

FOREWORD

I grew up with what is called a conservative church. I want anyone who reads this book to know that I do not hate or have any bad feelings for that group. In fact, many people whom I could name are still my conservative friends. I love them as brothers and sisters in Christ.

I know this book is in strong disagreement with the conservative position. I hope that all of you will realize that my conscience is better educated in the truth now. This has made me leave the conservative line of thinking.

All of the scriptures and thoughts in this book show why I left the conservative position. Also, I don't find the word conservative in the Bible, but I do find the word liberal in Isa.32:8, and many other places.

What matters is truth! It also still matters that I love all of you conservative people very much, so much so that I thought it my spiritual duty to write this book for conservatives and liberals to both read and reflect.

In love I submit it to everyone

ANTI-ISM

Having once been a so-called "conservative" myself, I thought it good to write about it. Maybe some of you have had experiences with the following "conservative" doctrines:

- anti-children's home help
- anti-church cooperation
- anti-help for "outsiders" utilizing church funds
- anti-building use for "love feasts," weddings, get-togethers, or any wholesome use, but worship when the church is not in session.

The word anti-ism, as used in the writing, is taken from the "New Scholastic Dictionary" in two different places. First, on page 32 (anti)-a prefix meaning against or opposed to, derived from the Greek. Also, "-ism"- an action or practice of a system of doctrine, policy, set of principles, etc. In this instance the doctrine they are against is the Bible. So we have "anti-ism," or anti-Bible doctrine. This compound word is derived from proper English meanings. Let's start with the children's home issue first.

Like many of you, I grew up in the 50's when the digression first occurred in the church. I followed what our preacher said at first about these homes and went along reluctantly,

at first, to follow what they called the conservative view, but my conscience was bothering me with lots of questions. I was told by our preacher that the conservative view was the right one and that I should follow it as the truth. Our preacher told me that I should “show up” all the churches that did not agree. I never bothered until some years later to investigate what “conservative” and “liberal” was, much less why loaded terms like these had to be used to describe fellow Christians. This bothered me because these terms could not be found in the Bible. For many years I thought about this, and the more I studied about it, I could see that these terms originated with politicians and were terms we were using to split, bite, devour, label, and demean each other GAL 5:16-17. I now believe that this in itself was all wrong.

CONSERVATIVES OR LIBERALS? WHICH? NEITHER!

In the 50's and 60's terms like conservative and liberal emerged in American politics. Politics is a very worldly thing, mostly, and should not be mixed into the one true church that you read about in the Bible. In order for politicians to be able to label, degrade, and classify each other, they started using the terms conservative and liberal. The word liberal was a label put on those who wanted to go beyond the written law of our country just a bit. To be a liberal, one would give loose meaning to the laws. The liberals finally enjoyed going farther and farther from the path of the founders of our country.

Those who opposed the liberals were soon called conservatives. The conservatives would cry out at the liberals and insist that they do everything to stop the liberals with the laws already on the books. After awhile the conservatives felt the need to push as hard as they could in the opposite direction of the liberals. The pushing for more and more laws by the conservatives causes everyone to lose more and more of their freedoms, all of which the founding fathers did not intend. They wanted freedom and liberty, not huge thick books of restrictive laws. I really think that the founding fathers wanted freedom and liberty with responsibility and respect for each of their fellow countrymen. You see, after awhile, when so many laws are passed, you have no freedom at all because of the rules that the conservatives come up with.

Conservatives find problems with everything in our country's government that does not suit them. If you listen completely to them and permit them to run everything, you will lose the liberty that the founding fathers intended and died for. We should stand up for our liberty in our country and not let it be taken away by too many laws.

Now, thus far, I have been talking about our country's politicians and our country's government. I have only stated that politics should not be mixed into the church because politics is a thing of the world. Brothers, if you really believe that politics has no place in the church, consider what I am about to write.

The church, the bride of Christ (Rev. 22:17), is a holy and wonderful woman, is she not? Our Lord died for her to make her this way! Tell me, then, why some of our preachers and members back in the 50's and 60's borrowed such demeaning and labeling names as liberal and conservative to refer to the church? Did they not love the bride of Christ, the

woman that he died for? Even if they disagreed with each other over issues, why did they have to demean and drag down into the mud of old dirty politics this beautiful sin-forgiven woman? It is the church that Jesus died for! Those who have taken part in this labeling and name calling all share the blame of defaming her glory and shame her husband!

I am convinced that this is what happens when we refer to the different congregations of the Church of Christ around the country as liberal and conservative. Why don't all of us respect the autonomy of the church, that we all say we believe in, and stop the name calling!

I challenge anyone to find in the Bible these four words: liberal church, conservative church; yet, we all say that we are supposed to call Bible things by Bible names. Ha! We don't do it! When we refer to each other as liberal and conservative, we borrow that from dirty politics!

I know that there are many differences in congregations, but if we would stop the finger pointing and name calling and respect the autonomy of the church, we could move close enough together to talk about our love for each other.

As soon as we start loving one another again, we could start teaching each other the truth in love, as is stated in Ephesians 4: 14-15.

I want to suggest some Bible answers as to how to refer to the bride, the church that Jesus died for. Listen to the spirit talking through Jeremiah 33:16. The latter part of this verse states this about this wonderful lady, "and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, the Lord our righteousness." Spiritual Judah and Jerusalem comprising the church which is Christ's bride, "In those days," (v. 15,16), and "at that time." "She shall be called the Lord our righteousness." Also, the church-bride that Jesus died for should be classified as "the pillar and ground of truth," as it is called in I Timothy 3:15. Surely, all of you must agree that to refer to the bride of Christ as liberal or conservative is without a doubt contrary to the sound doctrine that Paul is talking about in I Timothy 1:10. Also, these two labels are not "holding fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me (Paul) in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 1:13)

Brothers and sisters, I am convinced that we can all stand in the liberty that Paul talks about in Galatians 5:1 if we stop trying to bite and devour one another (Gal. 5:15) by giving into the politicians' desire of the flesh to label (Gal. 5:16) one another as conservatives and liberals. Why not love one another more by stopping the name calling.

I would like for us at West 76 Church of Christ to just refer to this congregations as a sound church in keeping with 2 Timothy 1:13, indicating those who would hold fast the form of sound words. Remember, you don't find these other two names in God's word. This reason alone is reason enough not to use them.

CHILDREN'S HOME ISSUE

The children's home issue arose in the 50's and all that it accomplished for the church nationwide was that it dropped us from being about the 3rd largest growing church down to around 17th in the 70's. Now we are even lower. This is a terrible shame and a tragedy that is reflected to the world. The world sees us argue, debate, and split over the care of abused, neglected, and sometimes even orphaned children. I don't wish to debate anyone over these issues. There has already been too much of this. I only wish to write this book to shed God's light on this issue by using the scriptures where I was wrong in being "anti-minded." So, I wish to share some of my hard times with other people who may have been involved in the same thing. I hope this booklet will be of help to any of you that can now look back and see that this was all wrong. I had an elder in a conservative church tell me that this should never have been an issue. He changed his mind. Also, before about 1950, the church was not split and most all of the churches were helping to take care of the ones they now call into question. These churches gave to children's homes all over the country. However, Satan saw that he could drive a wedge into the church more easily by getting inside, getting us to argue and debate over the cause of abused, neglected, and orphaned children. Satan must be jumping up and down now over the results of these debates. On November 18th-20th in 1957, Brother Guy N. Woods, a popular preacher and debater from Memphis, Tennessee, and a staff writer for the Gospel Advocate, met Brother Roy E. Cogdill of Lufkin, Texas, a preacher well known west of the Mississippi River, and publisher of the Gospel Guardian. They met in a debate before 1,200 brethren in Birmingham, Alabama. In this debate Mr. Cogdill contended that it is contrary to the scriptures for Churches of Christ to build and maintain benevolent organizations for the care of orphans and the aged that are among us. He argued that orphan homes were incorporated bodies chartered and regulated by the state and controlled by a board of directors; thus it was an organization created to do the work of the church. Brother Woods responded that most churches were also incorporated to meet legal requirements for things like purchasing property, but this did not make them another organization, even though they were required to keep state laws. I do not know any of the so called "conservative" churches that have not incorporated as such, and when they do incorporate, they are guilty of doing the same thing that they blame these children's homes for, and they also say it is wrong and sinful. The conservatives probably feel that the children's homes are churches and cannot see the difference. Cogdill went on to say that elders should put orphans in families of the members for care to be paid for by the church if necessary. Woods pointed out that the family is a different organization than the church and a family that adopts is under state laws and regulations. He contended that the orphans' home was an extension of the family as far as its responsibility to children, and that elders could provide for orphaned children in either, and that control over either type of care was up to the parents. When Cogdill compared the home to the missionary society, Woods replied that the society did the work of the church missions, while these homes only replace the broken homes of families. The home takes nothing away from the organization of the church. Several churches, in an attempt to satisfy both sides, placed a box in the lobby where contributions to homes could be placed. Now, isn't that something? I also always wondered why the two sides

of this issue could not get along by placing a box in the lobby for the purpose of sending money to these homes. Also, since the anti brothers started opposing the idea of helping anyone who was not a member with the funds out of the church collection this would also solve that problem because they have stated that you could help non-members out of your own pocket, but were not to take it out of the "Lord's money." This made things a little better for me, for a while at least, in my own mind.

