

# The Lakeview Lamp

*“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” - Psalm 119:105*

**October 28, 2007**

## *Should The Church Provide Social Meals and Recreation?*

Phillip Owens

It may come as a surprise, especially to younger readers, that many of the social works churches engage in (recreational teams sponsored, plays and pageants, day-care centers, retreats, showers and teas, physical exercise classes, providing walking tracks, gymnasiums, financial counseling, etc.) are of very recent origin. The fact that something is of recent origin does not necessarily make it unscriptural, but this is mentioned due to the fact that there was practically universal rejection of these practices among churches of Christ as little as fifty to fifty-five years ago.

In 1951, B.C. Goodpasture was editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, a periodical written and published by a number of gospel preachers. The Advocate published the *Gospel Advocate Annual Lesson Commentary* primarily written with Bible teachers in mind. In that book, bro. Goodpasture wrote:

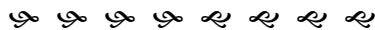
*“It is not the mission of the church to furnish amusement for the world or even for its own members. Innocent amusement in proper proportion has its place in the life of all normal persons, but it is not the business of the church to furnish it...The church was not established to feature athletics...For the church to turn aside from its divine work to furnish amusement and recreation is to pervert its mission. It is to degrade its mission... Building recreation rooms, and providing and supervising recreational activities at the expense of the church, is a departure from the simple gospel plan as revealed in the New Testament...The church might as well relieve the parents of feeding and disciplining all of the young people at church expense as to take over the job of entertaining and supervising the recreation at church expense” (page 229).*

It is interesting that most churches claiming to be “of Christ” that build, maintain, and fund these social works now are strong supporters of the Advocate. Obviously, changes came along the way. We are not arguing that because something is of recent origin it is

unscriptural; we are simply calling attention to the fact that brethren have changed, and that what now is considered common was universally and vehemently opposed by gospel preachers and a leading journal among Christians only fifty years ago.

At some point, Christians changed in their thinking and believed it was scriptural to take money contributed to the church for its work, to construct buildings which included kitchens and large dining rooms, commonly called “fellowship halls.” These were not built to feed needy saints, but to provide social functions for well-fed Christians. Whereas the primary work of the church is to preach the gospel (**I Tim. 3:15; I Thess. 1:8**), edify saints through teaching (**I Tim. 3:15; Eph. 4:11-16**), and take care of its own indigent members (**Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-35; 6:1-6; 11:27-30; Rom. 15:25, 26; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; II Cor. 8-9**), a philosophy known as the “social gospel” began to be prominent in the latter half of the Twentieth Century, emphasizing an ideal social order that is believed to be achieved by solving social problems. Rather than emphasizing the need for salvation from sins and things eternal, a shift in thinking came that prompted brethren to expend the churches’ resources and funds in solving economic, health, and other social related issues. Catering to the needs of the “whole man,” churches began providing childcare, entertainment, “mothers day out,” etc.

Therefore, the issue is not whether or not brethren should enjoy meals and recreational times together; rather it is a question of authority. Does the New Testament give Divine authority for churches to provide for these things from their treasuries? Keep in mind that Jesus said, “*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name east out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work lawlessness*” (**Matt. 7:22-23**). “Lawless” works are those for which there is no divine authority, no “law” from God that would authorize their practice. Though some may think they are “helpful” and that they “do good,” if something is not authorized; one goes beyond the doctrine of Christ and has not God when he engages in its practice (**II John 9**).



*“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son”* (**2 John 9**).

Preacher’s point – It is better to have God and not have things He has not authorized than to have things He has not authorized and not have Him.

*“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.”* – **Psalm 103:2**

# **Family News**

**Virginia Bryant**'s brother-in-law died this past week in Paris, TN.

**Elmo Ferrell** remains in room 101-A at NHC, physically doing better.

**Laura Reed** remains in room 350 at Sumner Regional.

**Peggy Ridings**, Sandra Boyd's mother, is at Sumner Regional in room 435 recovering from a broken hip.

**Joyce Smith**, a longtime member at Lakeview, is now in a nursing home in Maryville. For those who may want to send a card, her daughter's address is 3223 Sam James Rd.; Maryville, TN; 37803.

**Ame White** had some nerves deadened in her back last week to ease her pain. She also has an appointment with the neurologist on Tuesday to address her problem of getting choked when she swallows eating.

**Bill White** has another test on Wednesday at Sumner Regional to find out more about his gall bladder and if he needs surgery.

**Robert Wray** continues to needs meals. Attend the meeting up front tonight for details.

**Out of town, traveling, or visiting: Ken and Rhonda Hull (KY, am).**

**New Reports from men we support: Wilson Copeland (China).**

**Note** – If you have any news for the bulletin (out of town, sick, etc.), then please let me know. I will be printing it some weeks on Saturday night, so please get the news to me by then. Thanks! – Troy

# Lakeview church of Christ

132 New Shackle Island Road

P.O. Box 514

Hendersonville TN 37077

Building: 615-824-1376

[www.BibleSaints.com](http://www.BibleSaints.com)

Bible Call: 615-824-1310

If you would like to subscribe, unsubscribe, or change your address  
to this bulletin,

then simply respond to this message and state your request.

Troy Nicholson  
[trojenn@ibellsouth.net](mailto:trojenn@ibellsouth.net)

*"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1  
Thes 5:16-18).*