

LOCAL CHURCH EVANGELISM: WHO WAS SENT AND SUPPORTED AND BY WHOM?

I. INTRODUCTION

1. As in our study of local church benevolence, this also is a test on local church evangelism, i.e. its work of preaching the gospel to reach and to save the lost from the condemnation of their sins.
2. As before, the procedure we will follow is to ask a series of questions based on a series of N.T. passages, each of which deals with the local church and its work of evangelism – its preaching the gospel to reach the lost in turning them from their sins, from darkness to light, from Satan unto God, from the power of darkness to the kingdom of God’s dear Son.
3. Each question based on each passage will have two parts, the answer to which can be learned from a simple reading of the passage cited.
4. Two important lessons will be learned in this study.
 - a. We will learn **WHO** was **SENT** and **SUPPORTED** to preach the gospel in N.T. times as a work of the local church.
 - b. We will learn **WHAT ORGANIZATION** sent and supported **WHOM** or **HOW** they were supported to preach the gospel in N.T. times as a work of the local church.
5. As we take this test keep in mind that we are:
 - a. To respect and obey divine authority, Mt.17:5; Col.3:17; Heb.5:8,9; Lk.6:46.
 - b. Not to add to, take from or substitute for what is written, 1Cor.4:6; Rev.22:18,19; Cf. Deut.4:2.
 - c. To “speak as the oracles of God,” 1Pet.4:11.
 - d. To respect the silence of the scriptures, Heb.7:12-14.
 - e. To “speak where the Bible speaks; be silent where the Bible is silent; do Bible things in Bible ways; call Bible things by Bible names.” As examples, consider:
 - (1) The scriptural mode or form of baptism, Rom.6:3-6; Col.2:12.
 - (2) The scriptural subject of baptism, Ac.2:36-38,41.
 - (3) When the Lord’s Supper is to be eaten, Ac.20:7.
 - (4) The kind of music authorized in worship, Eph.5:19; Col.3:16.
 - (5) How many elders are to oversee each local church, Ac.14:23; Tit.1:5.

- f. Considering the work and the action of the local church – the collective activity of the local church – in its evangelistic work. (Emphasize this!)
 - g. Not considering the individual action of the individual Christian separate and apart from local church action, such as that of the persecuted Christians driven from Jerusalem and that of Aquila and Priscilla teaching Apollos at Ephesus as recorded in Ac.8:3-5 and Ac.18:24-26.
6. Now let us see what the Bible says in answer to our question: Who was sent and supported to do the work of evangelism, by whom, and how were they supported?

II. DISCUSSION

A. AC. 8:14-17

- 1. Who was sent on this occasion and why?
 - a. Peter and John, two apostles, V.14.
 - b. To impart the Holy Spirit, or Spiritual gifts to these baptized believers, vv.15-17.
 - c. Why? So they could carry on the work in the absence of the written word to guide them. Cf. Rom.1:11; Mk.16:17.
- 2. Who (what organization) sent them?
 - a. Was it a human missionary society?
 - b. Was it a human edification society?
 - c. Was it some other separate human organization or agency?
 - d. No! It was the other apostles who were at Jerusalem who sent them, v.14.

B. AC. 13:1-5; 14:21-28 (esp.vv.26,27).

- 1. Who was sent to preach the word of God?
 - a. Barnabas, Saul, and John, 13:2,5.
- 2. Who (what organization) sent them and how were they supported?
 - a. Where they sent by a human missionary society?
 - b. Where they sent by a one-man missionary society?
 - c. Where they sent by some other human organization or agency separate and apart from the local church?
 - d. Where they sent by some other centralized pooling of resources arrangement of churches or for the churches?
 - e. No! They were sent by the church that was at Antioch, being called and sent forth by the Holy Spirit, 13:1-5; 14:26,27.

