

# CHURCH FINANCED GYMS ARE THESE SCRIPTURAL?



## SECTION I: ESTABLISHING BIBLE AUTHORITY

In undertaking the subject at hand, which is to determine if there is Bible authority for church support of gymnasiums, it is necessary to establish just how anything is authorized by the Bible. The New Testament of Christ is the testament that men now living are under, so it will be necessary to establish how a thing is authorized by the New Testament (Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 8:8).

There can be no doubt that in matters regarding salvation, Christianity and religion, we must have Bible authority today. The apostle Paul in writing to the church at Colossae in the first century said, "**And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him**" (Colossians 3:17). The pioneer preacher, Walter Scott, once correctly stated that in the Bible there are facts, commands and promises. He said that the facts are to be believed, the commands are to be obeyed and the promises are to be enjoyed. The reader will note that Colossians 3:17 is a command. It is not a fact, nor is it a promise! The only way to the promises of God (and that is what we all should want for it includes eternal life) is to believe the facts and obey the commandments. If one is to have eternal life he must OBEY this command to produce New Testament authority for what he does in religious areas. Paul said to "**prove all things, hold fast that which is good**" (I Thessalonians 5:21).

But not only must there be a *respect* for Bible authority, there must also be a knowledge of *how* to determine Bible authority. There are three ways to determine Bible authority for a thing:

- 1) Direct Statement (Command)
- 2) Account of Action (Example)
- 3) Implication

An example of this matter of determining whether a thing is authorized or not may be thus illustrated:

**"Is there New Testament Authority for the church to build a modern-day church building**

**and worship therein?"**

All one has to do to determine the answer is to find a **command** (which is binding on men living today), an account of action (**example**), or **implication** to prove his practice of worshipping in a building scriptural. The command to *assemble* is found in Hebrews 10:25. The Hebrews writer tells Christians to practice the assembling of the saints and not to cease this practice (it is commanded). In the verse itself it is not stated as to where the assembling is to take place (and in no other passage in the New Testament is a special place to assemble explicitly commanded, nor is there a binding account of action, example, of Christians building and meeting in church buildings given). But, it is IMPLIED (implication above) that Christians may meet to worship God (in fulfillment to this command to assemble) anywhere they desire, i.e., provided it is done decently and in order (cf., I Corinthians 14:40). Christians may meet in homes, by a riverside, or in a church building. This also is called generic authority.

### BIBLE AUTHORITY?

Having shown the need to have Bible authority, and having shown how to determine Bible authority, we now must point out that there is absolutely NO BIBLE AUTHORITY for the church to build and maintain gymnasiums for the enjoyment of members of the church (in particular, the young people).

The reason this is the case is because there is, *first*, **no command** (binding on men now living) to build a gymnasium. There was no command for any congregation of God's people to build a gymnasium in the first century.

*Second*, there is **no example** (approved account of action binding on men today) of the early church, the example church, building gymnasiums.

*Third* and last, there is **no implication** in the New Testament giving the Lord's church today the authority to build and maintain gymnasiums.

In view of the above we must ask those in the Lord's church, and those in denominationalism who profess that they have built their gymnasiums to the glory of God--where is your book, chapter and verse for doing such? (cf., Colossians 3:17; I Peter 4:11; II Timothy 3:16).

It must be remembered that only one of these three

ways to prove Bible authority will do. However, those who practice the building of gymnasiums cannot find even one of the three to justify their actions.

## SECTION II: IS BUILDING GYMNASIUMS THE WORK OF THE CHURCH?

The mission of the church is the salvation of souls (Luke 19:10; Mat. 28:18-20). The authorized work of the Lord's church involves:

- 1) Edification
- 2) Benevolence
- 3) Evangelism

One of the three works of the church is that of edification. By *edification* reference is made to the building up of the body of Christ. This edification is a spiritual building up as opposed to a physical building up. The apostle Paul wrote:

**"For bodily exercise profiteth little: but GODLINESS is PROFITABLE UNTO ALL THINGS, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come"** (I Timothy 4:8; emp. mine, glg).

The teaching program of the church, wherein the word of God is studied, is designed to build up the church spiritually. Paul told the Ephesus elders that he commended them to God and to the word of his grace which was able to "**build**" them up (Acts 20:32).

*Secondly*, the work of the church is that of benevolence (Acts 4:32-34; Acts 6:1-6).

*Thirdly*, the work (mission) of the church is to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15-16).

In view of the above it must be asked, "Does the building of gymnasiums by the church, i.e., financed from the church treasuries, aid in the fulfillment of any three of these divinely authorized works?" If not, then there is absolutely no Bible authority for the church to build a gymnasium.

## SECTION III: RECREATION, ENTERTAINMENT, GADGETS AND GIMMICKS

The work that God has given the parents (the home) is that of the education and the entertainment of the children. The work that God has given the church is limited to that of evangelism, edification and benevolence.

Since it is the case that **the basic problem involved is that of a blurring of the roles of the church and the**