meetings? Inasmuch as you imply that any human organization which engages in worship is sinful (as per your second question), is it sinful for a P.T.O. organization to open and/or close its meeting with prayer? Is it sinful for a baccalaureate exercise to have a prayer to open and close its meeting? If not, could they also sing praises to God, hear the word of God preached, or engage in some other form of worship? Now, if you admit that this secular organization can engage in these forms of worship, please tell me why they could not take up a collection and observe the Lord's Supper? Maybe you can enlighten us regarding these matters."

There it is. Notice that Mike does not make any criticism nor condemnation of the practices he describes! He affirms the scriptural right of "secular organizations" to do all of these things. Any "collectivity" can do just what a local church does on the first day of the week, including having the Lord's Supper and taking up a collection, because *none of those things are limited to a local church assembly*. At the same time that he takes such positions as these, Mike also says the following—

"Brother Don Martin is very bold saying there is "a new church, Guardian of Truth Foundation. "Now where did he get his information? He just made it up out of thin air. He just asserted it and was in hopes his reader would agree with him. His assertion is not proof. He did not quote from anyone associated with *Truth Magazine* that claimed Guardian of Truth Foundation is "a new church." IF such were so, it does not meet on the first day of the week (Acts 20: 7; 1 Cor. 16: 1-4). It does not take up a collection upon the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16: 1-4). It does not eat the Lord's supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20: 7). It has no elders or deacons (Acts 14: 23; 20: 28-32; 1 Pet. 5: 1-4). How can it be a church when it does not do what a church is supposed to do?" p. 378

Now, reader, just compare the two previous quotes from Mike with this one. While contending for the right of "secular collectivities/ organizations" doing all of those things he lists, he insists that the *Foundation* is not doing them. Okay, I will accept that they are not doing them at the present time. But, he doesn't see anything wrong with their doing them, either. We will look more closely at this point shortly. But, I wonder just how long it will be before the *Foundation* does *all* of what he denies it is doing now?

This claim of liberty of opinion, silence and expediency is not new. Here is a warning by H..Leo Boles in 1939 at a meeting with Christian Church leaders. He spoke for an hour and a half on *The Way of Unity*. It was later published in a tract which records Bole's words on page 19—

"'Areas of silence,' 'Liberty of opinion,' and 'the realm of expediency' are trite phrases used by leaders in the 'Christian Church' and have been coined and put on a par with the teachings of the New Testament. It is just another way of saying that the opinions of men may guide the people of God and that some of the people of God should submit to the opinions of men. There was unity with God's people so long as they respected the slogan, 'Where the scriptures speak, we speak and where the scriptures are silent, we are silent' but when brethren began to claim the authority to speak where the New Testament is silent, and impose their opinions upon other brethren, division and separation were the inevitable results."

Just so, the argument of the *GOTF* is that in this "twilight" zone between the entire "universal church," as a body, and local churches, is the area of individual conduct which has neither prescribed nor forbidden organizations. When and where the Bible is silent there is no prohibition; therefore, we can do what we want to do.

Seeing that these individuals, in the "universal church" are given the task of taking the truth to the whole world, they may thus form themselves, as expediencies, into organizations smaller than the entire "universal church," and other than a local church, by which they can fulfill "their individual responsibility of evangelism and worship." Notice what Dan King says about this—

"A corporation is simply a large group of individuals who pool their efforts and talent together to accomplish tasks. Although it has legal status and enjoys certain benefits under the law, still it is only a group of individuals working together to accomplish common tasks." WHAR, page 30.

"But we are going to continue quietly our work of publishing and selling religious books and literature through our bookstores and at our lectureships, acting not as a subsidiary of the church but as individuals engaged in a legitimate business enterprise." Page 36.

"The fact of the matter is that the Guardian of Truth Foundation is an arrangement in which a few individuals work together to perform their individual responsibilities." Page 125.

There are more such statements in their book but these should be clear enough. On this basis, the position then shifts to a claim of individual *liberty/expediency*. Just like brethren a century before, we heard the liberty/expediency claim constantly through the years dealing with the institutional brethren. There was nowhere else for liberals to go seeing

they had no other justification for what they were wanting to do. I agree that we have liberties in carrying out specific instructions that are addressed to individuals who preach the gospel and edify others, *as long as they are truly expedients*. But, just to claim something to be expedient does not establish it as an expedient.

In keeping with the “individuals only” assertion, it is insisted that I Timothy 3:15, the “pillar and ground of the truth,” refers to the *universal church*, not local churches. It is a major foundation of the *GOTF* argument. Which is it, universal or local? Seeing so much depends on understanding this passage, we need to take some space with it here.

I Timothy 3 begins with qualifications of elders and deacons. These offices apply only to a local church. The *same qualifications* apply everywhere to *every local church*, not just Ephesus. Titus chapter one also gives us a list of the same qualifications and applied to “every city.” Peter addressed his first epistle to Christian residing in a large area of that part of the world, I Peter 1:1, saying to elders wherever they might be, “tend the flock of God which is among you,” I Peter 5:1-4. As in Acts 20:28, the term “flock” is used to refer to a local church. Paul appointed elders in “every church,” Acts 14:23. These qualifications have meaning only to local churches and they apply equally to *all local churches* where there are men who meet the qualifications.

Immediately following the qualifications of elders and deacons for *local churches* in I Timothy 3, verse 14 begins with “these things write I.” What things? Well, the “things” must include the qualifications *he has just written!* That is the context of verse 15. He continues:

“These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

Paul specifies that his just stated instructions tells them of proper action and conduct in local churches where these elders would be. The conduct (behaviour) as elders has meaning only on a local basis of a congregation. That is the way God arranged His organization.

The position that I Timothy 3:14-15 refers to the universal church and not local churches is taken for the same reason others have taken it in the past and to justify *the same thing*, human organizations. We have already seen that J.B. Briney, in the debate with W.W. Otey, used this same argument in support of Missionary Societies; *it was his very first*

*argument in his first affirmative.* He says, after quoting I Timothy 3:15—

“Now, the way in which the church is the pillar and ground of the truth, is to sustain it. Preach it in the world. Carry it to the children of men, unto the uttermost parts of the earth. This presents to our mind the great purpose and function of the body of Christ, or the church of the living God, or the kingdom of heaven. Now, my dear friends, I think it is obvious to every mind that in this regard the church cannot act as a whole. I take it that the term is used in this passage in its general sense, and as equivalent to the body of Christ. It is not an organized body, - the church in this general sense, but it embraces all those who believe in and obey our blessed Lord. Now, I repeat that the body of Christ, or the church, in this comprehensive and general sense, cannot act in carrying out this commission, as a whole, that is, the whole church, everybody, cannot arise and go to preach the Gospel. Well, now, how is it to be done then? And just here I lay down this principle, and it is to constitute the foundation of nearly my whole argument upon this question. I read as follows: ‘When a thing is commanded to be done, and the method of doing it is not prescribed, those commanded are at liberty to carry out the command, and they are to act under the principle laid down by Paul in I. Cor. XIV., 39 and 40....Let all things be done decently and in order.’” Pages 161-162.

Briney continues by insisting that the only rule is “decently and in order.” By this he attempted to establish that the *Missionary Society* was nothing more than expediency in fulfilling a duty to proclaim the gospel. Further, notice how he describes this at the beginning of his speech—

“I affirm that the use of them is authorized in the new Testament Scriptures, and pleasing to God. What are they? They are voluntary organizations composed of Christian people who are banded together for the promotion of the cause of Christ. These organizations are made up of men and women with the love of God in their hearts, and with a desire, under Christ to advance the interests of His kingdom.”

That is all these missionary organizations are we are told by Briney, just individual Christians working together for the cause of Christ. That is *exactly* what Dan King insisted in the quotations we have already seen. But, Mike and Dan are not the only ones insisting on a defense based on I Timothy 3:15. With the obvious approval and encouragement of the *Foundation*, an article by Al Diestelkamp is included in *We Have A Right, Revised*, page 361. He says—

“To respond to the argument against such ‘collectivities’ based on I Timothy 3:15, please note that the apostle did not refer to the local church as the ‘pillar and ground of the truth.’ The ‘house of God’ is the universal church. Yes, the local church is to support the truth because it is part of the ‘house of God,’ as are individual Christians.”

*Look at what he says:* The “house of God” is the universal church and *local churches are part of* the “house of God.” That couldn’t have

been better said by Alexander Campbell, J.B. Briney or J.D. Thomas who insisted that the universal church was composed of both individuals *and churches*. If local churches, *as local churches*, are part of the universal church and there is nothing to prohibit the universal church from forming organizations through which evangelistic work can be done, then nothing is wrong with forming such organizations as the *American Christian Missionary Society* supported by both individuals AND churches! Al has made *exactly the same argument* as Campbell, Pendleton and Briney for the *Missionary Society* of 1849. And, with the *GOTF* using that argument, there is no way to stop local churches from forming evangelistic societies based on “liberty/expediency.”