- (1) How can anyone claim any organization other than the local church was involved in the sending these preachers?
 - (2) How can anyone possibly find a sponsoring church – a church standing between this church, or becoming the agent for this church – in sending these preachers to preach the gospel?
- f. We are not told who supported them on this preaching journey. But since it was the church's duty to support the preaching of the gospel, and since other examples can be found where churches did financially support preachers, how can we doubt that this local also supported them to the extent of their ability?

C. ROM.15:20-24, PAUL'S JOURNEY INTO SPAIN TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.

1. Paul is the preacher going.
2. Who (what organization) is supporting him on this journey and how was he to be supported?
 - a. Did a human missionary society send and support him?
 - b. Did a one-man missionary society do it?
 - c. Did some other human organization or agency separate and apart from the local church do it?
 - d. Did a sponsoring church arrangement acting as the agent through which other churches send and support Paul to do it?
 - e. Did some other centralized pooling of resources arrangement of the churches or for the churches do it?
 - f. No! He was expecting support from the church in Rome, v.24. Perhaps other churches, also.
 - (1) Was Paul expecting the church at Rome to send his support to him through any of the above mentioned agencies or organizations?
 - (2) There is no indication of it in the text.
 - (3) How can anyone expect any organization except a local church to be involved in view of the absence of evidence to the contrary?

D. 2COR.1:8,9.

1. Who (what organization) supported Paul while he preached the gospel at Corinth and how was he supported?
 - a. Did a human missionary society support him while there?

- b. Did a one-man missionary society do it?
- c. Did some other human organization or agency separate and apart from the local church do it?
- d. Did a sponsoring church arrangement acting as the agent through which other churches in supporting Paul, or which acted as the receiving and disbursing agency in supporting at Corinth, do it?
- e. Did some other centralized pooling of resources arrangement of churches and for churches do it?
- f. No! Other churches simply sent wages to Paul, vv.8,9.
 - (1) Churches in Macedonia supplied his wages at Corinth.
 - (2) Did they send his wages through any of the above mentioned agencies or organizations?
 - (3) No! They sent it directly to Paul by means of their brethren as their messengers, vv.8,9.

E. PHIL.1:3-5; 4:10-18.

- 1. Who was sent and supported? Paul, the preacher and apostle to the Gentiles.
- 2. Who (what organization) supported Paul in preaching the gospel in Thessalonica or how was he supported there?
 - a. Did a human missionary society send Paul to Thessalonica and support him to preach the gospel there?
 - b. Did a one-man missionary society do it?
 - c. Did some other human organization or agency separate and apart from the local church do it?
 - d. Did a sponsoring church arrangement do it?
 - e. Did some other centralized pooling of resources arrangement of churches and for the churches do it?
 - f. No! The church at Philippi did it. That local church, and it alone did it!
 - (1) Did Philippi send wages to Paul to or through any of the above mentioned agencies or organizations in supporting Paul to preach the gospel at Thessalonica?
 - (2) No! They sent it directly to Paul by means of their own messenger.

III. CONCLUSION

- 1. From the scriptures we find no more authority for local churches discharging their evangelistic work through a human missionary

society, a one-man missionary society, some other separate human agency, or through a sponsoring church arrangement, than we can find authority for infant baptism, instrumental music in worship, a one-man eldership, the pastor system, sprinkling for baptism, or the tithing system of giving in this the N.T. dispensation!

2. Local churches may cooperate in supporting a preacher or preachers in preaching the gospel both near and far as did Macedonia, with each church sending support directly to the preacher, 2Cor.11:8,9.
3. Local churches may buy the services of a human institution in order to do their God-ordained work of evangelism; but they have no divine authority to build, maintain, sponsor or contribute to one for that purpose. Ill. by examples.
4. Individual Christians may own, operate, build and maintain various human organizations, corporations, etc., for business purposes, but the local churches have no scriptural authority to do so, nor do they have the proper organization for doing to!
5. However, individual Christians have no authority to establish human organizations of any kind through which to preach the gospel. The local church is God's only organized collectivity for doing that work.
6. Remember: We must not go beyond that which is written, 1Cor.4:6; cf. 1Pet.4:11; Rev.22:18,19; 2Jno.9.