

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

WATER FOUNTAINS AND SOCCER FIELDS

By Larry Hafley

The Bible does not state that Noah used hammers, saws, and axes in the construction of the ark. However, these instruments were authorized by the command, *“Make yourself an ark of gopherwood”* (Gen. 6:14). Without the instruction to build the ark, the tools would have been unauthorized.

The Bible does not mention church buildings per se. However, they are scriptural because of the authority to assemble (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:18; 14:23; Heb. 10:25). As church buildings are necessary to assemble, then water fountains and bathrooms are scripturally authorized expedients. Without the right to assemble, church buildings would be without divine authority.

The Bible does not refer to song books or phone apps that identify the correct pitch. However, they are authorized by the command to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). They assist us in carrying out the divine direction to *“sing and make melody”* in our hearts to the Lord. Without the authority to sing, songbooks and aids to help with song pitch would be unscriptural.

The Bible does not talk about white boards or video projectors. However, they are approved by the authority of *“teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you”* (Matt. 28:20). They assist in doing what the New Testament churches did; namely, teach (Acts 11:22-26). Without the authority to teach, boards and projectors would be contrary to scripture.

The Bible does not say anything about collection baskets. However, they are authorized by the command to *“lay by in store”* (1 Cor. 16:2). Without the authority for a contribution, collection baskets would be unauthorized.

The Bible does not mention plates on which to serve the bread or trays to hold the grape juice of the Lord’s Supper. However, they are authorized by the command to *“take, eat”* and *“drink”* (1 Cor. 11:24-25). Were there no communion, the plates and trays would not be scriptural.

The Bible does not specifically cite a baptistry (an artificial pool in which baptism is performed). However, the command to baptize authorizes or necessitates a place to baptize. Without the right to baptize, a baptistry would be without authority (Matt. 7:21-23).

Contrasting Parallels

The Bible does not directly mention the use of pianos and organs in the worship of the church. If we had scriptural authority to “play music,” such instruments would be authorized. As there is Bible authority for song books and pitch devices because we are to sing, so there would be authority for pianos in worship if we were commanded to “play music.” When someone finds scripture for “playing music,” he will have found authority for guitars, trumpets, and every other kind of instrument. Until then, they cannot be used with the approval of heaven.

The Bible does not show where any church built and maintained recreation and entertainment facilities as a part of its work. Just as buildings, bathrooms, and water fountains are authorized by the command to assemble, and plates and trays are authorized by the command to partake of the Lord’s Supper, there would be authority for dinner plates and softball/basketball/soccer teams if the church were authorized to provide social meals and

recreation. When someone finds authority for the church to furnish recreation and entertainment, he will have found authority for fellowship halls, baseball diamonds, basketball courts, soccer fields, etc. Until then, these exist without scriptural authority. When we act without authority, we do not have fellowship with God (2 Jn. 9). ■

The Need for Distinctive Preaching

By Jim Deason

The role of the teacher is to hold back nothing profitable, but to teach the whole purpose of God (Acts 20:20, 27). That is the key to faithfully fulfilling the work of an elder or evangelist, i.e., that we hold back nothing that is profitable to the people. Preaching on the love of God is not going to help the young women of the congregation when they fail to hear a sermon directed toward their immodesty. Preaching on grace is good, but not if you fail to preach on how folks frequently absent themselves from worship in favor of their favorite sports or recreational activity. Preaching on mercy is wonderful, but sometimes people need to hear a lesson on social drinking or dancing (prom). Forgiveness is a grand theme, but sometimes brethren need to be warned of encroaching false doctrines and practices. I believe there is a justifiable cause for concern today, not just because of what is preached from some pulpits, but even more because of what is not being preached! One of my heroes in the faith once observed, "If we don't preach on certain subjects, it won't be long before we can't preach on those subjects because people will not put up with it." He was right and, in my opinion, we are seeing the fruit of that in our time. Again, the key to faithfully fulfilling the work of an elder or evangelist is to hold back nothing that is profitable. It is not always easy to properly assess and preach to the needs of the people, but by all means do it!

The "old Jerusalem gospel" has a distinctive ring about it. It is a message flooded with Scripture and practical application. It is not always popular, but it is always right when presented with the best interest of the hearers in your heart and on your lips (Eph. 4:15). – *Collegevue church of Christ Bulletin*, October 25, 2020. ■

Where Will We Be When COVID Is Gone?

By Mark White

COVID-19 has been an unwelcome intruder to human society in general, but to the church of the Lord in particular. We have significant challenges ahead recovering as a society, but churches will forever be affected by this trouble, too. We may not yet know all the ways the pandemic and our response to it may have affected us, but we can be sure that the Devil will see to it that it will harm us spiritually, if he can. We need to be thinking now of how we will recover what we have lost, and restore what has been lacking. Of course, we have learned some valuable lessons along the way about ourselves. Our strengths have been made obvious, but so have some weaknesses. Virtual meetings can never replace physical meetings. They are about as effective as a virtual doctor visit. It may get the job done somewhat, but there is nothing like the real thing. When this trouble has passed, where will you be? What effect will COVID have had on you spiritually? Trouble never leaves us where it finds us. – *Collegevue church of Christ Bulletin*, December 13, 2020. ■

What would this church be like if:

- The preacher missed services as often as I do?
- Everyone in the Bible classes studied and prepared like me?
- All the members contributed the way I do?
- The song leader was as tardy as me?
- Visitors were greeted by everyone in the same way I greet them?

What would this church be like if everyone in it was just like ME? — Selected

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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