



LETTING THE CHURCH  
BE THE CHURCH

# **A RECURRING DANGER**

- **Tempted to make things according to our will:**
  - Gentiles remade God - Romans 1.20-25
  - Jews substituted righteousness - Romans 10.1-4
- **We see this after the NT, as well:**
  - Catholicism altered the church:
    - Elder, Bishop, Diocese Bishop, Metropolitan Bishop (AD325)
    - Pope, Universal head of the church (Boniface III AD606)
  - Mormonism changed the gospel (1830, 1835)

# WHAT THE CHURCH IS NOT:

- **An organization for social change:**
  - Doesn't mean we ignore the marginalized or injustice (Acts 20.32; James 1.27, 2.8f).
  - Keep focused on a unique mission (1 Tim. 3.15).
- **A general charitable organization:**
  - The church is to be benevolent (Acts 4.32).
  - The church's benevolence was always directed toward Christians (Acts 4.34; 11.29f; 1 Cor. 16.1).
  - As an individual, those restrictions are not present (Lk. 10.37).

# WHAT THE CHURCH IS NOT:

- **A fundraising organization:**
  - The NT church raised funds in one way — a freewill offering (Acts 4; 1 Corinthians 16; 2 Corinthians 8-9).
  - Funds were either sent to individual Christians (Acts 4; Philippians 4.15f) or to other churches (Acts 11.30; 1 Cor. 16.3).
  - There was no “middleman” organization — the church retained complete oversight over its contribution.
- **An organization for entertainment and socializing:**
  - Note what the church devoted itself to (Acts 2.41f).
  - Socializing and entertaining is the work of the home (individuals), not the church (1 Corinthians 11.22,34).

# **WHAT THE CHURCH IS:**

- **The pillar and ground of truth (1 Timothy 3.15)**
- **Headed by Christ (Ephesians 1.22f)**
- **The body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12.12-27)**
- **Founded and built by Christ (Matthew 16.18)**
  - **It is His church — He is the head.**
  - **The church must respond to Him.**
  - **He has expressed Himself in the Gospel.**