### **Just Individuals or Organization?**

To begin with, the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* wants brethren to think that it is just a few individuals working together, as we have already seen. They insist on that so they can claim that the *Foundation* is just like Paul and his companions who worked together in preaching the gospel. Recall what Dan said in WHAR—

“The fact of the matter is that the Guardian of Truth Foundation is an arrangement in which a few individuals work together to perform their individual responsibilities.” Page 125.

The April, 2008, *Newsletter*, put out by *Foundation* Board member Andy Alexander, puts it this way—

“We are a group of Christians aspiring to teach the word of God, to inform brethren regarding the Lord’s work in various parts of the country, and to strengthen and encourage Christians. In addition to the bookstores, we also publish Truth Magazine.”

Yet, while the King/Willis books insist on one hand that the *GOTF* is “just a few individuals working together,” on the other hand they say the *Foundation* is a corporation like a bank or any other business, a human institution. See that in this argument from Dan—

“On what ground do brother Frost and his colleagues charge the Guardian of Truth Foundation with sin? Because we accept contributions from individuals, have given away tracts on rare occasions to Philippine brethren, and conduct an annual lectureship. Is there any other legitimate business enterprise that (1) cannot accept contributions from individuals and (2) cannot give away its product? If several of us pooled our money to organize an automobile dealership and some kind-hearted brother gave us \$30,000 to help us in our business, would that be sinful? Then, if several years later, our dealership became prosperous enough to give some poor brother a car, would that be sinful? Of course not! Indeed, we would charge any brother who so thought with being ridiculous. Furthermore, we would hasten to tell him to mind his own

business (1 Thess. 4:11) and to keep his nose out of our affairs.” Page 137

When it is advantageous, they are just a few individuals working together, like Paul and Barnabas. Then, when it better suits their interests, they are a business like an *automobile agency*. We will notice shortly that they also say the *Foundation* is a *human institution* and not just a few individuals doing something together. They easily slip from one position to the other depending on what needs to be defended at the moment.

Certainly, the fact is the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* is not “just a few individuals working together.” They attempt to make it sound as innocuous and innocent as they can by expressing it that way, which you will recall is *exactly the way Briney said the same thing in defending the Missionary Society*. It is like saying that a *local church* is “just a few individuals working together.” That was the point of view that Charles Holt and his followers insisted on years ago. Of course, any organization is composed of *people* whether it is a business corporation or a local congregation. But a local congregation is more than “just a few individuals” working together, and the same can be said for a Business Corporation such as a bank or the *Guardian of Truth Foundation*. Apparently, more will have to be said on this, though it should already be understood by all Christians.

The word “church” is a collective noun and a local church is a single entity with form, structure and boundaries. Each congregation is commanded and put in order by God, I Corinthians 12:18, 24. God specifically commanded local congregations just as we see them in the New Testament. Notice that Dan refers to the *Foundation* by the singular pronoun, “it.” He recognizes that “it,” the *Guardian of Truth Foundation*, is more than just a few individuals doing something together but rather “it” is a single entity, an organized body, itself. A local church is also referred to as “it” in scripture, I Timothy 5:16, “let the church be not charged that it may relieve them who are widows indeed.” And, this is a rule that applied to all local churches, not just Ephesus! Paul commands individual responsibilities as compared to that of the local church, distinct from individuals. We tried to get some brethren to see that fifty years ago!

Frank Puckett, in the *Arlington Meeting*, a meeting of conservative and institutional brethren in 1968, said the following, page 155—

“Since the word church always denotes an assembly, and since that term is given two extensions, it follows that there are two kinds of

assemblies. There is a general assembly and there is a local assembly. The general, or universal, assembly of God's spiritual children with their spiritual head, Jesus Christ, in a spiritual relation, and in a spiritual realm (Eph. 2:4-6; Heb. 12:22, 23). This general assembly has no worldly character nor earthly place of assembly; it has neither earthly organization nor collective function. It does not and cannot by divine arrangement function as an earthly coordinated collectivity.

"On the other hand the local church does have an earthly assembly in an earthly location characterized by an organizational structure and ordained to function as a collectivity in coordinated group action. Though composed of the same people—God's spiritual children, the nature and function of these two assemblies is quite different. That difference must be recognized and respected."

The local church is identified by other terms than the word, "church." Whereas the "universal" church is referred to by the word "body," it is so only in a spiritual sense, figurative instead of literal. The local church is also called by the same term but with another view than that of the universal body—I Corinthians 12:27, "*Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof.*" The genitive case, "of Christ," denoting relationship. Each local church is a body in a particular sense, having literal members with different functions, just like a human body. They make up *a functioning unit*. The local church is also called a "flock," singular, with attendant overseers, Acts 20:28, I Peter 5:1-4. The word, *flock*, is also used to describe the universal church with Jesus as the chief Shepherd. In the local sense of *flock*, there are humans who are the shepherds, Acts 20:28. And, there are other such terms that describe a local church.

In this local church, qualified men oversee the function of the group. Indeed, the word "bishop" means one who sees that things done by others are done correctly, i.e., done according to scripture. They are to tend, feed and protect the congregation while superintending the work of the entire local body. But, elders are tied to a particular local congregation, "*tend the flock of God which is among you,*" Peter says. There are also to be "deacons" who serve in a special capacity to carry out work, where they are deacons, under the oversight of the elders of that local church. If there is no one qualified for these offices, the function of the congregation is by mutual consent and agreement of the members.

The individuals who make up a local church are specifically identified with that particular congregation in ways that do not exist between them and any other congregation. In Romans 16:1, Phoebe was identified as a

member of the church in Cenchreae, the port city of Corinth, even though she was in Rome at the time and was commended to the brethren there. Cenchreae and Corinth were only seven miles apart, but yet were distinct churches from one another. Epaphroditus was a messenger from the church in Philippi, Philippians 2:25, and did not change that relationship just because he was in Rome with Paul for a short while.

Thus, Christians are identified *by their membership* in a particular local church. Because a Christian attends a local church assembly where he is not a member, while on vacation, business trip or a gospel meeting, does not make him a member of that congregation. Preachers who go somewhere to preach in a gospel meeting do not automatically become members of the congregation where they are for a week. The agreement a preacher has with some congregation in a gospel meeting is limited to a specific kind of work for a designated period of time. Some thirty-five years ago, Ed Fudge told me that wherever he went for a Gospel meeting that it made him, automatically, a member of that congregation. Look where he wound up.

Further, local churches have distinctive and identifiable “names.” We can read of the church of God at Corinth and the seven churches of Asia in Revelation 2-3 who are named as distinctly different, organized groups from one another. This identifies the organized entities by name and location, which in turn identifies the connection between individuals who made up each of those congregations.

Each local church has a treasury of money contributed by the members of that local church. It is not a universal treasury. Money belongs to the individual Christian to do with as he chooses. But, when he places it in the common treasury, it is no longer his but God’s, to be used for His purposes, Acts 5:1-4. The instructions of Paul in I Corinthians 16:1-3 show that Paul had the right to call for a collection but he did not have the right to step in to take control of it. He told them to approve who they wanted to carry “your bounty” to Jerusalem. Collected money was to be used for benevolence, support of gospel preachers and teaching, I Corinthians 9:7-14, Philippians 2:25, II Corinthians 11:8, as well as other necessary expenses incurred by the congregation. The preaching supported from the treasury was to be both local and world-wide as seen in above passages and I Thessalonians 1:7-8. A treasury of money contributed by the members of that church was specifically instructed from God.

Members were to work together toward common goals; notice this in I Corinthians 12:12-27, Romans 12:9-19. There were to be no divisions but rather they were to be perfected together in the same mind and judgment, I Corinthians 1:10. Such instructions as these could only be fulfilled on a local level where direct and personal contact exists.

God arranged the local church this way. He planned it, formed it, named it, specified its form of organization and its function.

The *Guardian of Truth Foundation* is an organization, a corporate body, *an entity of itself, an "it,"* with a *board of directors* who oversee its function. It has its own particular *name and location*. The *special members of the company* are identified as belonging to the *Foundation* regardless of whether or not they are engaged in some joint activity or not. It is a relationship within the corporation that no one else has outside of it. No one can be a member of that organization unless appointed by the Board of Directors. Mike puts it this way on page 84 of their book—

"Therefore, I feel the need to reply to them in defense of the foundation of which I am a member."

