**Institutionalism and Liberalism**

**Introduction**

* Difference between Institutionalism and Liberalism.
  + All institutionalism is liberalism but not all liberalism is institutionalism.
  + A church can be non-institutional and still be liberal.
* During Restoration Alexander Campbell and others thought there were things to be done too large for local church to do.
* Created Missionary Society (MS).
  + Congregations send money to MS and the MS decides what to do with the money on a larger scale (mission work, orphans, etc.).

1. How is authority established?
2. Must have authority.

* Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:22-24; Colossians 3:17

1. Ways to get authority.

* Command – Acts 2:28; Mark 16:16 (baptism is an explicit command)
* Approved Example – Acts 20:7 (Lords Supper on first day of week)
* Necessary Inference – 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 (every first day of the week)

1. Is this authorized?
2. Support of human institutions. (missionary societies; preacher schools)

* N.T. Pattern of supporting efforts
  + Local church 🡪 Evangelist (Philippians 4:15-16)
  + Local church 🡪
  + Local church 🡪 Evangelist (2 Corinthians 11:8-9)
  + Local church 🡪
  + Local church 🡪

Local church (Romans 15:25-26)

* + Local church 🡪
* Not N.T. Pattern of supporting efforts.
  + Local church 🡪 Missionary society 🡪 Evangelist
  + Local church 🡪

Orphan Home

* + Local church 🡪
    - James 1:27 = Individual Christians (keep oneself)

1. The Sponsoring church.

* N.T. shows church autonomy – self-government. (1 Corinthians 16:3 – whomever YOU approve; Acts 20:28 – elders of a local church-ephesian)
  + Churches don’t have right to dictate what other churches do.
  + Within the parameters of biblical authority a local congregation decides for themselves what to do.
* Not N.T. pattern.
  + Local church 🡪
  + Local church 🡪 Sponsoring church 🡪 Local church
  + Local church 🡪
    - This takes away church autonomy. The sponsoring church is deciding what the funds are for (from the local churches, and to the church they support).
* Government for a local church resides in the eldership. This is autonomous. (1 Peter 5:2-3 – “which is among you”)
* They can’t do as much without help from a sponsoring church?
  + Whatever they CAN do is enough. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 8:1-5 – church in Macedonia begged to participate as they could)

1. Social Gospel (Fellowship halls, events, recreation – things pertaining to social needs).

* This isn’t the work of the church! (1 Corinthians 11:17-22)
* Work of the church 🡪
  + Evangelism – Matthew 28:19-20
  + Edification – Ephesians 4:11-16
  + Benevolence to saints – Acts 11:27-30
    - Only to saints. (Acts 2:44-45; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 1 Timothy 5:16)
* In assembly we…
  + Sing and pray – 1 Corinthians 14:15-19
  + Take the Lord’s Supper and preach – Acts 20:7
  + Take up the offering – 1 Corinthians 16:1-4
* It is not the churches responsibility to entertain!
  + Christians can do this individually – Acts 2:46 (house to house)
  + This is separate and has nothing to do with the assembly.

1. Do the ends justify the means?

* Look at all the good that comes from doing these things! It’s a good work!
  + You would think Uzzah was doing good – 2 Samuel 6:1-7
  + Saul thought he was doing good – 1 Samuel 13:8-15 (He wanted to entreat God’s favor before going into battle against the Philistines.)
  + God is serious. When He says to do something a certain way He expects it to be done that way.
    - Leviticus 10:1-3 (must be regarded as holy)
      * When we fail to respect bible authority we fail to regard God as holy.