EXPLANATIONS

As time passed I moved to Branson, Missouri, and all along I thought I could worship with either side of the issue as long as they were willing to help those who were not members and the children who were in the homes out of their own pockets. We could help people who were members out of the collection at church. They would not keep their word and do this. As time went on, after I had moved to Branson, I thought I would start a church and that I would try to make peace with both sides of these issues. So, in the interest of being a peacemaker, like the Bible says, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God," MAT 5:9 I began to call some of my own family and brothers in Christ to start a new church in Branson. We started the new church with the idea to make peace between brothers of both ideas and to have a church both sides could come to and visit while in Branson. Not long after the church got going, I got together with the church and we opened a separate checking account. This account was for the purpose of helping those who were not members and the children's homes with individual free-will donations. Not any of the conservative people would put anything into the free-will collection. Only those who were on the other side and would have given out of the treasury would give anything to the separate account. Also, they started objecting to the account. After we set up the separate checking account, to save face and make an excuse for not giving any money at all individually into the account to help non-members and strangers and children's homes, they stated, "We will not take part in the second account because it had the name church of Christ on it over at the bank." At this point I gave up trying to make peace because they already had it in their minds to split the church. We are supposed to do all things for the glory of God and Christ in the things that we do to help the poor and less fortunate. It's easy for them to make an excuse after the fact now, but it takes a good-hearted person to love people by getting something accomplished. They wouldn't even try to do one thing for the children's homes or strangers. Instead, they had it in their minds, to split the church. Division is sinful 1Cor 1:13, but they did not seem to care at all, and they did split the church. The responsibility of the split in the church is on their shoulders, because we tried to make peace! So, the rest of us came to the conclusion that they did not want to help anyone who was not a member either way.

This went on for about a year and a half. They also would pair off to one side and discuss how they were going to make the whole church "conservative," even though I had stated to them two years earlier that I did not want to have any part in an all anti-church. They also said that they did not want us to have any food in the church building,

even after worship was over, because it sends the wrong signal and it would be spreading the social gospel.

EVIDENCE OF LOVE FEAST IN THE EARLY CHURCH (JUDE 12)

Jude 12 refers to a feast of charity, or love feast. The scriptures prove that they had these feasts. Also, Rom. 16:5 talks about a church that Priscilla and Aquila had meeting in their house. It seems reasonable to me that they had food in their house and shared it with Paul and others from time to time. When this church had a love feast, did they go outside of their meeting place to eat or meet? I think not! Most so-called conservative brothers (and I don't like to call them that at all) point to I Cor. 11:20-34 and say, "See, it's a sin to eat a meal in the church meeting house." This is making a law where God made no law. They take it out of context, as to why Paul rebuked this Corinthian church. The problem was that this church was so worldly that they would mix the meal with their worship to the point that they were drunkards and gluttons. They were not even wanting to love each other enough to share their food with each other. Divisions and cliques were the problem. They did this to the point that it was impossible to properly discern or partake of the Lord's Supper. The apostle sharply rebukes them. He commands them, in verse 33, to tarry one for another when they come together to eat the Lord's Supper! Then, in verse 34, he is addressing any man in the Corinthian church, not all the rest of the men and churches in the brotherhood, who did not abuse this liberty. He tells "them" if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that "you" come not together unto condemnation.

This verse, put in proper context with the rest of the Bible, tells us that the apostle had to stop "them" from eating during church because they did not know how to be spiritual enough to separate the two items. Number one, the Lord's Supper, and, Number two, the meal; therefore, they could not partake of the Lord's Supper properly. So, Paul stops the food until he would come and set the rest of things in order, that is, give them more spiritual instruction.

Facts: Jude 12 talks about their feast of charity. Also, my Lord Jesus taught thousands of people the good word of God, and then set down five thousand disciples and followers, feeding them with loaves and fishes. The Lord's meeting place was the world. Did Jesus sin when he mixed his teaching of the gospel with the food he served? I think not! Read Matthew 14:16-21. Also, the early church went house-to-house teaching and preaching the word. They must have shared food as they went in the book of Acts. Our zealous brothers today are making laws that take away your liberty to do so. Now, after church is over, the Lord's Supper has been partaken of properly, and the last prayer has been prayed, it is not a sin to share a love feast (Jude 12) in the meeting place for association and convenience sake.

If the whole congregation decides to go out to a restaurant building-meeting place, it's no different than the church building-meeting place. There is nothing sacred, or holy, about the brick and stone walls of either meeting place. There is no spiritual significance to brick and stone walls.

During the time of the Jews when that temple was being used, the building of that temple was sacred because of the very presence of Jehovah God. This old temple veil was rent from top to bottom when Jesus died on the cross. There is nothing sacred about the church building-meeting room. It's just a place for us to gather for worship, or any other activity that we may have. We've had weddings and singings, so far. Remember, the church is not the building. It's the people!

Now, I understand some other principles that come into play on the subject also. If, where you used to worship, your liberty was taken away concerning this subject, and you were told that it's a sin to eat in the meeting place, then you had better not take part when others do it. However, I urge you to educate your conscience by studying the word of God more closely, to see that it's not a sin. Enjoying our lunch together is not a sin after the Lord's Supper has been partaken of properly and the last prayer has been spoken. It shows our love for each other to share our food together after worship is over. However, if you still think it violates your conscience, you had better not take part in the food!

We should all not bite and devour one another (Gal. 5:15) over things like this. If it bothers you, just don't take part. On the other hand, don't take away other people's liberties by telling them they are sinning if they do it! Follow the guidelines of Romans 14. Also, "we should stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." (Gal. 5:1)

I would like to say at this point, that I noticed that the people in the church, including myself, whom they despised as liberals were perfectly willing to sit down with them and worship, making peace by helping those who were not members out of the other checking account. The ones who believed in anti-ism would not make peace or stand for it. None of the church collection money was going to the homes or non-members, but they still were not happy to make peace. They left one by one over the period of about six months and started their own anti-church. What kind of people would not want to help kids or strangers out of the collection or out of their own pockets. They wouldn't do it either way and couldn't have peace with the others. That did it!

I conclude that anti-ism groups do not want peace, and when the church at large is convinced of this, we will all be better off. I stopped trying to make peace. I am informing the rest of the brotherhood about what goes on. The fears of the anti's will cause you to take away all of your liberties in Christ, if you let them get away with it.

Prior to about 1950, there was peace in the church of Christ over these homes and church cooperation. Some preachers came up here from Texas and split the church mostly over what is your right to do and your liberties. When will we learn to stand fast in our liberties wherein Christ has made us free and be not entangled in this yoke of bondage? (Gal. 5:1) In this case it's a yoke of anti-ism bondage.

Now let's look at the anti-church cooperation issue, or better stated, "one church can't help another church."

COOPERATION ISSUE

I am pleased to thank Brother Bill E. Smith for permitting me to use some of his articles found in his workbook entitled, "Divisions Within the Restoration." I suggest that you can order his workbook from Helm Publishers, 10100 Haverhill Place, Oklahoma City, OK, 73120.

Following and akin to the Orphan Home Issue, was the Cooperation Issue. With the arrival of television and national radio networks following World War II, churches began to think of preaching the gospel to the whole world in their generation. In a mission area in the Northeast a young evangelist by the name of James Walter Nichols had an area-wide radio program that drew rapid support from churches throughout the area, and from the "Bible Belt." He was persuaded to move it to Abilene, TX, and under the oversight of the large Highland Church of Christ, plans were made for a national program sponsored by brotherhood churches. It was soon to rival many denominational and individual nationwide religious programs.

When E.R. Harper, who had sought to establish a state-wide radio program while preaching at the Sixth and Izard church in Little Rock, AR, was chosen to preach on this Herald of Truth program, many of his peers began to oppose it and to conclude it was unscriptural, even though they had been doing the same thing in a much smaller way. Many of the same group who opposed the Orphan Homes, now opposed this new program that was supported by churches of Christ across the nation. In the debate between Guy N. Woods and Roy E. Cogdill, mentioned earlier in the Orphan Home Issue, three nights of this Birmingham, AL, debate was on cooperation. Woods affirmed, "It is in harmony with Scriptures for churches of Christ to contribute funds from their treasuries in support of the Herald of Truth radio program as a means of cooperating in accomplishing the mission of the church." He contended that the Herald of Truth was a work of the Highland church, supervised by its elders, and that other churches were invited to have fellowship in this effort, with no representation, on a voluntary basis.

But Cogdill argued that Highland was doing the work of other churches, as the Mission Society had done, and that a church could not engage in a work that it could not support alone. Woods charged that since most of his adversaries had done the same thing in smaller ways, and that since they had supported Orphans' Homes in the past, it was they who had caused division by opposing them now, and not Woods and his supporters. Although these two issues were very divisive, they did serve to make the brotherhood more conscious of the need to stay within the scriptural bounds when experimenting with new methods for their work,

COOPERATION ISSUE ANSWERED

CONSERVATIVE CREED STATEMENT: "A church cannot take on a work that it cannot do alone." Scriptures, please, for the above statement?