Mike is a *member of something*, in this case, "*the foundation*." It is obvious that he knows that. Dan King and others are *members* of the organization known as the *Guardian of Truth Foundation*; he, with others, make up the Board of Directors of the organization, who see that things done by others are done correctly, while others are just employees whose work is overseen by the Board. (Doesn't that sound something like a local church with bishops and members?) The very word, "Foundation," as used here, is a collective noun denoting an organization, singular, with plural members.

The 2008 *GOTF* Lectureship featured Steve Wolfgang as the moderator of the *Open Forum*. He is a member of the *GOTF Board of Directors*. He made a clear statement as follows:

"We are a human institution. . .an organization."

That is taken from the tape downloaded from *GOT* website. In a letter about another preacher and sent to several preachers on September 1, 2008, Tom O'Neal says the following:

"He acts like just now some of us admit that Truth Magazine/Guardian of Truth Foundation is a human organization. I wonder where he has been? I don't know of any brethren that have ever thought otherwise."

Dan King states in *We Have A Right*, page 67, the following—

"We agree also that Guardian of Truth Foundation is a human institution, and would argue that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with that."

Now, let's recall what we noted from Dan before—

"A corporation is simply a large group of individuals who pool their efforts and talent together to accomplish tasks. Although it has legal status and enjoys certain benefits under the law, still it is only a group of individuals working together to accomplish common tasks." WHAR, page 30.

"But we are going to continue quietly our work of publishing and selling religious books and literature through our bookstores and at our lectureships, acting not as a subsidiary of the church but as individuals engaged in a legitimate business enterprise." Page 36.

"The fact of the matter is that the Guardian of Truth Foundation is an arrangement in which a few individuals work together to perform their individual responsibilities." Page 125.

Now, which is it? Just a group of individuals working together to fulfill their individual responsibilities to preach and worship or is *GOTF a human institution, an organization, an entity*? It is evident that they know, as we have pointed out, that the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* is just that, a human institution, an organization, an entity of itself. It is far more than just a group of individuals doing something together. Yet, the arguments they use are based on just individuals doing something together, such as Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Silas, etc. Did Paul and Barnabas compose a human institution, an entity, an "it"? The answer to that should be obvious but they seem to have great difficulty in seeing it.

The *Foundation* has a treasury to fund the work it does, a treasury funded not only by profit from its business enterprises but also by contributions, not investments, from individual Christians who are not members of the corporate body. The monies they receive are donations from the "universal church."

Then there is the annual "Lectureship" in Bowling Green, Kentucky. In spite of Mike's position that each local church is fully capable of doing all God requires in evangelism "*in the community where it is located,*" the *Foundation* Board placed the "lectureship" right in the middle of a number of conservative churches in the city and county. Why is that not an encroachment on the geographical "community" of several local churches? When there are so many churches having meetings, what is the imperative that calls for *GOTF* to have one? Since the *GOTF* lectureship is, they claim, a fulfillment of their responsibility to take the gospel to the whole world, why don't they have it somewhere in Montana where there

is no local church for hundreds of miles and they won't invade the "community territory" of any local church? Is their "lectureship" in Bowling Green some sort of accusation that the local churches in the city are not doing their job of preaching in spite of the fact that these other churches have such lectureships? But, of course, no one should really find it strange that they chose Bowling Green where one of their bookstores is located. Recall what we noted above from Dan King—

"But we are going to continue quietly our work of publishing and selling religious books and literature through our bookstores and at our lectureships..."

Look closely at that! They are *selling* religious books and literature "through our bookstore and at our lectureships." This is why they remind people at their lectureships to be sure to go by the bookstore. They have a lectureship in Bowling Green, which is not needed to begin with, to enhance their business profit. I frankly charge the *Foundation* with making merchandise of the gospel.

The name of the whole affair is *The Truth Magazine Lectureship* put on by the *Guardian of Truth Foundation*. Here is a nationally advertised gospel meeting that promotes and glorifies a human institution that in turn increases the influence and fattens the coffers of said organization, using the gospel of Christ to do it! Yet, here is another fact. Mike says—

"Therefore, I feel the need to reply to them in defense of the foundation of which I am a member (to give scriptural authority for what I am doing) and to defend what I believe to be gospel truth regarding things permitted by divine authority (the right of foundations such as the Guardian of Truth Foundation to exist). I am speaking of matters of divine liberty-things authorized, but not required, permitted but not essential." Page 84.

Notice that he is defending something that is "permitted but not essential." He insists it is a matter of *expediency, liberty*. Keep that in mind while you read what Dan said in a book he and Leon Boyd wrote in 1992 titled, *Responsibility and Authority in the Spiritual Realm*, pages 28-29. This book is published by the *Guardian of Truth Foundation*—

"For something to qualify as a scriptural expedient it must edify (build up) the church, not tear down (1 Cor. 10:23-33). Division is destructive to all that the church stands for (Jn. 17:20; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:1-4). If a thing produces division in the body of Christ and alienates brethren from one another, it ought to be left off unless it is a demand of heaven (in which case it doesn't fall into the area of 'expediency' anyway).

The Missionary Society of 1849 was touted as an 'expedient' method of getting churches to cooperate in preaching the gospel to the world. Leaving aside the question of whether it was scriptural or not, was it 'expedient' for its promoters to divide the brotherhood over what *they* considered an expedient? Were there not other 'expedient methods' that all could have agreed upon? See Hosea 4:17."

Dan is criticizing the "promoters" of "expediencies," like those who promoted the *Missionary Society*; they pressed matters to division. He is *not* criticizing those who conscientiously *objected* to the societies. Please notice he says that even *if* the *Missionary Society* was a true expedient, it was still wrong to divide the brotherhood over it.

Now, Mike admitted that what they are defending is *expedient but not essential*. I say again, no one, *no one*, would have objected to the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* if they had just stuck with being a publishing business selling a service which they funded from corporate profits. But, they have gone far beyond that. And by promoting their added "expediencies" they have caused widespread division among brethren. *They knew beforehand* that there would be opposition to their lectureship but they have been *determined*, no matter what kind of unrest and division results, that they will have their way. *They obviously consider that their "expediencies" are essential*, just like Campbell and Thomas with their projects. They press their admitted "non-essential expediency" to the alienation of brethren. That isn't even a good business practice. A capable businessman does not alienate a large part of customers over something that is not necessary, something not "essential." Seeing that they are doing this then *there has to be some other motive driving them, a motive they have not revealed up to this time*.

But, let's add another statement from Dan. It is found on page 11 of their book, at the beginning of the first chapter—

"No man has the right or authority to impose his own will upon the consciences of others. Should any man attempt to do so, his efforts ought to be rejected outright and he should be ostracized. In no case should quarreling or fighting about such questions be allowed to disrupt the unity of the churches of Christ."

That sounds much like what he said in 1992. But, there is a difference. In 1992, he was condemning the liberal *promoters* who divided "the brotherhood" with their "expediencies." In 2008 *he is condemning those who object to the "non-essential expediencies" of the Guardian of Truth Foundation*. Quite a turnaround, isn't it? Apparently, it just depends on "whose Ox is being gored" as to what position will be taken.

The entire *Foundation* thinks it has the right to do whatever it decides to do but anyone who objects or is critical is causing division and should be *ostracized*, as Dan states in this quotation! I remind you that attaching a “yellow tag of quarantine” has been the practice of every advocate of human societies for the past hundred and fifty years. Here is another interesting quotation from H. Leo Boles in the tract noted previously—

“...if acting in the ‘realm of silence’ permits one to act for himself, it will permit every one to act for himself. If liberty in opinion will let one organize a missionary society, the same liberty of opinion will let another group of God’s people oppose that society.”

If what they are doing is a matter of personal opinion then I have just as much right to my opinion as do they. Throughout this controversy, going back for years, Mike and others on the board have frequently questioned any critics of the *Foundation*, “Are you drawing lines of fellowship?” *Deja vu!* That is another old tactic of institutional brethren. They want to charge their critics with drawing lines so the critics can just be dismissed and ignored as “troublemakers.” Pitiful! Mike and company, by pressing their unnecessary expediencies, have drawn a line of division and announced that any critics of what they do should be ostracized. Recall what Dan said in 1992—

“Leaving aside the question of whether it was scriptural or not, was it ‘expedient’ for its promoters to divide the brotherhood over what *they* considered an expedient? Were there not other ‘expedient methods’ that all could have agreed upon?”

