

The Church's Purpose

Adapted by Doug Roush

What is the purpose of the Lord's church? Is it to eradicate poverty, disease, social injustice, illiteracy from among men? Is it to bring about a cessation of war and conflict? Is it to campaign for a temptation-free society for Christians to live in?

If the church is supposed to have the eradication of disease as one of its great goals, the Lord could have easily equipped it to accomplish that goal. The same power that enabled one blind man to see could be used to enable all blind people to see. The same power that enabled one lame man to walk could be used to enable all lame people to walk. The power that cured many people of varied diseases could be used to cure all people of all diseases. The same supernatural power that was used to perform miraculous healings by Jesus, the apostles, and first century Christians could be used by 21st century Christians if the purpose of the church is to eradicate disease and physical disability.

If the purpose of the church is to eradicate the effects of poverty, the Lord could have easily equipped it to accomplish this purpose. Jesus fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes. Similarly, He fed four thousand on another occasion. He who did those marvelous works could have enabled His church in all generations to feed, clothe, and shelter the impoverished masses of the world through miraculous powers. No doubt, He would have, if in fact the purpose of the church is to eradicate the effects of poverty.

If the Lord had wanted His church to become a lobbyist group to apply political and legislative pressure to make sin and persecution illegal in society, He would have given instructions for it to do so. In contrast, we observe that His word does not even instruct His church into a direct effort to destroy slavery. Rather, His word instructs the Christian slave to be trustworthy in their duties and it instructs the Christian master to treat his slaves as he would have his heavenly Master treat him (Col. 3:22 - 4:1). This is not to say that God endorses slavery, but that He instructs us how to live righteously within an unrighteous culture.

The church's purpose is to save souls and prepare people for eternity (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20). Christ, in His word and through the church, offers the impoverished the hope of someday walking a street of gold (Rev. 21:21). To the suffering, Christ, in His word and through the church, reveals an existence where there will be no pain. To the sorrowing, Christ, through His word and in the church, promises a future place where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 21:4). Christ, in His word and by the church, tells the tempted and persecuted that there is value in their afflictions, and that the testing of their faith is "more precious than of gold" (1Peter 1:6-7). He instructs the church to rejoice as we live godly lives while we experience whatever condition of life we find ourselves in (Phil. 2:16-18, 4:4; 2Cor. 12:9-10). By the instructions of Christ, the church is to attempt to change people through the power of the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17). The implements of the church "are not carnal, but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2Cor. 10:4-5). (Adapted by Doug Roush from an article by Bill Hall, via The Admonisher, Feb. 24, 1985)

Are We Guilty?

By Paul B. Blake, Sr.

Matt. 26:66 - "What do you think?' They answered and said, 'He is deserving of death.'" Jews accused Jesus and said He was guilty. What were the Jews accusing Him of? Preaching the gospel. Yes. Telling them the truth, telling them they were lost. Telling them how to be saved. Telling them about God, Heaven and Hell. What a wonderful thing to be guilty of! Does the sinful world accused us to today of teaching and preaching the same thing? Are we guilty of telling others that they are lost? About God, Christ and Holy Spirit, about how to be saved? Are we guilty? Or, do we keep our mouth shut when we talk to people in error and sin. What about when our brethren are in sin or error? Are we guilty of telling them the truth? Can the world say we are guilty of preaching the gospel?

Lord, You Do the Work

By Paul B. Blake, Sr.

"Lord, we will do the praying, and You do the work." That's what we mean when we pray and do not work. We pray for the sick, and we should because it is scriptural. But is that all we are to do? What about caring for them? What about work they need done and are not able to do? Mow their lawn, wash clothes for them, clean their house, and cook for them. But we think we are good Christians because we prayed for them; we've done our job, let God do the rest. Are you sure?