

What Exactly Is “Institutionalism”?

Introduction:

- A. Review of our mission as defined by the Head of the church.
- B. Restatement of our great concern: let the church be the church!
- C. Many would have us believe there is no distinction between collective and individual activity.

I. What does the New Testament teach?

- A. Individual disciples have an obligation (*Matt. 5:43-48; 25:31-46; Luke 10:30-36; Acts 4:36-37; 9:36-42; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:16; 6:18; Heb. 13:16; James 1:27; 1 John 3:17-18*).
- B. Such touches on the very meaning behind being a Christian!
- C. There are some individual duties that cannot be performed by the local church.
- D. There **is** a New Testament distinction set forth between the individual and congregation.
 - 1. *Matthew 18:15-17*
 - 2. *1 Timothy 5:16*
- E. A fundamental difference exists between the individual's money and collective money.
 - 1. The way money is raised.
 - 2. The oversight of the money.
 - 3. The use of the money.
- F. As individuals, a number of liberties exist. The church, however, must not be “burdened.”

II. Institutionalism

- A. The support of human institutions from the treasury of local churches. The practice of a church sending money to an institution in order to carry out some work the church deems worthy of support.
- B. “What's wrong with that?”
 - 1. Church-supported orphan's homes as an example
 - 2. Church-sponsored nursing homes as an example
- C. “Is it really that big of a deal?”