Dan, you condemn yourself! I want to reinsert the previous quotation by W.W. Otey from 1954 to underscore just what has been said to this point—

“In that fight of yester-year the digressives confused tuning forks, song-books, religious journals, and meeting houses with instrumental music and the societies. They attacked the character of the men who opposed them; they hated every man and publication who dared speak a word against what they were doing . . . . Again, I know of no case where those who started on a course of innovation ever yielded for the sake of peace and unity. I wish I could express some hope that the worst will not come. But I have little on which to base such a hope. More than sixty years ago, men of faith begged the innovationists to give up the things which they themselves said were mere matters of opinion and thus save the church from ruin. I have no recollection of even one man who did so; but actually they jeered and laughed at the brethren who entreated them . . . . The thing now troubling the church is the same thing that troubled the church then—INSTITUTIONALISM. That grows out of trying to make the church function *universally*. Our digressive brethren reached their full-grown institutional status only after many,

many years of development.”

We are in an historical position like Otey was in 1954 and can say the very same things today. Just what the liberals did in the 1800s, as seen before from Pendleton and Briney, Otey’s personal experience, and the announcement in the *Gospel Advocate* in 1954, is just what is happening today. What is it Dan said? “No man has the right or authority to impose his own will upon the consciences of others.” Well, it is the *Foundation* Board who is imposing its will on the consciences of others without regard for the unity of brethren. And after all that, *Dan brings out the yellow tag of quarantine* to tie on anyone who criticizes them! He insists we need to be “ostracized.” *Déjà vu*.

### **Attempting to Activate the Universal Church**

Let’s now enlarge on the longstanding practice by the *Foundation* of soliciting contributions from the universal church for its “business.” In their book, both Dan and Mike admit they have done this but *downplay* the extent and manner of it. However, it is more extensive than they want to admit. The motivation in the appeals by the *Foundation* to contributors is a spiritual one; the *Foundation* is doing good works—

“Donations for this new literature more recently have been sought on a three-year basis (1969, 1970, 1971). A few individuals (probably not more than 50 or 60) have most generously either contributed or pledged about 60 percent of the needed funds. . . . But we need others who will substantially contribute, that this literature publication effort might be carried through to completion.” Cecil Willis, *Truth Magazine*, November 27, 1969.

“Approximately \$100,000 have been spent in the preparation of this class material. . . . A very special word of appreciation is due to those individuals who have made contributions to help to underwrite the cost of preparing this new series of class material. Without the selfless generosity of these brethren and sisters, the preparation of this new series would have been impossible. As is true in most cases, a few had to bear the burden for the many. We had hoped that many hundreds of people would contribute a little each, and thereby make this series possible.” Cecil Willis, TM, August 9, 1973.

“If you wish to make contributions to be used to send tracts or other printed materials to brethren in foreign lands who cannot afford to pay for them themselves, we will be glad to ship them to those requesting them.” Cecil Willis, TM, November 6, 1973.

“Knowing the uncertainty of your contract situation, I know you cannot now make any definite commitment as to what you might be able to contribute to the Foundation to help in my support next year..” Cecil Willis, a letter, TM, April 17, 1975.

(Regarding the book, *Gospel Plan of Salvation* by T.W. Brents) “Recently the Gospel Advocate quit publishing the book and indicated to us that, if we were interested, we could go ahead and reprint the book. To reprint and bind the book will require \$8500-9000. I am convinced that there are enough brethren who want to see this book available to another generation of Christians that they will help us raise the money to reprint this book ... Will you help us by making a donation to print this book?” TM, January 1, 1987.

“For several years, planning has been done in order to produce a set of commentaries on the entire New Testament written by those who are Christians. . . . The project will consist of 15-20 volumes in its final form. Hence, this is a major publication venture for the Guardian of Truth Foundation, costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. Financial planning is already being done to pay for the first books of this series. . . . The guardian of Truth Foundation is committed to this project to underwrite the publishing costs of this series. Already one man has agreed to donate the cost for publishing the volume on 2 Corinthians and his monthly donations are already coming in. We hope that others will want to join with him in contributing money to publish this series of commentaries at the earliest possible day. . . . Through this series of commentaries, we hope that future generations will be able to study the word of God at the feet of men whose knowledge of the Scriptures and doctrinal soundness are impeccable.” Mike Willis and Melvin Curry, TM, July 2, 1987.

These are just instances we know about because they are in print. I can logically assume that many appeals for money have been made on a personal basis. Of course, having gotten the thousands of dollars, or however much it may be, to pay for the cost of putting all such material into print, they will sell that material for a full retail value. *That is pure profit.* There isn’t a business in existence but would love that deal. In the face of the above facts, they now call any accusation that they have received hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations an “outrageous claim.” At the same opening, they attempt to convince their readers that—

“The Guardian of Truth Foundation has not campaigned for individuals to make donations, although we have received some donations at various times through our history.” Page 282.

*Really?* Look at the appeals for money quoted above. *They have,* through their history, “campaigned” for donations from the universal church. Whatever the amount of contributions, or the number of individuals who donate, *the Foundation is not opposed to appealing to every Christian in the world to contribute to it!* Remember the appeal: “We had hoped that many hundreds of people would contribute a little each...” They might as well have said thousands of people or even millions.

In appealing to the “universal” church for contributions—not asking

for business partners nor investors—but donations, the *foundation* will never succeed in getting *all* Christians to contribute. But not *all* Christians or churches contributed to the *Missionary Society*, nor the *Herald of Truth*. All such societies *would* have accepted donations if all Christians everywhere had responded. *They tried!* Just so, the *GOTF* leadership would take the money if they could get every single Christian in the world to contribute to it. And, *they have tried!* Even the *attempt* to activate the universal church through a human organization for evangelism and worship is without Bible authority. *Strangely* enough, Cecil Willis correctly said the following in his debate with Inman—

“He wants to know in the fourth place, would it be all right to have a nationwide broadcast or telecast if the money were sent directly to the preacher. No, Brother Inman. It would not. It surely would not be! There just is not any Bible authority for it, and if you tried to activate the church universal and put on the Herald of Truth through sending it to a preacher, you would have the one-man missionary society. That is what you would have then. Now you have just the sponsoring church missionary society, but if you were to send it to a preacher and make him the agency through whom 2000 churches were going to act, then you would have a one-man missionary society. So that would not be all right. In 2 Corinthians 11:8 the apostle Paul said, ‘I robbed other churches taking wages of them that I might do you service.’ The only thing I know of in the bible that is scriptural to send to a preacher is ‘wages.’ You cannot make him a brotherhood agency.” Page 95.

That was Cecil in 1967 and is the way we properly dealt with liberalism at the time. Notice: he declares that it is equally wrong *even to try to activate* the universal church through one man as it is to try to activate 2000 local churches through one man. Now, *why would it be so wrong to try to activate the universal church through one preacher but perfectly alright to try to activate the universal church through a corporate organization as even Cecil attempted to do?* Sadly, Cecil told the truth in the debate with Inman and yet practiced something else. You can see that in the quotations on the previous pages where he energetically appealed for contributions from the church universal. Mike simply continued the practice his brother started.

There is yet another factor in this. The assertion is made by Mike that when any preacher sends an article to one of the papers, whether *Truth Magazine* or *Gospel Truths*, it is the same as making a monetary contribution to that paper. Recall that this is exactly the same tactic used by the *Missionary Society* men over a hundred years ago, twist the facts to make your critics look inconsistent..

So, *articles equal money* is the argument. Notice in the quotations above that an appeal was made for contributions from *as many as possible*, the universal church, in order that the *Foundation* could send tracts, books and materials overseas. If articles equal money, the books and tracts they send to preachers overseas also equal money because they are just articles of varying lengths written by preachers with money used to produce them. If sending literature is the same as sending money; they could just as well send money to those preachers. Would Mike and Dan oppose a *Missionary Society* if it was supported by calling only on local church members to send contributions for that *Society* to oversee and support gospel preachers? Well, we will let Dan explain that to us, page 118 of their book—

“Luke 8: 1-3 does not give authority for *churches* to support preachers through a missionary society. All that I have argued from this passage is that *individuals* can contribute to some ‘organization’ or ‘collectivity’ through which evangelism and benevolence can be done. If someone wants to present evidence that churches can contribute to such an organization, let him present his evidence. I do not believe there is any such evidence to be found in the New Testament. Consequently, I believe that it is sinful for churches to contribute to such organizations. However, Luke 8: 1-3 is ample proof that individuals did pool their resources through something other than a church to preach the gospel.”

*First*, Dan tells us that “organization” and “collectivity” in their view *mean the same thing*. The *Guardian Of Truth Foundation* is such a “collectivity/organization,” in their view. The local church is also a “collectivity/organization.”

*Second*, he has argued extensively throughout his part of their book that the *local church* is not the *only collectivity*, the *only organization* for evangelism so we can build other organizations *through which to do evangelism*.

*Third*, he says such organizations can only be supported by the universal church; no local churches can contribute.