BIBLE TRUTH ANSWER:

1. Where are the boundaries for a church's work? Mark 16:15 "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Also, there were two brothers sent together to do a large benevolent work that was too much for any one church to do by itself. The churches sent Titus and an unnamed brother as agents all over the brotherhood to collect money for the churches in Judea. II Cor. 8:16. In II Cor 9:12-13, this gift not only supplied the want of the saints, vs. 12, but in vs. 13 the Bible states that liberal distribution "unto them,"

meaning the saints, "and unto all men," meaning people of the dearth stricken area who were not members. These non-members helped by the churches were probably people who knew the church members of Judea and may have been studying the gospel with them. It does say liberal distribution unto all men.

2. What cooperation in soul-saving did Paul point out? I Cor. 3:6 "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."

3. What church did the churches in Macedonia join together to help? Acts 11:27-30 The Bible states in vs. 27 that there came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch. So it seems that Antioch cooperated with the churches in Macedonia to help the brethren who dwelt in Judea. To be fair to the text, Jerusalem brothers were probably helped along with any of the other brothers who had churches in the whole area of Judea. We don't even know that all the churches in Judea even had elders at this time. This is a good example of church cooperation on a work too large for one church alone.

4. What church sent Paul on a missionary journey? Acts 13:1-3 The answer seems to be Antioch.

A. What other church joined in their support? Phil. 4:15-17 The answer seems to be the Phillipian church. Hence, we have church cooperation.

B. What church did Paul teach while supported by other churches? II Cor. 11:1-11. The answer here seems to be the Corinthian church, vs. 8. Paul says, "I robbed other churches (plural) taking wages of them, to do you service."

*Note: We have given in examples 1 through 4 both scriptures and proof that churches in the New Testament cooperated together in preaching the gospel, and also that they cooperated in benevolent works to help members and non-members alike. They did not do it with respect of persons either.

CONSERVATIVE CREED STATEMENT: "A church cannot receive funds from other churches to do a good work."

BIBLE TRUTH ANSWER:

1. What large project was made available because of a need? Acts 11:27-30. The answer is the relief of the dearth stricken churches and brethren who dwelt in Judea.

2. Were all the churches that cooperated and sent funds rich? II Cor. 8:1-14 Paul states in vs. 3 "and beyond their power they were willing of themselves" or "gave of their own accord." This church was very poor but gave to another church to do a good work that it could not do alone. Hence, church cooperation is found in the Bible!

3. Were any churches forced by some other church to contribute? II Cor. 8:3-5 shows that they did it out of love, giving themselves first to the Lord, and then praying that the apostles would take the gift to the churches in need.

4. Had these churches been commanded to help? II Cor. 8:8 No, they cooperated out of love because they had developed the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, as the Bible teaches in Gal. 5:22. Hence, they helped another church do a good work.

5. Were churches given a quota to send? II Cor. 8:12-14 Not at all, because it says in vs. 12 “according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not!”

6. To whom was the money they gave sent? Acts 11:29 says “determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea” and vs. 30, “sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.” The point here is that churches cooperated with another church to do a good work which they could not do alone! Here in the Bible we have church cooperation which the conservative creed says is sinful and wrong to do!

CONSERVATIVE CREED STATEMENT: “The same principle that condemns the Missionary Society also condemns the Herald of Truth.”

BIBLE TRUTH ANSWER:

1. The Herald of Truth is a program of the Highland church; it is not an independent organization like the Missionary Society! The Herald of Truth does not violate the great commission given in Matthew 28:16-20. The great commission was given to the apostles, and then handed down, vs. 20, to all the churches when Jesus said, “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” The Missionary Society takes this away from and out of the hands of the churches and its elders. Jesus did not believe that we needed a separate society to do this! Matthew 16:18. God’s eternal plan for spreading the Gospel was the church. Eph. 3:10-11 The Herald of Truth violates none of this because it is under the oversight of its elders. In Acts 13:1-3 and Acts 15:30-41, Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and Mark depended upon the church to finance their work with no outside organization. So does the Herald of Truth. The Missionary Society is completely different and unscriptural; therefore it is wrong!

CONSERVATIVE CREED STATEMENT: “The same principle that condemns the Missionary Society condemns the Children’s Homes.” Conservatives are afraid that the orphan homes will become churches, usurping the power of the church.

*Note: At this point in our study I want to suggest that you read a tract written by Brother V.E. Howard entitled “Institutionalism-Orphan Homes and Church Cooperation”, copyright 1970, published by Central Printers and Publishers, P.O. Box 1456, West Monroe, Louisiana 71291. I have received verbal permission to include some of Brother Howard’s articles in this book. See pages 14-15.

1. ORPHAN HOME NOT A CHURCH

In view of the facts, how could godly men oppose the work of orphan homes and the cooperation of churches in other works, since the human institution does not usurp the authority of the divine institution? The orphan home is not a church. The orphan home does not displace the church. The home for orphans, directed by Christians, is only a method, a means in the hands of members of the church, the church at work, doing the things commanded by Christ. Remember, He did not specify HOW, but HE did specify that it be done.

But, someone is heard to say, “Do not the homes for children and homes for the aged take the place of the church in their work?” No, they do not. A home for homeless or deserted children takes the place of a home and not the church. The home is a human institution and the church is a divine institution. We have already discussed the ways in which their works overlap. Both are Scriptural.

2. ORPHAN HOME A MISSIONARY SOCIETY

As just stated, the home for the homeless is a home to replace the God-appointed home, which might be your home, or my home. Now, question, “Is the Missionary Society parallel to your home?” If so, then the Missionary Society is God-sanctioned and God-appointed. You do not believe that!

The terms “Missionary Society” are frightening words to many brethren. We believe the Missionary Society to be sinful. No doubt our “anti-orphan home,” “anti-church cooperation” brethren have made the charge that the orphan homes are the same as the Missionary Societies to command a little respect for their claims from the innocents. But I tell you it is inconceivable that these brethren actually believe this charge. For example: Our “anti” brethren will say that an individual can support an orphan home. Will they say that an individual can support a Missionary Society? If the orphan home and Missionary Society are the same, then they are forced to the conclusion that one may support a Missionary Society, although it is believed to be sinful.

Some of our “anti-orphan home brethren” advocated, for a while at least, the placing of a little contribution box in the vestibule of the church building, in which the individuals might deposit their contributions for orphan homes, so that the contribution would not be a contribution from the church—but from individual members of the church. Now, isn’t that something! How are you going to separate the “individual members of the church” from the “church—as such,” as the expression is used? But here is the point: our “anti” brethren charge the orphan home to be the same as a Missionary Society. If that be true, then these brethren should begin placing a little contribution box in the vestibule of church buildings for collections for a United Missionary Society! It’s good to place a box in the vestibule for the orphan homes; the orphan homes and the Missionary Societies are the same; therefore, it is good to place a box in the vestibule for the Missionary Society! Objections?

I have an idea that many brethren have been persuaded into the “anti-orphan home,” “anti-church cooperation” position because of this cry, “Missionary Society,” when they do not even know what a “Missionary Society” is. Don’t you know that a Missionary Society is a society, or association, of a combination of churches. The Society, through its governing officials, choose for, act for, direct and assess the congregations in all matters relating to the missionary work of the congregations. The Missionary Society is a human institution with legislative authority to build, support, and control orphan homes, homes for the aged, and missionary works of the combined unit of congregations. How could any sincere person say that an orphan home is a Society which controls a combination of congregations; that an orphan home builds, controls, and operates many orphan homes for the congregations under the orphan home’s jurisdiction? The home which Christians operate for the homeless is parallel to a home. How could a home be

parallel with something which builds, controls, and operates many homes? Why will brethren pervert and deceive?

EARLY YEARS

I wish to relate some of my experiences when I, myself, thought that anti-ism was the way to be and that anti-ism was the truth. First of all, I lived 50 miles away from the church building where I grew up, and the preacher persuaded me that those other churches of Christ were not holding to the truth. So, for years I drove this long distance to go to church. I now see that this was all in vain and a waste of my time and gasoline.

