

The Social Gospel

Introduction:

1. What is the social gospel?

A. It is a concept that emphasizes the "whole man" and caters to his "social needs". Most are concerned with the "now world".

B. It is a message that doesn't deal with sin, doesn't introduce Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King, doesn't call upon people to obey God in all things, and doesn't prepare people for death, judgment and eternity!

(1) **Herbert Wallace Schneiber (*Religion In The 20th Century, 1952*) said:** The central idea of the Social Gospel is that the redemption or salvation of mankind collectively, the regeneration of the social order, is the ultimate goal of religion."

-- **What this means is: The social gospel focuses attention on the whole group or society, not the individual.**

-- **It seeks to make life better, instead of getting people ready for life after death.**

-- **Simply put – it doesn't attack sin!**

--- **That is why in many churches of Christ today you don't see church discipline being practiced.**

C. In the Gospel Anchor, Feb 1986, Gene Frost accurately observed: "The work of the church then, to the social gospeler, is not directed toward the individual, to convict and convince him of personal guilt, to change him and make him anew. Oh no, the legitimate role of religion is social. It is the work of the churches to build gymnasiums, to organize ball clubs, etc., to prevent juvenile delinquency; to build kitchens, and dining halls to enlist **the secular-minded who otherwise would not be attracted by spirituality**; to build and operate industries to help solve the problem of unemployment; to build and maintain benevolent homes to care for the needy. And so the religious organization substitutes for individual responsibility, leaves its spiritual efforts to achieve temporal and physical goals."

1) Example: In the area of intoxication, drunkenness, a work of the flesh (Gal 5:21);

--- **The social gospel approach would be, to fund an alcoholic recovery program, call it a disease, and blame society.**

--- **The gospel of Christ approach is to call it a sin, blame the sinner, and call upon the drunk to repent.**

2. Churches engulfed in the social aspect of the gospel will do just about anything to get people to come.

A. Perhaps we need to ask ourselves if Peter on Pentecost or Paul in Antioch, Corinth, or Ephesus would have conducted a two or three day seminar teaching folks in their day on subjects like:

A. "Biblical Basics for Financial Management"

B. "Your Checkbook speaks"

C. "How to make a million"

D. "I Owe, I Owe, So Off to Work I Go"

E. "Successful Financial Planning"

F. "Mom, Dad, the Kids and Their Money".

1) Seminars are held by the church in some locations that have nothing to do with Christ, his death, his resurrection, nor the salvation He offers.

2) Buildings are constructed for the purpose of assembling, worship and teaching.

-- It is not for scouts, social clubs, and other forms of entertainment and recreation.

The Inadequacy of the Social Gospel:

- 1. After the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus took the opportunity to tell the people about the true "bread of life".**

John 6:45-53

- A. Many people after witnessing this miracle, determined that Jesus was in fact just the kind of Messiah they were looking for. He could feed thousands by his mere words!**

- (1) They flocked after Him for loaves and fishes.**

- (2) They would not become His flock because they followed Him for the wrong reason - ignorant of what Christ was all about!**

- a. How many practicing a "social gospel" can really tell you all about Jesus?**

- b. Man needs the salvation found only in Jesus.**

- 2. Many say that the work of the church is to house the homeless, educate the illiterate, feed the hungry, and on and on.**

- A. If we make this the purpose of the church then we have failed miserably for the cause of Christ!**

- (1) Jesus fed five thousand and then they left Him.**

- (2) He then turned to His disciples:**

John 6:67-68"Do you also want to go away?" But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

3. Christians ought to be interested in feeding the hungry, housing the needy, and assisting those that are less fortunate - The individual Christian ---- Not the church.

A. The church is:

1 Tim 3:15the pillar and ground of the truth.

B. It is to make known:

Eph 3:10the manifold wisdom of God

4. The "Social Gospel" would perhaps improve man's environment, but the gospel of Jesus Christ will improve man's eternity.

Church to Entertain Saints or Sinners?

1. By "Entertainment" we mean the 3 F's - Fun, Food, and Frolic (Party Games)

-- **Concerts of praise and altering their services for traditions.**

A. Jesus did not come to earth to "seek to entertain", but "to seek and to save the lost"!

Luke 19:10 "for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

B. The gospel is not God's "power to entertain", but "the power of God unto Salvation"!

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

C. The mission of the church in the world is to preach the gospel to the lost.

Mark 16:15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature....."

There Is No Scripture to Authorize Church Entertainment:

1. We must respect the silence of the scriptures in this area.

1 Pet 4:11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.

II Jn 9 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God.

2. The idea that we can do something because it is not expressly forbidden in scripture creates respect for what the Bible does not say, rather than what it does say!

3. When one's action in religion is governed on the assumption that he can do what is not expressly forbidden, then the door is wide open!

A. Through this door has come instrumental music, praying through Mary, baptizing babies, kitchens, gymnasiums, etc.

1) These innovations have divided the church!

4. Remember what John said:

Rev 22:18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;

Entertainment Leads One Away Not Closer to the Lord:

- 1. When one substitutes food for the stomach for food for the soul; music and laughter for meditation and prayer, they drift away!**

Phil 3:19-20 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

- 2. God's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, not carnal in nature, and does not appeal to the fleshly appetite.**

Rom 14:17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

John 18:36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world.

Bible "Fellowship" Never Used in Reference to Entertainment:

- 1. The Bible does not teach just any kind of "fellowship"; the term is limited to what the Bible teaches about it.**
- 2. Bible fellowship is based upon gospel teaching, not bringing men and women together to drink coffee and eat doughnuts.**
1 John 1:3, 6-7
- 3. It is fellowship that men enjoy with one another and with God because Jesus died - this would be impossible without His death.**

Conclusion:

- 1. The Lord organized local churches of Christians to focus on the work of spreading the gospel, worshiping God, edifying the saints, and caring for needy brethren.**
 - A. He did so with a plan (Elders, deacons, and other Christians cooperating together).**
 - B. More organization is only needed when the mission is expanded beyond Bible limits!**

- 2. The Holy Spirit warned through Paul that some brethren and even elders would pervert the truth and lead brethren to practice error.**
Acts 20:28-30

1 Tim 4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,

- 3. Those that do not practice a social gospel but rather the gospel of Christ are in the minority today.**
 - A. But so was Noah, Abraham, Enoch, Daniel, Gideon, and the apostles.**
 - B. What matters is that we abide in the doctrine of Christ!**

- 4. May we thank God for people who look for nothing more than the true gospel of Christ and will settle for nothing less!**