Given those reasons, I can only conclude that he would accept the *American Christian Missionary Society*, as it was first formed, but supported by individuals only. The organization oversees and produces the preaching and only the “universal church” contributes money. So, what is the thrust of his argument on Luke 8:1-3? It is that any and every individual can contribute to human organizations for those organizations to engage in evangelism. Remember, that argument is found in their book,

*We Have A Right*, as well as the *Revised* version. And, what is the purpose of their books? It is to defend the right of the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* to engage in evangelism and worship, receiving funds from the universal church to do so!

Notice how he expresses his point by saying, “All that I have argued from this passage is that *individuals* can contribute to some ‘organization’ or ‘collectivity’ through which evangelism and benevolence can be done.” Focus on that word “through?” He admits that the *GOTF* is an *organization*, a single entity “through” which *individuals* support evangelism. Based on what both Mike and Dan have argued in *WHARR*, they would accept the *American Christian Missionary Society* if it were funded by individuals only. Here is a statement from Mike found in their book, page 128—

“Let us remember what is wrong with the missionary society—that it was supported by church contributions to do the work God gave the church to do. It was a human institution supported by church contributions which did the work of those churches which made contributions to it.”

That is an interesting bit of information so let’s be clear about what he said. (1) Mike does know that there is “work God gave the church to do,” *meaning local churches*. (2) Neither Mike nor Dan condemn the missionary society as such.

Necessary inference—The thing that was wrong with the missionary society was *not that it was doing the work God gave the local churches to do* but *how it was supported*. If the missionary society had been supported by individuals only, it would have been “scriptural.”

And the grand conclusion is—we are at liberty to form any human institution we can think up to do the work God gave the local churches to do as long as such institutions stay out of local church treasuries.

Let’s make something else clear. Neither the *Missionary Society* nor the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* is a “method” of doing evangelism. They are organizations that use and control methods. Brethren have tried to get this across to institutional advocates for a hundred and fifty years. Marshall Patton said it well as follows—

“The issue is one of *organization*. Two organizations are under consideration: the church with its overseers (elders), and the benevolent institution with its overseers (board of directors). Each must use *methods* in the accomplishment of its purpose. *These organizations are not methods; they use methods!* . . . The ‘Digressives’ argued that the

missionary society was only a *method* by which the gospel was preached. However, the board of directors of the missionary society had to do exactly the *same thing* that God's overseers had to do in executing the great commission, namely: select *methods*. Those acquainted with the digression of a century ago know that the great burden on the part of gospel preachers was that of showing our digressive brethren that their auxiliary organizations, societies, institutions, etc., *were not methods*. Those, like the church, had to select methods for executing the work under consideration." *Searching The Scriptures*, March, 1960.

### Even More Organizations

Ron Halbrook has formed a corporation called "*Help A Neighbor, Inc.*" The *Articles Of Incorporation* state the following—

"ARTICLE II: The purpose for which the corporation known as Help A Neighbor, Inc. is organized is exclusively for charitable and religious purposes. The corporation will give individuals one means to provide Bibles, other religious literature, and related items and services to disadvantaged people. Resources may be used to build church buildings, to extend medical aid, or to meet such needs as building or repairing domiciles. The key to provide for others what they are not able to provide for themselves in the spirit of Matthew 22:19: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' The purpose of the corporation is further limited to the approved activities in section 501(C)(3) of the IRS code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code."

*First*, Halbrook is not just a writer for *Truth Magazine*. He is on the Board of Directors of the *Guardian of Truth Foundation*.

*Second*, if *Help a Neighbor, Inc.* is dissolved, the distribution of any remaining assets will go to the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* or the donors. But the *GOTF* may be the *only* receiver of the assets. Notice below that the *GOTF* is listed first, and it is not stated as "and" the donors, but "or" the donors. Here is Article VII of the charter—

"In the event the corporation dissolves, any remaining assets will be distributed to the Guardian of Truth Foundation or returned to donors in conformity with Section 501(C)(3) of the IRS Code."

The funds in *Help A Neighbor, Inc.* are the direct result of appeals to the universal church to contribute to it for benevolent AND religious work. We will see shortly that this includes evangelism, worship and even support for preachers. The decision as to where and to whom the money goes is in the hands of the corporate directors, whomever they may be; in the current situation, it is Ron Halbrook. This money contributed for religious work may all go to the control of the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* if *Help A Neighbor* is dissolved. It is argued that both corporations are scriptural in organization and practice. It should be clear to everyone that whatever *Help A Neighbor* can do, the *Foundation* can do. They stand or fall alike.

The *GOTF* is already more than just a business. But what we see *Help A Neighbor* doing right now, and will do, the *Foundation* could also do. The justification for it all has already been argued by them.

*Third*, the Bibles and religious literature that will be dispensed by *Help A Neighbor, Inc.* will come from the *GOTF*, increasing the profits and influence of the *Foundation*. Is there anyone who can possibly miss a direct connection between the two corporations? They might as well just admit that *Help A Neighbor, Inc.* is a benevolence and evangelism arm of the *Guardian of Truth Foundation*. So, note the following facts.

(1) Ron's mailouts announcing his project specify support for things to be done focusing on the Philippines. However, the articles of incorporation leave the door open for the same projects to include places anywhere in the world. *Help A Neighbor, Inc.* can go anywhere and everywhere with its projects. With enough money, it becomes a world wide work. So, *Help A Neighbor, Inc.* is to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. That really sounds Biblical, doesn't it?

(2) Ron says, in a general email of November 22, 2007, that "Help A Neighbor exists exclusively for charitable purposes." That isn't so. It is just a ploy. First, Ron's email contradicts the charter of his corporation. According to the articles of incorporation, the work of the corporation will be both "charitable and religious." That is what he filed with the government. Remember, this is what the charter says—

"The purpose for which the corporation known as Help A Neighbor, Inc. is organized is exclusively for charitable and religious purposes. The corporation will give individuals one means to provide Bibles, other religious literature and related items and services to disadvantaged individuals."

The corporation was formed *exclusively* for both "charitable and religious" purposes. That line is immediately followed by the stated intention to distribute "Bibles, other religious literature and related items and services." That is an emphasis on "religious" purposes of the corporation. And, Ron has certainly been busy fulfilling this stated purpose of his corporation. In a "Help A Neighbor Report" issued by email on March 27, 2008, Ron says this—

"We have helped preachers have surgeries, repair vehicles, and bury their dead. One preacher doing a pivotal work in a central location is staggering under a crushing load of debt (about \$4,000) trying to keep his teenage children in school and deal with a 20% loss of income because of the falling dollar. Can we offer funds to help resolve some of his debt? Bibles and other study materials are always needed to enhance our brethren's level of study and their effectiveness in teaching. I owe about \$8,000 right now for Bibles and other materials already distributed and some to be distributed during the trip starting today."

Now, if that does not tell us that *Help A Neighbor* is supporting preachers, I just don't understand English. I sympathize with the predicament these brethren are in but the end does not justify the means. Such reasoning as that was *exactly* Alexander Campbell's justification for the *Missionary Society*.

And it will profit nothing for Ron to claim that the help for the preachers is only "benevolence." A preacher's support everywhere, even here in the states, is to take care of personal expenses of living—health, transportation, education, payment of debts and the like. And, because of inflation and recession in the States, everyone is losing the value of their income especially in the current economic crisis. By throwing funds from *Help A Neighbor* to the preachers, Ron is subsidizing the preachers living expense and *that* is supporting the preachers! The *Missionary Society* did no less. It doesn't matter if it is only one or two times or on a regular monthly basis it is still support..

Further, Dan said in WHAR, page 216, that to give a Bible to someone is "the very purest form of distribution of Gospel material." So, *Help A Neighbor* is, and will be, dispensing "the very purest form of distribution of Gospel material." The "other religious literature" mentioned in the charter of *HAN* is *other than* Bibles which will certainly involve tracts on numerous subjects, class material, books and other literature. In addition to that, "related items and services" would also be dispensed, the charter says. Grammatically, in the statement of the charter, these will be "related" to the religious purpose of the corporation but they are not specified. Such a category of related items and services can be anything Ron wants to put there but certainly will be used for evangelism, edification, benevolence, worship and construction of church buildings. That makes *Help A Neighbor, Inc.* a "missionary" organization, a "missionary society."

According to the charter, Ron's corporation will build church buildings. So, here is another statement from the March 27 Report—

"Church Building for Kapitbahayan Church of Christ in Manila Nearing Completion. In July 2007 we started gathering funds to help the saints of the Kapitbahayan church to pursue their plan in constructing a meeting house. They met for many years in a borrowed facility used by denominational groups, but had outgrown this facility. Visitors sometimes attended the denominational groups thinking they had found the church of Christ. For the past year I have watched this project progress. On February 4, 2008 I preached two lessons on the history and translation of the Bible to 100 people gathered on the first floor and soon thereafter it was finished. Brethren from Manila and surrounding regions were invited to attend an all-day gospel meeting on February 29. An overflow crowd attended, six were baptized, others were re-

stored, and there was great rejoicing by all! The second floor and some finishing work can be completed for \$2,000-\$3,000.”