I would stop in sometimes and see just how bad those “liberals” were. Differences were extreme and disagreements would break out. So I would argue and then leave them to “show them up” like the preacher back at the home church said I should do. As I think back, I hate all of what I did. I ask these churches (you know who you are) to please forgive me because you were right and I was wrong, and I was misled. I have since gone back and prayed with one of these congregations. As I would talk to the so-called liberals, one of them said something that started me to thinking. This good old brother said to me, “Hey now, wait a minute. The church can’t help people who are strangers or children in these homes who are not yet baptized members? How do you know strangers are not members or angels (Heb 13:2)?” He would say that you cannot tell every time who is a member and who is not. But, Jesus said, “I was a stranger and you took me not in.” Mat 25:43. He would also say children are safe in the kingdom already. Also, if they become baptized, as many do in these children’s homes, what are you going to do about those who get baptized? He would also say, Gal 6:10 says, “Let us do good unto all men, especially those of the household of faith.” You see, brothers and sisters, it wasn’t until years later that I looked at the beginning of the Galatian letter to see that Paul was talking to the churches of Galatia. You see, it is only natural that he would address them as brethren, but our preacher confused me by saying he was only addressing the brethren. He would point with his finger and say this could only be individual responsibility and not church action. This is rubbish I no longer believe. Back when Paul was alive it was more natural for the heads of the houses to take the lead, and men were enjoyed more as the father figures in the church. If I would have read my Bible more closely, as I do now, I would have noticed that the whole letter is addressed to the churches of Galatia Gal. 1:1-2. Then he says “brethren,” so all of the heads of the households in the various churches of Galatia would listen up. Church action and individual action go hand in hand. It takes a slanted, over-zealous view to strain and wrest with the scriptures to point to the word “brethren” and ignore that at the beginning of the letter that he is addressing the churches of Galatia. If the whole church decides to help anyone they are at liberty to do so. I can take both verses instead of just one and help both kids and strangers out of the collection or out of my pocket and fulfill both verses better and keep all of the Bible instead of just taking one word in a verse and building a conservative anti-view about the one word brethren. Not only that, but I have been taught that the more scriptures you use to apply on any subject is far better than one word of the Bible. So, I was a stranger and you took me not in. Let “us,” the church, do

good unto all men, but don't stop there. You individuals can do it too. It's good to help everyone in need, especially they of the household of faith. When will brothers stop twisting the scriptures using just one word in a verse to push an idea that they want to push. This type of thinking caused me, as a young man, no end of problems and confused me at first, but not anymore!!

EXPLANATIONS

Dearly beloved, Paul is saying, as we the Church and we the brethren have therefore opportunity, let us do good to either group. This is why the spirit puts it all together in the plural in this verse...so we won't miss it! If Paul were talking about members only, he would not have separated the two groups by saying "especially those of the household of faith." You have to exclude the "we" and "unto the churches of Galatia" and take on the one word brethren by itself to take on their conservative position. After they do this they make some new laws and say you cannot help strangers or outsiders out of the collection. Where does it say this in all of God's word? Scriptures please!

They say you are permitted to only help members or people who are not strangers with the Lord's money. Jesus said in Mat. 25:43, "I was a stranger and you took me not in." The phrase "took me not in" includes all things necessary to take care of this stranger. Beloved, don't you know it's a sin to make a law where God did not make a law? Beloved, don't you know it's a sin to separate the two groups of people and in so doing make God a respecter of persons (Rom 2:11) in the benevolence of the church? Beloved, don't you know that the brothers of all the churches of Galatia are the church, and that the church is made up of the brethren? Generally speaking, anything the brothers can do, the church can do. Is it biblical for you to help an outside stranger? YES! Is it biblical for the church to help an outside stranger? YES! Gal. 6:10; 2Cor.8:9,18-19; 2 Cor. 9:12-13 KJV, and I Thes. 3:12.

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

The Galatian writer uses two words in this passage to refer to the church: "we" and "us," both of which are used to describe the church's relationship to others. All means all. Everyone. One can't exclude people outside of the church from this. The church is to do good unto all men especially to those of the household of faith, which means especially Christians, but also non-Christians.

We, the church, and us, the individuals. Two groups receiving the help. Inside members and outside strangers. Do I have a responsibility to both groups? YES. Can I do it by myself if I want to? YES. If it's too much for me, can I get the church to help? YES. Does the church have the same love responsibility to both groups? YES! Can the church do it to both groups? YES. This is all voluntary benevolence. Is God a respecter of persons? NO. Not when you do it his way! Let's not make him out to be one, by taking

on the “conservative” doctrine, and say the church can’t help someone outside of the church with the “Lord’s money.” All of the money in the church and in the world belongs to God. To be consistent with this “conservative” doctrine, a preacher who receives a salary of the “Lord’s money” could not help anyone that is not a member with the money he received from the church. This is crazy!

Where did the term “Lord’s money” come from anyway? I don’t remember reading this in the Bible. Do you? In First Corinthians 16:1, it was called the “collection for the saints” which was to be used by the saints to relieve the poor who were oppressed in the area of Judea. The Bible doesn’t say anything about whether all the people who were helped in this cooperation effort were members or non-members. To be consistent you couldn’t even help the children who had not yet become baptized believers even though their parents were members using this conservative position!

If splitting up the two groups were what God had intended for us to do, it would have been spelled out in the Bible in no uncertain terms. Love benevolence is under a general command in the Bible. (Mark 12:30-31) We are not left to build a whole conservative position with the one word “brethren!” I think they do this because it makes them feel super-religious. This is all wrong, and never should have been an issue at all. We should never have debated and argued in front of the eyes of the whole untaught world about the care and feeding of abused, neglected, and orphaned children. How cold and hard-hearted could we have become! It’s no wonder we don’t grow in spirit and in number like we did prior to the 1957 debates.

I know what some of you are thinking right at this moment. Abused and neglected children have fathers and mothers to care for them and should not be charged by the church. I agree, if they were under the permanent instructions of First Timothy 5:4,16. Conservatives misuse and do not understand these verses. Can’t you see that there are two kinds of benevolences in the scriptures and that Paul is giving instructions to both families and the church. The type he is giving instructions about in verse 9 is to the church, and it is permanent benevolence for the rest of their lives. This benevolence must be done if their families fail or their mates are rendered dead or desolate in such a condition that the other parties of the family are rendered desolate too. Permanent, mandatory obligation is what I see here, and only after the families are desolate.

What kind of benevolence is Paul talking about in Galatians 6:10 then? Can we apply this set of instructions from First Timothy 5:9,16 to Galatians 6:10? NO, WE CANNOT! If we rightly divide the scriptures, and if God is my helper, we will show the difference in the two. Can’t you see that Galatians 6:10 shows instructions for the church and us as individuals to voluntarily be benevolent unto all men whether or not they are members of the Church. The key to understanding is in the gentle words “as we therefore have opportunity.” Paul is trying to show the voluntary obedient love, benevolence, that is spoken about in Galatians 5:22-23. This is one of the fruits of the spirit that comes as a result of love. In verse 23, it says there is no law against love; hence, I believe voluntary benevolence is a result of love, and there is no law against this kind of love. The money help donated by the church or the individual to these children’s homes today is temporary

in nature, until the children can catch their breath and grow up a few years and get out on their own. It is mishandling the scriptures to apply what our permanent obligation duty is to widows who have no other means of support and then apply First Timothy 5:9,16 to people who need our love and support in Galatians 6:10. If we give our love when love is needed, like in Galatians 6:10, and duty obligation when duty is done, as in First Timothy 5:9,16, then correct dividing and obedience of all the scriptures can be achieved. We need to recognize both types of benevolence in the scriptures. This correct dividing of the scriptures is consistent with the scriptures in love, temporary benevolence, and permanent, rest of your life, benevolence. The “let us” in Galatians 6:10 is voluntary love, so it would follow...no law against love. Gal. 5:23. But the instructions of First Timothy 5:9,16 are must do’s, legislative laws for widows 60 and over, and her children, if any, in the church. We have to do this in the church. The term “church charged” shows that this type of benevolent instruction is mandatory.

In reproving the younger widows under 60 we must also consider the time of this writing of Paul to Timothy, about AD 64-67. This was a time of great persecution, and there was not much funds to do as they wished, most likely. They most likely did not have an area of “as we therefore have opportunity” available to them, so they could show their love with the opportunity to do so. To voluntarily show love to all men, GAL 6:10, many things have to be right for this to happen. Your own widows and their children would have to have plenty and you yourself would have to have the funds to show love. Your own family would have to be taken care of by you, and if it’s the church, it would mean that the church has to have the funds to do voluntary love benevolence. But still you need an opportunity, as it says in verse 10 “let us” is strictly voluntary love. This is the spirit coaxing you to develop the fruit of the spirit called love. Then you give, or the church will give of their own free will to the cause “do good unto all men.” It might not always be money...it could be time, food items...etc. If it’s the church, it’s the same thing....food...money.

It all boils down to voluntary benevolence because of your love, or the church’s love has developed the fruit of the spirit. Nothing can stop love when its God’s kind of love, the fruit of the spirit. There is no law against love. Why do they make one then? I have never in all my life known of any of these children’s homes telling you that you HAD to give to them. It’s always been voluntary benevolence brought about by love. So, you see, then, let not the church be charged is not at stake here. When the church wants to give of its own free will, it is love, not obligatory duty. The church is charged with widows who fit the pattern of the scripture in First Timothy 5. No one ever charged any church of Christ saying “you have to help these homes.” But, there is no doubt that God has ordained that we, the churches, through love, are to develop the fruit of the spirit and do good unto all men. 2 Cor.9:12,13; 2 Cor. 8:9,18-19 are examples of church cooperation. But you see the how and the where to do these good works is left up to us. Our opportunities are going to come along as will the church’s. You don’t have to help these children’s homes; it’s voluntary, but you do have to help the poor and children. Jesus said, “the poor you have with you always.” MAT. 26:11; MARK 14:7 Whosoever will help a little child helps me...etc. MAT. 18:5 Whosoever gives a child a cup of cold water in my name shall not lose his reward. MAT 10:42 What’s the problem then?

