

(Cont. from pg. 3) preachers (Philippians 4:10-20) and the only cause for support being sent from church to church was benevolence (Acts 11:27-30). Even this was not “funneled” through a receiving church in order to go to another church, but was for the relief of the church to which it was sent.

**The Discipling Movement.** In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century efforts were begun by some brethren to take a much more aggressive posture in evangelism. Unfortunately the direction this took with many in the Boston area involved both the adoption of an organizational structure that is unscriptural and methods of accountability that were unscriptural. A single church assumed oversight of what were referred to as “home churches.” Areas of the country were divided

up into districts of oversight. Converts were required to engage in a specific amount of Bible study a day and to confess their sins to their “sponsor” (who was not required to confess their own sin in return). While all Christians want to see the church grow, if we abandon our insistence upon Biblical authority for what we do, we are nothing more than just another denomination. In fact, those involved in this effort eventually formed the denomination known as the “International Church of Christ.”

By Kyle Pope

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# Faithful Sayings

## Olsen Park Church of Christ

4700 Andrews Avenue Amarillo, Texas 79106  
(806) 352-2809

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### Services

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.  
10:20 a.m.  
6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

### Elders:

Ken Ford  
Charles Kelley  
Pat Ledbetter

### Deacons:

Dean Bowers  
Eddie Cook  
Bill Davis  
Pat Goguen  
Neil Ledbetter  
Jeff Nunn  
Fred Perez  
Rusty Scott

### Evangelist:

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## Issues of Division Among Brethren

Among brethren in America, who first surrendered, and brethren have gone back into the apostasy of human traditions. In so doing the non-denominational New Lord's body has been splintered and brethren who were once united have been separated from one another. If we are ever to resolve this error we must understand the issues that have lead brother to stand against brother and ask ourselves what God's word authorizes regarding our conduct. In some cases these divisions have involved brethren imposing what they believe to be liberties upon their brethren who question the Biblical authority for such practices. In other cases, the very goal of standing on the authority of Scripture has been

Instrumental Music. Among the 1st issues that initiated division in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the question of whether the Bible authorizes the use of mechanical instruments in church worship. The New Testament is silent (Cont. on pg. 2)

(Cont. from pg. 1) on the matter. Though it commands singing (Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16), there is no scriptural authorization for instrumental accompaniment. As a result to insist on using such in worship would force brethren to do what the Bible does not instruct. Among churches which once stood in opposition to this unauthorized human innovation, more and more brethren are accepting it and turning back to the apostasy of the religious world.

**The Missionary Society.** A second major issue that divided brethren at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the creation of manmade organizations to coordinate the support of preachers in different areas. Under this scheme various churches supported a human society, which in turn supported and sent preachers to various areas. As a consequence, the church surrendered its responsibility to a human organization. In the Bible churches supported and sent preachers themselves without any separate institution acting as a go between (Acts 13:1-3, Philippians 4:10-20). This practice and the acceptance of instrumental music led to the creation of the “Christian Church” and “Disciples of Christ” denominations. This practice has been imitated (for all practical purposes) by some churches of Christ in the “sponsoring church” arrangement (see below).

**Bible Classes.** Some brethren in this country in the 20<sup>th</sup> century had concerns about whether the church was authorized to support and conduct Bible classes for all ages. Two of the main concerns about this were: 1. Does this surrender parental responsibility? and 2. Should there be women teachers? The Bible makes it clear that in the assembly, women are to be silent (I Corinthians 14:34) and that they must not teach over men (I Timothy 2:12). Yet women are instructed to be “**teachers of good things**” (Titus 2:3). Although it is clear that the primary responsibility for teaching children rests with parents (Ephesians 6:4), the church is authorized to support the teaching of God’s word in and out of the assembly (I Corinthians 14:26, Philippians 4:10-20). So, while we must not make Bible classes into anything more than simply Christians teaching one another, the concept of the church supporting the teaching of God’s word is authorized.

**One Cup in the Lord’s Supper.** Some brethren also questioned whether the church is authorized to use multiple cups in the taking of the Lord’s Supper. While the Bible does refer to the “**cup of blessing**” (I Corinthians 10:16) the events described in the institution of the Lord’s supper, make it clear that a singular container is not the focus. Before their Passover meal, Jesus

gave them the cup and said, “**Take this and divide [it] among yourselves**” then after their meal, He identified the memorial significance of the contents of the cup which he had previously divided among them (Luke 22:17,20). Some who hold the “one cup” view believe that the cup itself represents the “New Covenant.” The Bible makes it clear that there are two elements in the memorial (not three) and that it is a covenant of blood which is symbolized (I Corinthians 10:16, Matthew 26:27,28).

**Support of Human Institutions.** In the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century a cause of great division among many brethren was the question of whether the church is authorized to financially support organizations that are set up by Christians to perform worthwhile services. Organizations that were initially at the heart of the controversy were Bible colleges and Children’s homes. In modern times the question has expanded to church supported hospitals, student centers, camps, and many other organizations (which now solicit funds from churches). Regrettably this question has often been viewed from a purely emotional viewpoint rather than from a simple attempt to identify Biblical authority. If certain education and benevolence are the responsibility of the church what right does the church have to surrender this responsibility to another

organization? On the other hand, if the activity concerns something that is not an authorized work of the church, the church has no authority to sponsor another institution to carry out that work.

**The Social Gospel.** In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the church also found itself confronted with issues about its role in the social life of its members. Beyond acts of collective worship which the Bible authorizes some brethren have insisted that the church sponsor meals, “get togethers” and entertainment for young people. While it is clear that Christians should be involved in each others lives outside of the assembly (Acts 2:46), the Bible also warns that we must not confuse the social and the spiritual side of thing (I Corinthians 11:22, 27-34). The so-called “Social Gospel” distorts the work and purpose of the church and uses carnal (rather than spiritual) means to draw people to Christ.

**The Sponsoring Church.** Much like the missionary society of the 19<sup>th</sup> century modern day churches of Christ have adopted a parallel innovation in the support of preaching. This practice involves churches sending money to one central church in order to support a particular project. In the Bible church contributions were used to directly support (Cont. on pg. 4)