Or, here is another one in a general emailing of November 28, 2008—

“Our main emphasis is on helping saints in the Philippines, especially to build church buildings. This does not exclude charitable endeavors in other places.”

And, just what are church buildings used for? Taking care of the sick? No. Secular education? No. Feasting, fun and frolic? No. Food distribution to the poor? No. They are for *religious* purposes—worship, edification, evangelism. As Ron points out, in this latest report, he preached twice on February 4th in the first floor of their new church building and returned to the same place for an “all-day gospel meeting” on the 29th. Was that for “benevolence” or for evangelism/edification? It should be clear to everyone that *Help A Neighbor, Inc.* is not *exclusively* for benevolent and charitable purposes, *contrary to Ron’s claim.*

Further, putting up church buildings connects local churches of Christ directly *with Ron’s corporation* and ultimately with the *Guardian of Truth Foundation.* Ron has already made an appeal for funds on behalf of selected churches in the Philippines to do repairs and complete construction; this involves many thousands of dollars. We are not told just how other funds will be dispensed and who will be the recipients but it is clear from the following statements by him in the general email sent out on November 22, 2007 that disbursement of funds will be the decision of *Guardian Of Truth Foundation* Board member, Ron Halbrook. Note—

“Individual Christians who are friends of Philippine saints and work have trusted us to act as a source of reliable information and to deliver needed resources.”

(3) Ron makes frequent “evangelistic” trips to the Philippines. He has received monetary support from congregations to do this. I can’t imagine his taking any trip to the Philippines from now on but what it will involve the aims and work of his new corporation. Actually, he will be doing what he has been doing all along except he can expand it to a larger scale with an increase in available funds through his corporation. His trips to the Philippines will be for multiple purposes. He will be preaching and teaching, distributing Bibles and religious literature, building and repairing buildings for local churches as well as handing out funds for benevolence and helping preachers with their support.

Further he will have local churches in America funding the work of the corporation *if he continues to take support from churches for his*

*trips as he has been doing.* Or, he can drop all contributions from churches and defray all of his expenses by using corporate funds, which he is authorized to do under ARTICLE VIII of his incorporation papers. That would still mean he has a benevolent *and evangelistic* society supported by the universal church, *if not by local churches as well.* Why not go ahead and start an *American Christian Missionary Society* supported by individuals only and be done with it? There is already one preacher who has essentially done that with his corporation and I suspect that there are a number of other organizations just like these that have been hidden from us to this point. They all are trying to activate the universal church through their organizations for evangelism and worship.

Let's also focus on the fact that HAN president, Ron Halbrook, will spend a great deal of his time in the Philippines preaching. Supported by his corporate funds contributed by the universal church then we have that universally supported missionary society.

(4) Whenever there is a handout of money or goods, especially big money and goods, loyalty is bought. Individuals and churches tend to become loyal to, and defensive of, the organization from which they get their handouts, whether it is money, literature or benevolence. Whichever way the organization goes is the way they go. The *Guardian of Truth Foundation* and *Help a Neighbor* are building a loyal following. Has not experience taught us that the tendency is not to bite the hand that feeds us? Rather, you stroke it.

(5) Who or what is given the credit and glory for the handouts, material and money? Of course it is *Help A Neighbor, Inc.* and/or *the Guardian of Truth Foundaton*, and/or Ron Halbrook.

Now, to one last item regarding Ron, these corporations and their work. In an email, dated December 30, 2007, Ron wrote to Filipino preachers about support. Obviously, some were complaining about a lack of support from the States; they were not getting what they considered to be their rightful share. To offset their complaints, Ron wrote—

"First, consider this point. There is no denominational structure or organization among true churches of Christ because God did not reveal such organizations in His Word. Denominations create such organizations because they think it is necessary to support the spread of their message."

I'm sure there is some way Ron explains this statement so it does not conflict with the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* and *Help a Neighbor, Inc.* or any other humanly devised organization that they insist is authorized

to engage in evangelism and worship. But, that is exactly what Ron and Mike have done. They do indeed have denominational structures, human organizations not revealed in God's Word by which they have made an end run around local churches to go directly to the local church members for support. It appears by Ron's statements that whatever is necessary to get out of a difficult spot is what is said. It's like the claim that the *GOTF* is just some individuals working together — and in another place it's a business like a bank — and in another that it is a human institution.

### **Wages versus Work Fund**

There's another matter now that must be dealt with. It goes back to around 1982. In this instance, it involves contributions from local churches, *not just individuals*.

In a letter from Rome, Italy, dated August 15, 1982, Italian preacher, Alessandro Corazza addressed the elders of seven local churches plus James Yates of Texas. The late brother Yates was on the Board of Directors of the *Foundation* at the time this happened. The seven churches mentioned were supporting brother Corazza in Italy, *and more*. Here is what Corazza says in the letter—

"To the Elders of the following Churches of Christ:

- 1700 Imhoff Avenue, Port Arthur, Texas
- Mound and Starr –Nacogdoches, Texas
- South Cullman – Cullman, Alabama
- Expressway – Louisville, Kentucky
- Timberland Drive – Lufkin, Texas
- Silver Street – New Albany, Indiana
- 407 W. Highway 131 – Clarksville, Indiana

"And to Mr. James D. Yates – Katy, Texas

"Dear Brethren:

"Here enclosed you will find the first workbook in Italian for children. It is the translation of the First Quarter, for Pre-School children, of the series 'Truth in Life'. You can see that the printed work is not in offset, because my equipment is for letter press machines, but it seems well done, at least in appearance. I can assure that the translation is faithful. I am also printing the manual for teachers.

"At present I am engaged in the printing of the first quarter for 'Primary' and I will send you a copy in few days. It is an expensive work, but we didn't have anything in our own language. In this way all

our children all over the nation will study the same things and therefore will have the same mind. It seems that our little ones who are starting to study with this new material are the best judges of the work, because they like it!

“You can see how monumental will be the work at the end of my efforts, but I think that the brethren deserve the best in this field of knowledge. Coming years will establish how important this work will be for the Cause in Italy, and therefore I want to be the first to thank all of you for your fellowship and help, because this couldn’t be possible without your help.

“Please let me know any suggestions or advices you could feel concerned in. I don’t want to be wrong in anything. Also, and this is natural and human, I would appreciate any word of encouragement from you brethren.

“Again, I want to tell you that all the work of translation and printing has been done by myself. I don’t have worker to pay (just the rent of the place), and all the expenses have been faced with our support, which is the same you already know.”

Beneath this letter are two columns listing *monthly* support Corazza received. One column is for personal expenses, wages. The other column is a separate *work fund*. Only two of the churches on the list provided *personal* support to Corazza. One of those two churches gave him \$725, wages only. The second church provided \$650 a month for wages plus \$250 for a *work fund*. The other five churches contributed *nothing* to his wages but solely to the work fund which totaled \$1,450 per month. That was \$75 more than his wages of \$1,375. Recall the previous quotation from Cecil Willis about a one man missionary society and “wages.” Strangely, Cecil was head of the *Foundation* when all of this was happening. Corazza received more than just *wages*.

This work of Corazza in publishing GOT commentaries and literature continues to this day. The August, 2008, issue of *Truth Magazine*, page 15, carries an article by Steven Wallace about his recent trip to Italy where he visited with the Corazzas. He reports on their work even supplying pictures of their stock of printed material. I have no idea how it is all being financed at present time but someone is paying for it. Here are the facts about this situation.

(1) There was a connection between Corazza and the *Foundation*. There is no way Corazza could translate and print the *Foundation* class literature without the approval and encouragement of the *Foundation*, which had long wanted its literature translated into other languages. According to Corazza, in a letter answering questions sent to him by one

of the then elders at South Cullman, the agreement was not a written agreement but an oral agreement with Roy Cogdill and Cecil Willis for him to print and distribute the literature. But, it was an agreement either way.

Then, the *Foundation* Board received a progress report through its Board member, James Yates, contained in the same report to the churches. It was as much a report to the *Foundation* as it was to the churches.

Another connection with the *Foundation* was Bill Cavender, who was a staff writer for *Truth Magazine*. He promoted congregational support for the project. Cavender was preaching for South Cullman at the time, one of the recipients of Corazza's letter. South Cullman supplied none of his wages but contributed *only* to the work fund and was the *largest contributor* to that fund. The congregation divided over the matter as criticism of the scheme increased. That's a fine testimony for a "nonessential expediency."