The problem is that I was taught that it is a sin to use the collection of the church to do this. Also, it's a fact that all of the conservative churches teach that the ones who are helping the homes out of the "Lord's money" are doing wrong and they are sinning. Also, in the group I was in, they compelled the whole church not to do this as a church even if the members wanted to out of love. Many people left. They try to save face a little now by saying it's ok if you want to help the homes out of your own pocket, but it's a sin to do it out of the "Lord's money." How ridiculous! If the person does it because he has developed the fruit of the spirit in his life, it's ok, but, if the church does it because the whole church has developed the fruit of the spirit, it is a sin. This is a double standard, and this is making a law where God did not make a law. Also, the responsibility for the split of the church in 1957 is on the conservative's shoulders because, prior to 1957, many of the churches of Christ were doing this on a voluntary basis. Churches were told to stop, even though they felt the fruit of spirit to do it. How sad it is!

I heard disagreements among the so-called conservative groups where I attended, such as the things in the next related subject:

BUYING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN BY THE CHURCH AND EXPLANATIONS

A long time after the debates were over, I heard different members and one preacher of the so-called conservative church say it was ok for the church to buy services for one of the children in the church to employ one of these homes to take care of a child who was a child of one of their members who was deceased. For a time at least, it was said that it was ok to buy services from the homes much like you would buy services from a hospital or a nursing institution. The church could pay the bills at a hospital for one of its members, if need be, so, in like manner, they could buy services for one of their own children. After a few years they changed their minds because they disagreed about this too. So now, to be consistent, they say this is wrong too. Now they say you can't pay any institution ever to take care of a child because it's wrong, it's a sin.

You have to take care of them in your own home. How ridiculous! I ask you, conservative brothers, this: Can you even help pay for a widow indeed's hospital bill out of the treasury of a church? Hospitals are institutions too. Is it the government paper work that makes it a sin to pay for a widow's hospital bill, or a child's, out of the "Lord's money?" Or maybe it's because, in the children's homes, they take care of more than one child at time. They do this on an organized basis to keep the laws of the state. The laws say you must incorporate when you are taking care of many children to be classified tax-free.

I hear from the conservatives that you have to take care of them in your home. Not every one in the church can do this type of pure and undefiled religion that they make a law and compel you to do. What if a couple in the church are in their 80's and are very feeble and

can't physically do the job? They want to show love, but they can't practice pure religion, and it's a sin to help a home that takes care of children out of the Lord's money.

I don't think conservatives have thought this through completely. This is why I'm writing this book to help some of them who listen, consider, and think. Let's say a group of elders in a so-called conservative church have a family of 12 people who are members, 2 adults and 10 kids. The parents go on vacation and get killed in a car wreck. Let's say the preacher and his wife agree to take these 10 children into their home because the rest of the their kin are not members of the church and don't want to take on the burden of the 10 kids, but say they will help with some of the expenses. The elders of the church would surely come to the financial help of the preacher and his wife and the 10 children. The state tells the church and the preacher you must incorporate the children's home or pay taxes on your donations, so they do it obeying the laws of the state and the Bible. At what point did these people sin? In case some of you don't know it **THIS WOULD BE AN ORPHAN'S HOME, A TAX FREE INSTITUTION.** To be consistent with conservative doctrine, the preacher could not use any of his church help money to take care of the children because it's a sin to use the "Lord's money" to help his home, which is now an institution. Only two of the children have become members of the church, so only two could be helped out of the Lord's money. We will have to ask the members of the church for individual donations all of the time to make up the difference to take care of the children. Jesus said, "I was a stranger and you took me not in"(Matthew 25:43), but it's a sin to help me out of the Lord's money because the kids are not members. Jesus has been represented as a stranger in the face of many small children since the 1957 debates and has not been taken in by the so-called conservative churches. Any way you look at it this is very selfish and sinful.

I suppose if this were to happen to a conservative church, like in the illustration, they would split up the kids into different groups and not incorporate the home, pay taxes on all the donations, and beg their members for donations, so none of the money used to help the kids who are not yet members would be used out of the Lord's money. Also, if you follow their doctrine to its conclusion, none of these children could be helped to go to school or college because the schools and colleges are institutions, and we can't do this out of the "Lord's money." How ridiculous and absurd this so-called conservative doctrine is when you follow it to its conclusion!

You so called conservative people better think this through before it's too late! Our Lord, Jesus, is represented as a stranger through these children. Matt. 25:43 **HE IS SAYING YOU TOOK ME NOT IN!** Personally, I would rather die having done some benevolent work wrong at some point rather than meeting my Lord and having to say, "Our preacher told us it was wrong to do it!" You're only going to hear Jesus say what he promised He would say: "I was a stranger and you took me not in." We need to learn to think for ourselves, so we won't hear those words from Jesus. By then it will be too late to make an excuse. Poor, poor is the soul that has missed its mark in life and eternity and hear the words, "Depart from me, and in as much as you did it not to the least of one of these you did it not unto me!" The "least of these" statement could be timeless in nature. At judgment, people could be standing there that were mistreated or abused when they were

kids. After having grown, died, and gone to judgment, “the least of these” could be referring to them when they were children in their lives or character.

In Branson, where I preach, we have a lot people knock on the door of the church building asking for food or lodging. We help most all of them when they ask this of us. What kind of an influence would I have, or feeling would I create, if I were to tell each of them we can’t help you out of the church money because you are not members, and I myself cannot help all of you out of my own pocket all the time because I simply am not able? If I were to start telling them that, what would be their perception of this and ALL churches of Christ? They most likely wouldn’t want to have anything to do with a church like that. I have already had an individual come to our congregation in search of some help who was sent away by the “conservative” group in town. This person told me that the other group sent them our way because they were “barking up the wrong tree” with them. The anti group will only help their own members. We helped them even though they were strangers to us. Is there a scripture going off in your ears? Jesus said, “I was a stranger and you took me not in...” Is a stranger a brother? They may or may not be depending upon the situation. Yet, if they aren’t a brother, one may create an opportunity to help them and teach them, simply by reflecting the love of Christ in benevolence toward them. We, at West 76 Church of Christ, are happy to say that we have taught and baptized many of these strangers since we started this congregation. Many are still faithful; some are not. The point is this: If we would have done nothing, many of these people would have most likely never have even heard the gospel and would have missed out on a chance to learn how to be saved. It is better to have loved them than to have never showed them love. One would be hard pressed to teach someone the gospel after having told them that the church wasn’t allowed to help them out of the “Lord’s money.”

What’s even more ludicrous is the fact that the money in the treasury, and the money in my pocket, and the pocket that holds it, and the pants the pocket is in, and the body that wears those pants, and the soul that inhabits that body, all belong to the Lord! Why make a distinction between the money in the treasury and the money in my own pocket when it all belongs to God anyway? As long as it all is used to fulfill a need or purpose, it shouldn’t matter what it’s called.

I have heard it said by conservatives that it is safe for us to follow this conservative idea because many of our good men have decided it is best and safe to do this. Though they may be good men, no good man has a right to object to anything that another Christian or church has a right to do! The churches and the individuals throughout this entire country are sending donations to these homes as voluntary benevolence brought about because of the development of the trait of the spirit “called love” and there is no law against this kind of love. Read Gal. 5:22-23. It is wrong for any brother to make a law against showing love in this way, no matter how good or pious he claims to be. Even though they are good men they don’t have a right to object and condemn any brother or church who voluntarily practices pure and undefiled religion by this method. If our “charity love” does not come from the heart it is not the result of the fruit of the spirit. There is no law against this kind of heart-felt spirit produced love on a voluntary basis! It is wrong to make these laws that the conservatives state and practice that I don’t find in the Bible.

The real truth is that you can do these acts of love by giving to the homes either way, voluntarily out of your own heart and pocket or, if the church agrees, voluntarily out of the collection of the church. Why? Either way it is voluntary love benevolence, and the fruit of the spirit is love.

It is wrong to take the legislated law of permanent compulsory duty (I Tim 5), which involves widows in the church, and apply it like they do to temporary voluntary love benevolence of each case of need that arises from time to time. Also, I believe it is wrong to separate and be a respecter of persons by dividing these two groups of non-members and members. This practice is not found in all of God's word. Scriptures, please, antis?

Conservatives will ask you where is the command to build an orphan's home? I will tell you right now. You will find it in the same verse that the Lord tells you how to do the work. There is no person alive who can find one verse in God's book which tells us exclusively how this work is to be done, but, without question, in Matthew 25, we are commanded to be careful to maintain these good works. The how and the where are not clearly stated and should not have had to be stated. The "how" is a matter of expediency or wisdom of ourselves. So, it would follow then, that if the expediency of it violates no other rules in God's word, it is lawful.

Benevolent works by members and churches is under a general command for us to do. Read Matthew 25 and Galatians 6:10. We are supposed to develop the will and desire to do these good works because of the fruit of the spirit.

Love is charity! If we make a law against this kind of love we legislate where God did not make any law. We are guilty of usurping the authority of Christ. See II John 9.

