

## Can the Church Support Non-Christians From its Treasury?

### I. The issue is NOT:

- A. Whether or not we love non-Christians and care for their needs.
- B. Whether or not we should help non-Christians at all as individuals.
- C. Whether or not the church's money can ever end up in the hands of non-Christians.

NOTE: The term "anti" is often used in reference to conservative brethren (those who don't use church funds to support non-Christians), but it is false and misleading, as conservative brethren are very generous and benevolent.

### II. The issue IS:

- A. Whether or not the *church* has authority to support non-Christians from its treasury.
- B. This is an issue of Bible authority, not preference or prejudice.

III. First of all, we must establish a difference between the local church and the individual. In other words, if the individual Christian can do something, can the church do it also? If there is no difference between the two, then what the individual can do the church can do, but if there is a difference, then there must be specific biblical authority for every church's action!

A. The church is a specific organization ordained by God. Therefore, unless the Bible says that the church and the individual can engage in the same works, then by necessity, we must find specific biblical authority for the church's actions.

B. The New Testament differentiates between church work and individual work:

1. The money of Ananias and Sapphira was no longer their own (Ac. 5:4).
2. The church is not to be charged with certain widows (1 Tim. 5:16).
3. The role of women in the assembly (1 Cor. 14:34-35).
4. Commands given to church such as Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11:23-39).
5. Commands given to individuals such as moral purity (Mt. 5:21-48).
5. The church and members individually (1 Cor. 12:27).

C. **There is a difference between church works and individual works.** This means that when considering a passage, we must determine whether it is addressing the church or the individual. Specific authority for church works is necessary!

### IV. Examples of church benevolence in the New Testament:

- A. Distribution made to the saints from common fund (Ac. 4:32-37).
- B. The daily distribution to the widows and saints (Ac. 6:1-7).
- C. Sending money to the needy brethren in Judea (Ac. 11:27-30).
- D. Ministering unto the saints in Jerusalem (Rom. 15:25-26).
- E. The collection is FOR the saints (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
- F. Ministering unto the saints (2 Cor. 8:1-4; 9:1).

### V. What about Matthew 25:35-40, Galatians 6:10 and James 1:27?

A. All three verses are addressing *individual* responsibilities. Matthew 25 is talking about individual judgment (churches will not be judged on the last day). The context of Galatians 6:10 is talking about sowing to the flesh or spirit, again, individual commands. Finally, James 1:26 says "if any *man* among you seem to be religious."

### VI. Where is biblical authority for the *local church* to support non-saints from the treasury?