(2) No voice of objection came from the *Foundation* about local churches funding this project to print and disperse company literature throughout Italy. It's true that the *Foundation* was not directly receiving donations so they could give away the literature free of charge. They didn't have to. Local churches paid for it all! Money from local church treasuries supplied money for the work of translating, purchase of equipment, materials and printing. The money went into a *work fund*; this was *other than wages* and is so designated. This religious material was distributed to churches and preachers in Italy so that all of the churches in Italy, it was said, could be of "the *same mind*" because they were all taught by the same *Foundation* material. The receiver of funds from the American churches, Corazza, made the decisions about what was done and how literature was dispersed; it was at that point under the control of one man. Now, before someone responds with "But, Corazza sent a progress report to all of the churches supporting him," let's put that in perspective. Who is willing to say that the *American Christian Missionary Society* would be scriptural as long as they sent a detailed progress report to the contributing churches? Would local church support of the *Herald of Truth* have been scriptural on the same basis? No, a report doesn't justify something without authority to begin with.

(3) As we have already noted, Mike and Dan have energetically contended that "articles" equal money. The time and talent that goes in to writing articles must be worth money. So, preachers are "sending"

monetary contributions to the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* when they send articles to be published in *Truth Magazine*. They insist that the same “monetary contributions” are made to the *Preceptor* or *Gospel Truths* when articles are sent to them.

We deny that this is so, but we may logically draw from this argument that all class literature and tracts, written by various preachers, published and distributed by the *Guardian of Truth Foundation*, is exactly the same as distributing money. We can only conclude from their own argument that the *Foundation’s* class literature and tracts, printed and distributed to preachers and churches in Italy by Corazza, was the same as distributing money to preachers and churches. But, the funds provided to distribute that material came from local church treasuries. These American local churches could as well have sent money to Corazza to distribute to preachers in Italy at Corazza’s own discretion. Literature thus represents money and money represents literature. Therefore, any way you slice it, Corazza fits exactly the model of a one man missionary society supported by local churches! And, the *Foundation* has been complicit in it.

There is another factor to be considered here. What if there had been a dozen preachers working together with Corazza, thereby making a “collectivity,” just like it is claimed by Mike and Dan for “Paul and company?” Some would be working on translation, others on printing and binding while yet others seeing to the distribution of the finished material. Remember this when you read the quotation from Al Diestelkamp on the next page. This “collectivity” received funds from local churches to print and distribute *Foundation* literature to preachers and churches in Italy. How is that essentially different from the *Missionary Society*? Would the *Gospel Press* of 1956 been doctrinally acceptable, supported by local churches as they later were supported? After all, the *Gospel Press* was only distributing *articles* in national magazines! Just how would that have been any different from what Corazza was doing? The *Gospel Press* was “just a group of individuals fulfilling their individual responsibilities to preach the gospel?” Why was it wrong for churches to send them money?

### **Local Church Donations To The GOTF**

Mike and Dan insist that it is a sin for local churches to contribute to human organizations and is why they do not accept such contributions from churches. But *if GOTF is just individual preachers working*

*together like Paul and Barnabas, then churches could support them!*

The fact is that the very *scriptures* that are used for their corporate justification, open the door, even now, for donations to the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* from local church treasuries. *Keep in mind* that they use the word “collectivity” as a synonym for “organization” just like the local church is an organization. This is then applied to the *Guardian of Truth Foundation*. They insist that there are many “collectivities” other than a local church in the New Testament which then authorizes what the *Foundation* is practicing. Also keep in mind, their arguments are not mere analogies that draw a few points of likeness, their arguments require that they be identical. Here is a sample of the kind of reasoning, again from Al Diestelkamp in their book, *We Have A Right, Revised*, page 361—

“The Claim is sometimes made that we have no first century examples of Christians forming collectivities other than local churches to spread the gospel. That simply is not so. We have an example of the church in Jerusalem sending a letter to the Christians in Antioch in which they convey teaching (Acts 15:20). This clearly shows that conveying truth in written form is an authorized work of a local church. If we were to embrace the ‘no-collectivities’ doctrine that would mean that it would be unauthorized for individual Christians to band together to write letters to other brethren. However, many of the New Testament epistles were the result of individual Christians pooling their talents and resources.”

(1) Al asserts that Acts 15 is an example of Christians forming collectivities other than a local church to spread the gospel. The authority he says is that the Jerusalem church sent a letter to other local churches correcting a doctrinal issue. Well, which is it? If it was the Jerusalem church that did it, how is it a collectivity other than a local church at the same time? All the authority he found is that a local church can write a letter to another congregation, or several congregations, to correct misinformation.

(2) Actually, the Jerusalem church, as such, did not write the letter. The whole church only chose the men to accompany Paul and Barnabas with the letter. The letter was from the Apostles and elders who were directed by the Holy Spirit in doing so, verse 28. The statement of verse 23 is “*the apostles and elders, brethren, unto the brethren....*” In this verse, the word for “elder” in the Greek text is an *adjective* modifying the *noun*, “brethren.” Literally, it is saying “*the apostles and elder brethren unto the brethren...*” However, the whole church was involved in it by their approval and choosing of men to go with the letter.

(3) If the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem compose the organization separate and apart for the local church that authorize individuals forming other organizations, then consider the consequences. They were within and part of the Jerusalem church. We therefore have here authority for other collectivities/organizations within local churches for gospel preaching. The Christian Church very early in the late 1800s, soon after the formation of the missionary society, formed all kinds of organizations within local churches—Ladies Aid Societies, Missionary Societies, etc. Guess what kind of authority they used for such organizations within local churches?

(4) But Al then switches focus and claims that “many” New Testament epistles were the result of the pooling of resources of several individuals. This is supposed to mean that these apostolic “letter writers” were “collectivities/organizations.” Now, I know that on occasion Paul dictated to a scribe but at other times he did the writing himself, alone. And, someone had to carry the letters to their destination. In some epistles he sent greetings from brethren where he was at the moment. But, where is there any indication in the New Testament that “many of the New Testament epistles were the result of individual Christians pooling their talents and resources into an organizational entity?”

Just what is the point of Al’s argument? It is that the very existence of epistles from inspired men are authority for human organizations, like the *Guardian of Truth Foundation*, to engage in evangelism and worship, just like local churches. However, these inspired men who wrote letters did not know nor authorize by word or example the forming of human organization to engage in evangelism and worship. What these inspired letter writers did authorize, as organizations, was local churches. Acts 15 does not prove otherwise.

However, seeing that *churches* supported these “letter writers,” like Paul “and company,” and these “letter writers” were “organizations” like the *Guardian of Truth Foundation*, then what is to keep churches from supporting such “organizations” today, even the *Guardian of Truth Foundation*? But, there is more.

As previously noted, Mike and Dan insist that sending articles written by preachers for evangelism, edification and correction is the same as sending money. So, a preacher sending an article to *Truth Magazine* is the same as though he sent a donation of money to *Truth Magazine*. This is supposed to prove that the *Foundation* has the right to receive donations

of money from the universal church. Now we have Al Diestelkamp, included in the latest book by Mike and Dan with their encouragement and approval, insisting that here is one church, Jerusalem, sending a written document to other churches for evangelism, edification and correction. That being the same as contributing money, they have just established for the *Herald of Truth* liberals what we fought against so much, viz., churches sending contributions of money to one or more churches for evangelism and edification!

Add to that the fact that inspired epistles written by Apostles for teaching were to be read in churches *who would then see that the epistles were sent to other churches*, and we have an edification society *complex* tying churches together. If sending written material is the same as sending money, then there is a stream of money going from one church *through* one church after another.

Further, if a local church, under the oversight of its elders, sends an article to *Truth Magazine* for teaching, evangelism, edification or correction, and sending an article is the same as contributing money, why could not the *GOTF* also receive donations of money from local churches? Surely, they would not say they would refuse any and all articles sent by a congregation.

But, Al and company are not alone in using Acts 15 for such a purpose as they have. Note the following from J.D. Thomas, defending the *Herald of Truth* and other liberal practices of over fifty years ago—

“For a Bible illustration of ‘organizations’ which do not violate autonomy, look at Acts 15:22-16:4 where we find a group (or organization) appointed by the church at Jerusalem to go down and do some missionary work and teach at Antioch. They also went on around to several congregations in Asia Minor and made a few decisions on their own, if we read the story carefully. They were an ‘organization’ (not the church) doing the Lord’s work. They were appointed by one church, they were teaching in other churches, but they were a scriptural organization.” J.D. Thomas, *Arlington Meeting*, p. 75.