When the conservatives say you have to take children into your home, and this is the only way it can be done, this is making a law where God did not make a law. I believe it is sinful and wrong to bind this line of thinking on the whole church at large.

The conservatives violate their own liberty when they bind this on their own congregations. They have also tried to bind these laws on all the other churches in the brotherhood, but without success.

Troubles come when brothers legislate where God did not legislate, and try to bind where God did not bind these laws. They try to seek to force their own opinions of "how and where" upon the whole church at large. Don't you know and see that this divides the true church and makes an unholy spectacle of the true church before an unregenerated world of unbelievers.

TAX-FREE ENTITIES OR CORPORATIONS AND LOVING OUR NEIGHBORS AS OURSELVES

Our government wants to help charities. The U.S. considers churches tax-free charities, even though all the money donated by the members is not used for helping people. This is very good for our government to take such a generous stand in favor of churches and all institutions. These help the poor and downtrodden.

I know that most all of the so-called conservative church groups do incorporate. However, they refuse to help the children's homes because they incorporate. You probably have not stopped to think about something that I am going to tell you now. If the government gets on to the fact that you refuse to help anyone who is a non-member, and you discriminate between members and non-members out of the collection, you could lose your tax-free status. You could start paying about fifteen percent income taxes on all your collections and donations. Basically, this could happen if you have no compassion as a church at the congregational level and help all the poor the same.

In England and most all the countries of Europe churches are taxed just like businesses, paying about fifteen percent of all their donations to the government. In England, Parliament gives out so much of this fifteen percent to all of the denominations. The Catholic church gets the largest amount of the fifteen percent that is taxed to the churches. I guess you conservatives just don't care about this any, do you?

I ask you to think with me for just a minute. What is so bad and sinful, as you put it, about a group of Christians getting together and helping more than one child at a time, not discriminating against them if they are not yet members of the church, then forming a board of directors to handle and take care of all the necessary things? These people are helping children in an organized way. This is done decently and in order, like the Bible puts it. The board of directors, as is called by the government, only does the work of deacons or helpers. These are still under the oversight of the elders. The board of directors, or deacons, consults the elders in each of these homes where they got started.

The government says if you fill out a few papers and send them to us, we will classify you, by our titles and records, a tax-free institution. The government says we won't tax your donations, and, if you purchase property or buy materials or anything for the church or the home, we won't charge you sales tax. What a deal for God's people and the kids! Most of you so-called conservative churches are quick to get yourself into a tax-free corporation for the congregations where ever you are. You don't hear me saying you are a different human organization because of this and that you have changed the church into a human institution, words that you hate so much. If it is okay to change your congregations into institutions by incorporation, why is it not okay for children's homes to incorporate like you do? You have a double standard of truth, one for yourselves when you incorporate, and a different standard for the children's homes when they incorporate.

I've heard you say this, "When churches of Christ around the country give money out of the Lord's money to a human institution, I have a problem with that." Yet all or most of you have made your own congregations a human institution when you went tax-free and incorporated. It would follow then that all of you tax-free so-called conservative churches are giving money to your human institution each week. If not, why not? Scriptures, please, antis? You called the homes "other organizations" in the 1957 Birmingham debates. I see a double standard here if you are incorporated tax-free.

To brothers and sisters in Christ, I want to say this. I don't think the so-called conservative brethren have thought this through to all of its end results and conclusions. Do you? I would like to think that some of them might change their minds when they discover, like I did, that I and they are accusing the so-called liberal churches and children's homes of the same thing that they are guilty of and are doing daily!

I changed my mind, and it's only in love that I write this book to try and coax some of them to think before it's too late.

When they hear Jesus say on judgment day, "I was a stranger and you took me not in," and "in as much as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not unto me." It will be too late then to say to Jesus, "Our preacher told us it's wrong to do it." You're only going to hear Jesus say then what he promised he would say. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment but the righteous into life eternal." Matthew 25:46. Why won't you change your mind and do what Jesus said to all people without separating them into two groups, strangers and brethren. See Galatians 6:10. This way strangers feel the congregation's love, just like brothers do. (Proof scriptures: IICor. 8:9, 18, 19; II Cor. 9: 12, 13; III John 5-8, I Thess. 3:12)

Just a note to make right here, as I am doing a sermon on love for Sunday, I am considering my neighbor and the church's neighbors. The text scripture that I am leading in with is on love. In Mark 12:30 it says, "And thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment." Verse 31 tells me the second commandment is like it, namely this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." How can I follow this if I use the so-called conservative view and start treating neighbors, who are not members, by treating with less love and compassion than I do a brother in Christ! How can I love a neighbor the same if I tell him, when he knocks on the church door, asking for some food to eat, "We can't help you out of the church money because you are not a member brother in Christ yet." It's the same as saying I can be loved because I'm a brother in Christ, but I can't love you as much as myself would be loved out of the collection of the church. We have to treat you different. No, folks, my Bible says, "Love your neighbor as yourself." That means love him just like he was a brother in Christ. You see, this so-called conservative view, does not fit the pattern of the love your neighbor as yourself tone of the scriptures at all. The double standard that the so-called conservatives go by is a respecter of persons standard that they set up themselves when they dwell too much on the word 'brethren.'

Can I, and do we, love a brother using the collection? Yes! Can I, and do we, love a neighbor or a stranger using the collection? Yes! Now this fits the two verses, Mark 12: 30, 31. Also, we are not looking like a respecter of persons before the eyes of a neighbor or stranger and before the eyes of God who asked us to love them as ourselves!

FIXING THE RESPONSIBILITY OF HUMAN CARE BY THE BIBLE

Where does the first line of responsibility for children's care or widow's care reside? The Bible answer is with their natural mothers or fathers. Read Eph. 6:1-4 and I Tim. 5:8.

Where does the second line of responsibility for children's care reside? The Bible answer is with any living relative or next of kin. Read I Tim. 5:4

When checking with some of these children's homes, I asked the question, "Do you ever get in contact with these children's relatives to see if they will help with some of the care of their own children?" The answer is "Oh, yes, we keep them informed on a regular basis and ask them to take on some or all of their cost and upkeep." We remind them of their responsibility and report on the children to them. However, most of the parents have been deemed unfit by the state courts and have had their children taken away.

So, you see, brothers, I Tim. 5:8 applies here: "But, if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Even if they are not members their actions deny the faith. So, you see, in fixing the responsibility, this scripture applies to anyone who will not or does not take on his or her own responsibility, much less anyone who abuses their offspring. We need in love to remember the need of those children whose parents are worse than an infidel. This need of love does not somehow go away or disappear because the Bible states this terrible thing about them. The children still cry out for bread and shelter! When parents sexually abuse children and don't take care of their human needs, causing the state to deem them unfit, the scripture which fixes the responsibility is I Tim 5:8.

The instructions for the church are stated this way, "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them and let not the church be charged that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." This is a good and wholesome scripture, isn't it? This scripture fixes the responsibility with family members for those who have living relatives with them and fixes the responsibility for widows indeed squarely on the church, doesn't it? I think we can all agree here to the Bible, can't we? What's good for the church also applies to the world, but all in the world do not do this, sadly.

The point is, you conservatives, got the whole premise of the 1957 Birmingham, Alabama debates wrong. You debated against I Tim. 5:16, I Tim. 5:4, I Tim. 5:8, and Eph. 6:1-4. You stated, "It's the church's job to care for orphans and the aged, not these man-made created homes." By saying "it's the church's job" you fixed the responsibility on the churches. We just got through showing how it is not the church's fixed

responsibility for anyone except widows indeed. When the churches give to these homes it is done out of love, not fixed responsibility. In all these years, since the 1957 debates, I can't see for the life of me why this has not dawned on you! It's done out of love!!!! Also, you still insist it's a sin for churches to voluntarily show their love this way. Why hasn't it dawned on you that there's no law against this kind of love.

WIDOWS INDEED TODAY

Have you ever seen a widow indeed in this day and age with all the government of Social Security, the welfare, and aid to dependent children, etc? I can just hear you say, "Well, Brother North, why do you insist that the churches can donate to these homes then?" The answer is that all of you conservatives have missed the point as to why the churches want to donate. When they do it, it is out of love, and there is no rule or law that they break.

I don't know of a single one of these homes that ask any church to donate to them because of a fixed responsibility coming from the Bible. Children's homes all ask for voluntary donations because of love, which is the fruit of the spirit, Gal. 5:22-23. What is the Bible saying here? Love is the first word here. So, against this kind of love, there is no law. What kind of love is it talking about here? This is not love between men and women, because we know there are laws governing that, and not love of country. This kind of love is produced by the fruit of the spirit, and it is feeling concern, help, charity, and giving to kids who need a second chance at life. It is not Bible fixed responsibility or compulsory duty, meaning taken in to the number, which is done for widow's indeed. No, it is temporary fruit of the spirit-produced love. It's temporary for the years that it takes for the kids to grow up and get out on their own. Many of these children have become members. Why won't you voluntarily give something to them, showing them and God the fruit of the spirit type of love? Paul says there is no law against this. Even if you don't want to do this, why won't you stop condemning all the churches of Christ who do it because of the fruit of the spirit God has produced in them?