“The whole case of ‘a church violating the autonomy of another church by receiving contributions from it’ is clearly overthrown by the scriptural passage, Acts 15:22-16:4. This passage also raises acute problems for those who insist that one church’s business is limited to the confines of its own borders. What we have here is that, the church at Jerusalem – the apostles and the elders, with the whole church – decided to send a human organization – a group of people who were not the church but who were going to do the work of the church, to do a teaching job – to Antioch and then on to Syria and Cilicia (v. 23). Note that there is one congregation which decides to do teaching in other

congregations without asking permission." J.D. Thomas, *We Be Brethren*, p. 155.

"A point often overlooked, however, is that the local church obviously has 'missionary' business outside its own borders. The instance given in the last chapter, from Acts 15:22-16:4, shows beyond question that the teaching obligation of the local church extends beyond its own 'borders,' and even into the 'confines' of other congregations." *Ibid.*, p. 162.

Sounds like Al Diestelkamp, doesn't it? Al applies Acts 15 to the Jerusalem "church" writing a letter that was sent to some local churches and equates it with an organization like the *Guardian of Truth Foundation*. J.D. Thomas takes the same instance of Acts 15 but uses the group of men from the Jerusalem church who accompanied Paul back to Antioch to be an organization like the *Herald of Truth*. Notice especially how Thomas uses (misuses) the word "organization." *GOTF* writers make the same mistake as did J.D. Thomas, J.B. Briney and others in this regard. They all think that any time you find two or more people doing something together it is an *organization* just like *GOTF* is an organization or like the local church is an organization. So, it doesn't matter whether one takes the line of Al Diestelkamp or J.D. Thomas, the church writing a letter or the group that carried it, it amounts to the same thing, i.e., authority for human organizations engaging in evangelism and edification.

Mike wrote an article that is an echo of what Thomas said, especially in the second paragraph from Thomas. Note again what Thomas says—

"This passage also raises acute problems for those who insist that one church's business is limited to the confines of its own borders . . . Note that there is one congregation which decides to do teaching in other congregations without asking permission . . . The instance given in the last chapter, from Acts 15:22-16:4, shows beyond question that the teaching obligation of the local church extends beyond its own 'borders,' and even into the 'confines' of other congregations."

In *Truth Magazine* of February, 2008, Mike wrote an article titled "Autonomy or Isolation." The primary thesis of his article is we need to follow Bible examples, primarily do what Paul did, follow his example. What Paul did in going to numerous congregations appointing elders, correcting problems, etc., we not only can do but should do because he set the example for us to follow. Here is what Mike said—

"If it is wrong for one today to do what Paul did, then it was wrong for Paul to do it as well. Being an apostle did not give one the prerogative to do sinful things . . . The work of the Apostles was to give revelation and to confirm that the revelation given was of God by the miracles

that they performed and passed on to others. These are the only works unique to the Apostles."

Mike is claiming the authority to inject himself into the business of any church he wants to, *just like* the Apostle Paul! Don't miss what he says—the *only two things unique to the Apostles is giving revelation from God and confirming it with miracles*. He argues that we can do everything else Paul did! But, if his reasoning is true, it is not limited to any one preacher today. Any preacher, even those still "wet behind the ears" could inject themselves into the business of any congregation and insist the church follow their orders. That is "evangelistic oversight," *plus*. What a disaster that would be! These brethren keep insisting that they are not trying to be "brotherhood watchdogs" while Mike sets forth the arguments that establish their authority to do just that! Keep in mind that Daniel Sommer held the same position of evangelistic oversight, and *Dan calls us Sommerites!*

Dan King makes a major argument on Jesus and the Apostles being an *organization*, with Jesus as the leader and Judas the treasurer, the agent, of the organization, pages 54-57 of their book. Not so strangely, we have seen this argument before. J.B. Briney made the *same argument* in defense of the Missionary Society in the debate with W.W. Otey, page 169, which we saw earlier. It was in Briney's very first speech on his affirmative proposition. A half century later, Hardeman Nichols represented its use by institutional brethren, recorded in *The Arlington Meeting*, pages 231-232. Nichols emphasized the application of the Jesus group to church work in general benevolence whereas Dan King and Briney apply it to evangelism and worship. It works just as well on any one of those items as the other. Nichols said that this Jesus group is "the proof" of his conclusion. Dan says that the Jesus group is "positive proof" of "collectivities" in the Bible for worship and evangelism. There isn't a dime's worth of difference between Briney, Thomas and King in arguments, purpose and tactics.

Harry Pickup, Jr stated the following in the *Arlington Meeting* in 1968. This is from page 130 of the book—

"I have read from a brother, whom I believe has an institutional concept of the church, that Paul and Barnabas constitute an evangelistic team, an organization, which is not a congregation. He admits that this 'organization' is not a 'local church' but that it is in 'the church.' If Christians may organize to do the 'work of the church' and yet not be the 'local church', why may not the whole church be organized?"

The *Arlington Meeting* was forty years ago but even then the argument brother Pickup cites was being used long *before* that time, and was used afterward. The argument Harry mentions was characteristic of institutional brethren then, just like Briney and others before him. They used the same arguments to justify their projects. And what about now?

The present claim by *GOTF* writers is that *Paul and Barnabas* comprised a preaching collectivity (organization), *Paul and Silas* in prison made up a worship collectivity (organization), *Peter at the house of Cornelius*, a worship collectivity (organization), the *family* is a religious/evangelistic/worship collectivity (organization), John and Gaius, and other like instances, are authority for organizations other than the local church to engage in evangelism and worship. And, of course, Jesus and the Apostles were an evangelistic and worship collectivity (organization). The whole point of these references is to establish that the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* is such an organization just like Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Silas, John and Gaius, the Family, Jesus and the apostles, etc. *That* is evidence to Mike and Dan and they are energetically trying to convince as many brethren as they can that it is reasonable as well as scriptural.

If Jesus and the apostles made up an organization/institution it certainly was not a *human institution*. God, Himself, organized and ordered it and that was not of human origin. Was the working together of Paul and Barnabas a human institution? No. Acts 13:2 tells us, “the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” Notice it wasn’t “whereunto I have called *it*.”

Now consider: *churches supported Paul and Barnabas, Peter, John and others*. And, though churches did not exist at the time, who would exclude the “Jesus Group” from church support if such local churches had existed then? If these arguments of Mike and Dan using Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Silas, Peter at the house of Cornelius are “positive proof” that establish the authority for human institutions/organizations like the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* and *Help a Neighbor* to engage in evangelism, worship and benevolence, then *there is nothing to stop local churches from contributing to them!* God commanded support from churches to these preachers, I Corinthians 9:6ff, and they did receive such support. Mike and Dan loudly deny that the *Foundation* would accept support from churches but, *deja vu*. We have also heard that before.

Give them a few years and see what the next generation, or someone *before* the next generation, does with it. After all, the liberals fifty years ago bought the arguments of J.D. Thomas and look where they went.

Here are a couple of quotations from 1958 and 59, right in the midst of our battle over institutionalism. Interestingly, the first is from Cecil Willis; the second is by Henry Ficklin—

“Once the door is opened to let in one thing without Bible authority, where can one stop? When man assumes God will not object to something he wants to add, there is no stopping place. Anything that someone else might want can just as well be added. So ultimately, the church will cease to be as God wants it, and will be transformed into the kind of institution that man wants, if this sort of thinking prevails . . . About a century ago some of the brethren began gradually to go away. At first the departures were so slight that some of the brethren could see no danger in them at all. Finally, with absolutely no Biblical authority for them, mechanical instrumental music was added to the worship, and missionary societies were built in addition to the organization of the church. But these brethren, who became the Christian Church, could not stop with these two departures. The flood gate had been opened and none could turn back the tide . . . In fact, no religious organization, having started down the road of apostasy, has ever turned back to reform itself.” *Gospel Guardian*, February 27, 1958.

“But, do not forget that modernism has no conscience. And it is not controlled by Scripture, or even by fixed principles, but by self-interest.” *Gospel Guardian*, January 29, 1959.

What we are seeing now are just the early stages of the *open* doctrinal shift of the *Guardian of Truth Foundation* and those who are sparking it. There can be no doubt as to the direction they are taking. That door is opened more than just a crack. It is highly unlikely it will ever be closed again.

**Dudley Ross Spears,**  
*Gospel Visitor,*  
**December 10, 1964**

There are duties which belong to all Christians by virtue of God's commands. Among these are some requirements to fulfill toward the local church of which the Christian is a member. The local church is God's functional unit, His organization or collective unit through which He proposes that His people accomplish His will on earth in a collective way. The local church is the largest, smallest and the only organization which God's word authorizes in the collective work of God's people, and IF one is to be a part of that work, he (or she) must be a part of a local church.