More than all of this, beloved, why won't you stop splitting churches by calling them liberal and talking down to them? Do you know Isa 32:8 states this, "But the liberal deviseth liberal things and, by liberal things shall he stand." (KJV) These homes are all supported by liberal voluntarily fruit of the spirit love donations by churches of Christ and individual members. Also, I have noticed businesses of the surrounding communities pitching in to help to the glory of God. Remember, the children's homes do not run the churches. Any church can start a donation at any time, and any church can stop any donations at any time because they are all voluntary love donations.

Your autonomy is never violated because it is completely voluntary if you give because you feel God's love. Friends and brothers, our hearts need to be bigger than our fear of God, because perfect love casts out fear! (I John 4:18)

When I was going to church with the conservatives, the idea that seemed to prevail was that if you ever sent one dollar of the collection money to one of these children's homes you were going to hell, and there was no doubt about it! How absurd and ridiculous this mind-set is of theirs. There's no law against love (Gal. 5:22-23). However, these people have convinced whole congregations of people that there is a law against love by making

up this one: It's a sin to send money out of the collection of the church to a children's home.

NO CONFLICT BETWEEN GALATIANS 6:10 AND I TIMOTHY 5

Can the whole church show their love because of fruit of the spirit that's in the church and help the widow under 60 over a tough, temporary situation in her life? Absolutely! And this would not be taking her into the number, giving her permanent help. Cases like this happen ever so often anyway. I don't see why I Timothy 5 and Galatians 6:10 have any conflict with each other, and I don't see why both scriptures cannot be carried out if we all have the fruit of the spirit and the respect to carry out both scriptures. Simply put, don't charge the church by taking her into the number of those who are helped permanently but show her your love by helping her temporarily.

Also, talk to her living relatives and try to persuade them to help, therefore fulfilling I Timothy 5:4. It states, "Let them learn to show pity at home." Giving her temporary help does not constitute permanent (taking her into the number) help. You see, if we go by all the scriptures, and not just apply I Timothy 5 to every case of need, we are able to obey all the scriptures on benevolence and not make any laws against love. I Timothy 5 does not stamp out or change love if you rightly divide the word of truth enough to do both scriptures.

The Bible seems to be saying to not saddle every unmarried widow into the permanent number who are cared for entirely by the church. My conservative brothers think that if the church gets involved in temporary love (Gal. 6:10) that they are going to violate the principles of I Tim. 5 because of the restrictions put on younger widows here. I disagree. Why? It would not be taking into the number and charging the church with all of her upkeep even if the church helped her on a temporary basis. This was probably already taking place in the church where Timothy taught.

Evidently, hard times were on the church in I Tim. 5, or just around the corner. We need to keep in mind the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. More than likely, because of the example of the first church, of having all things common, this seems to be what was going on with the whole church where Timothy was preaching. It probably got to where most of the congregation was just depending on the church to keep them up. They were not working daily, as they should. This is evident by I Tim. 5:13 and surrounding scriptures. Paul states in verse 13, "And withal they learned to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not."

What do I think? I think, if they had all this idle time and kinfolks who were able to help, they needed to start some kind of work to bring in at least part of their upkeep, and then the rest of their support should have been supplied by their next of kin.

So what is the next the wholesome scripture that has to be applied? Just read on down to verse 14 and 16. Paraphrasing both verses, get married, bear children, and, in verse 16, “Let not the church be charged!” Charged with what? Let not the church be charged with just what the single subject matter is---permanent upkeep.

TOO FEARFUL OF ONE SCRIPTURE

I Timothy 5:16

The savior talks about a type of person in the scriptures (Mat. 25:24) that was so fearful of the Lord that he said, “I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth” You conservatives know the answer to this parable how the Lord was so displeased with the fellow that he took his one talent and gave it to someone else who would make better use of it. Not only this, but this one talent man went out on his own information, not obeying his Lord, by changing something. This one talent man made up his own law to give back his one talent so he and it would be so safe on judgment day.

When you conservatives make up your own rules to the point that you can’t help any non-members out of the “Lord’s money” you do much like this one talent man. You hide your money, not producing the love of the fruit of the spirit like the one talent man. Brothers, it is wrong to be so fearful of one scripture that you shut down the church’s love at the congregational level for the non-member or a widow under 60.

Example: If we say that the church can never help anyone under 60 by looking too fearfully at I Tim. 5, saying we are limited to widows indeed over 60, then we make a big mistake at the congregational level.

I’ve heard some of you state this, as above. I’ve been around you many years. If we do this we lock up Gal. 6:10, Mat. 25:35, and James 1:25, unable to practice the fruit of the spirit at the congregational level (Gal. 5: 22).

When we say that only the individual can do these things because he is addressing only the individual, you make a law not stated in the Bible. I refuse to follow your made up law any longer because there is too much at stake if the whole church can’t show love and do good works at the congregational level. This means whole churches can’t show the love of the fruit of the spirit and that’s a made up law against love, going against Gal. 5: 22-23.

Why? Because the church can only be charged wrongly when the permanent obligation of someone’s care is charged to the church under 60. If not, why not? Let not the church be charged with what? The subject matter involved is permanent upkeep care of anyone under the age of 60 because it specifies “taken into the number.” If it’s not this way, then the Bible contradicts itself, and we know it does not! If it’s not this way, then there is a law against love, but we know that this is not so, and you people got it all wrong. When

the Bible says there is no law against this kind of love, it would include both church and individual. It does mean both! No law means no law, period!

Friends and brothers, our hearts of love benevolence needs to be bigger and stronger than our fear of God, in this type of fear for God only. Why? Because of I John 4:18 which states, "Perfect love casteth out fear."

I can only come to this conclusion, friends, that the so-called conservative groups have split the church because they are not yet perfect in love when it comes to this type of love. Along with their deficiency of love there is an over much fear of I Timothy 5:16 and surrounding scriptures. They take the compulsory duties of the church

and the individual and stamp out the type of love that we see in Gal. 5:22-23. Conservatives are too fearful of I Tim 5:16 and this causes them to wrongly understand this scripture. Therefore, and because of this, you conservatives stamp out love at the congregational level. Also, you split the church because of your unfounded fear! We are supposed to fear God for different reasons; however, we are not to fear God because of love. Conservatives, please listen to the spirit of God which tells you this in this last verse of scripture: I John 4:18, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

Oh, how we need to take a look at ourselves before it's too late!

HARD TIMES, TIMES OF PLENTY IN THE CHURCH, AND WIDOWS INDEED

I'm not sure that my so-called conservative brothers have considered some of the things that were just around the corner in A.D. 67 when the book of Timothy was written. Ask yourself what is going to happen in A.D. 70? Yes, the destruction of Jerusalem! Rome is going to be killing and hunting down Jews and Christians and feeding them to the lions.

Have you brothers ever stopped to think that the spirit speaking through Paul knows this and might just be setting rules in the text of the Bible to make sure "widows indeed" are being taken care of. Soon hard times are going to be on all the churches and there won't be many funds available for a long time, and money will be tight.

When conditions like these were coming on in A.D. 70 who did the church make sure that they provided for? The answer had to be "widows indeed." So, you see, I think God's instructions are perfect for all sorts of situations and hard times. I Timothy 5 makes sure "widows indeed" will be taken care of even in times like A.D. 70.

Today we don't have as many problems as they did in the days of the early church. Why? We have Social Security, Welfare, Aid to Dependent Children, and many more

programs in place. This is so true today in our society that you can hardly find a true “widow indeed” like in the days of Paul and Timothy.

The book of Timothy explains in depth what a “widow indeed” is. In short, she is destitute and unable to earn her own living. Listen to Paul speak in I Timothy 5:9-10 where he states, “Let not a widow be taken into the number under three scores years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints’ feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.” The Bible goes on to teach that if any Christian has widows let them (the Christian members) relieve them and let not the church be charged that it may relieve them that are “widows indeed.” In other words, the “widow indeed” has no kin folks to take care of her or no visible means of support! Paul is telling us to get our priorities straight and in line and do, for sure, take care of “widows indeed.”

PREREQUISITES OF VOLUNTARY LOVE

Love of God and impartial love of any neighbor is commanded to Israel of old in Mark 12:30 by Jesus himself. It would follow then, since the church is the Israel of God today, that the church is given a general command to do the same. However, we are told to do this as “we” therefore have opportunity to do good unto all men. The where, the how, the amount, and the ability to perform this is left entirely up to us as a church or an individual (Galatians 6:10). What does “as we therefore have opportunity” imply? God is coaxing us to love and good works, not wanting to force us to do the same, even though he commanded us to do so in Mark 12:30-31. God is wanting us to learn how to love like he does, naturally, as we feel blessed by him!

Now, I want to suggest some prerequisites to voluntary love that must be in place before we have the ability to perform God’s kind of love:

1. Enough funds to keep up with all church obligations.
2. Enough funds to preach the gospel, being done on a regular basis, reaching out to the world.
3. If there are any widows indeed, they are well taken care of, taken into the permanent number for the rest of their lives.
4. Enough funds to regularly worship wherever decided.
5. Money available in the collection and growing, so, if someone asks for help, we do have the opportunity financially.
6. We still don’t have the opportunity unless someone asks the church for love in the form of help or we see a need.
7. We still don’t have the opportunity unless the whole church has the desire to show love because they have allowed the love of God to bear the fruit of the spirit in their hearts.

8. If all other obligations are being met properly, and God has prospered the church by his love, then we bear the fruit of the spirit as a church to someone else---member or non-member.

This help could be for brothers or strangers. It doesn't make any difference (3 John 4,8). Because God is no respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11). God has shown his love to all the world alike by giving Jesus to die for all, so, we, as the church, should be like God and show our love just like He did to brothers and strangers alike.

Jesus set the example when he was with us. One of the apostles kept the bag. We simply are told it was for the poor, meaning Jews and Gentiles alike who Jesus would help out of the bag. We need to follow Jesus' example and help the poor, brothers or strangers, out to the church "bag," or collection, as it is called (I Cor. 16:1). We need to do this without respect of persons (Rom. 2:11) and without showing any partiality whatsoever.

The last thought that I have on this subject is that it is possible for the church to help strangers or brothers out of deep poverty. The Bible (II Cor. 8: 1-4) states this about the Macedonian church (vs. 3): "and beyond their power they were willing of themselves" or "gave of their own accord." This proves it was for strangers and members alike.

This is also shown in these scriptures: "Not only supplieth the want of the saints." (II Cor. 9:12) and "unto them and unto all men; (II Cor. 9:13), meaning strangers and Brothers. Conservatives ignore these scriptures.

MORE BIBLE EXAMPLES OF CHURCHES HELPING BROTHERS AND OUTSIDERS

Another example of love, which is charity done unto both groups, by the church, is I Thes. 3:12. "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another and toward all men, even as we do toward you." It is very evident that both groups were being helped here by the church because both groups are listed as being helped by the church. And may I remind you that Paul is addressing the whole church to listen and do this loving? Turn back to I Thes 1:1. "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians, which is in God, the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ."

Just because brothers, by themselves, can show the fruit of the spirit, does not limit this love shown only to brothers by the churches. I have shown several scriptures where churches are all involved together in having the fruit of the spirit and bearing this fruit of the spirit, which is love.

GAIUS, BELOVED BROTHER DOES GOOD THE CHURCH IS ENCOURAGED TO JOIN IN

In 3 John, the beloved Gaius is doing a good work to brethren and strangers. Two groups! When you read on in verses 6 and 8 John is encouraging the whole church to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth. Why should the church get involved in being fellow helpers if they are not to help anybody who is not a member out of the “Lord’s money?” John states, “Brethren and strangers, we ought to receive such that we might be fellow helpers.” This probably involved more than one church being fellow helpers to brethren and strangers, through example teaching.

THE ALL SUFFICIENCY OF THE CHURCH, THE HOME, AND THE GOVERNMENT

I want the people who read this book to know that I believe in the all sufficiency of all of three of these God-given spiritual institutions. Here are the scriptures to prove that they are spiritual and given by God, or else they would not be spoken of by God in the Bible.

1. The Government: Romans 13:1-7, I Peter 2:13-17.
2. The Natural Home (or its equivalent): I Peter 3:1-7, Ephesians 6:1-4, Colossians 3:18-21, Ruth taken in by Naomi (Ruth 1:16-19).
3. The Church: Matthew 16:18, Ephesians 4:1-16, Ephesians 3:21, Ephesians 2:19-22, I Peter 2:5.

All of the above spiritual institutions have their roots in the Bible and are ordained of God to be all-sufficient. Since I believe in the all sufficiency of all three of these, I also believe that it’s a step toward Catholicism for the church to take over the God-given duties of the home or the government. We are taught in the Bible (Romans 13:6-8) to give honor to whom honor is due and tribute to whom tribute is due. If we keep each God-given entity where it belongs in life and don’t try to take over its duties or authority, we will stay out of Catholicism and not change or overstep the authority of the scriptures when it comes to the church. I believe that the Bible teaches indirectly that the church should stay the church, the government should stay the government, and the home should stay the home. I believe this because God gave these all three their own respective authorities in the Bible.

DOING ALL THINGS TO THE GLORY OF GOD

The second part of verse 31 of I Corinthians 10 states, “whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.” If we take the conservative stand and insist that only individuals can do good works of the fruit of the spirit, what happens? If we insist that only individuals can help non-members we shut down the church at the congregational level from showing

love and bearing the fruit of the spirit, which is love. By doing this we stop the church from showing back to Christ the glory that she should show him because of her love and charity that we won't let her do at the congregational level.

The church is to have children and bear fruit through Christ. She is to bear the fruit of holiness and righteousness through good works. If she can't help a stranger, who Jesus says He is, how can she bear this kind of fruit to the glory of God. You conservatives stop her from doing this. How sad it is!

Other preachers have expressed these same feelings to me. You have boxed yourselves into a conservative corner position that cannot be defended from a scriptural standpoint.

Anti-people are so indrawn that they can't reach out to any stranger from the collection of the church. Remember, Jesus said, "I was a stranger, and you took me not in." Matthew 25:43 Well, get ready to explain to Him on judgment day why you refused to take him in out of the collection of the church! A stranger is not always a brother, you know? Why don't you "do all things to the glory of God" with the collection of the church at the congregational level?

ALMS OBJECTION ANSWERED

I've been told by the anti brethren that the whole church cannot help anyone who is a non-member. The reason they say this is because, if you do your alms, you are supposed to keep quiet about it, so no one else will give you the praise that God is going to give you. This statement takes this scripture out of context. In the first place, this scripture, Matthew 6:1, was in the days that Jesus walked among the Jews. No doubt, it was stated to the Jews by Jesus that they were to do their alms and not broadcast it out loud to show everyone how religious they were.

I don't know of any church of Christ today that shows its love and gives to children's homes that broadcasts how much they are giving. They all give strictly anonymously and even ask that it be kept a secret. So, they are following Jesus's words. The idea behind the giving is to reflect glory back to Christ in the minds of those who receive love from the church. Can the whole church show love to anyone at any time? The answer is yes. Why is this so? Again it is so, because there is no law against love! You, anti brethren just don't get it!

A CONCLUSION WHO'S TIME HAS COME

I really feel in my heart that because of fear of another organization, like the Missionary Society, caused the conservatives to overcorrect the problem that simply did not exist with the children's homes. It is okay for the church to give to the children's homes because they simply replace the work of a home and not the work of the church.

I realize that many in the church have turned to entertainment during the worship time, instead of Bible based worship like the early church did. Entertainment will never be worship, and worship will never be entertainment. There is simply no authority for entertainment. A bad mistake that the conservatives make is to lump entertainment together with everything else that they don't like, like the children's homes.

Then they yell, "liberalism" to the whole brotherhood at large. Don't you know that the Bible tells us to, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." (I Thes. 5:21) I feel that, without a doubt, that I have proved, by all the scriptures used in this book, that the children's homes are good! I have proved that the early church cooperated in works that were too large for one church to do alone by itself. So, I've proved that church cooperation is good also. By being so fearful of another organization and overcorrecting too far in the opposite direction, you throw out the children's homes, which only do the work of the natural home anyway. The conservatives split the church over the practice of voluntary love. (Gal. 5:22-23)

I tell you, friends and brothers, this individual, beautiful woman (the church) has every right to practice this kind of love in front of her husband, God Jesus! You, conservatives, believe that the church is a beautiful, singular woman, the bride of Christ, don't you? Well, if this be true, and you say only that the individual can do these good works of alms, why do you stop this individual from doing her alms in secret then? Christ only has one wife, and she is an individual, beautiful woman. Is she not? Why do you stop her from giving alms to poor strangers and children's homes? Even, by your terminology, you should let the church do her alms. Spiritually speaking, she is an individual.

Conservatives fail to realize that over correction of a problem leads to sin in the opposite direction. How is this so? They make up more rules and laws to go by to stay more conservative. None of us has a right to make one single rule or law in our religion because of II John 9 which states, "Whosoever goeth onward, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God." Also, no one has the right to take away any liberty that the church or the person has to make them be more conservative. (Gal. 5:1) This lead to division, just like it happened in 1957 after the Birmingham debates! Division is sinful and wrong when it is done for the above reasons, so they can divide and feel more conservative. Read I Cor. 1:10-13. Also, Isaiah 32:8 states this: KJV, "But the liberal deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand."

Personally, I wish that I would have been brought up in the other group, the one that the conservatives call liberal, because many positive things are stated in the Bible about the word liberal when dealing with people and brothers. I find nothing in the Bible about a conservative mind-set or a conservative church!

I am enjoying my newfound freedom and liberty that I have proved good by God's word. (I Thes. 5:21) I also feel that I have joined the builder's crew for Christ and have left the wrecker's crew, which is in opposition to the truth in love. (Eph. 4:15) Why? Because the conservatives have made laws against love wrongly! (Gal. 5:22-23)

After the 1957 Birmingham debates, I feel like the following has happened to the conservatives: “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” (I John 2:19)

By: Jerry A. North