

PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

By Scott Parker

FIVE CHAMPIONS OF THE SOCIALITES

Many “*church of Christs*” insist the local church may be in the entertainment business. If you are familiar with those kinds of folks, you know that they really like to place their confidence in the words of men. A mistake (cf. **2 Tim. 2:15; Col. 3:17**).

Since the socialites like to follow the words of men, I thought I’d quote a few of their favorite fellows whose position on church entertainment is scriptural. **Note:** I do not support everything they say, or the language of Ashdod they sometimes use – SP.

The first of the socialites’ champions is a man named **Roy Lanier, Sr.** In **20 Years of the Problem Page** (Vol. 1, p. 68ff), on the subject of church entertainment, Lanier wrote:

“And then there are socials, fellowships I believe they are called. When I was a boy we called them parties, but the church did not give the party, nor was there a minister of recreation to oversee the party. And we can hardly have a “fellowship” without food, so the church must have so much money set aside in its treasury to supply the food consumed at these socials... I have not been able to find {in the Bible} where churches fed people who were able to care for themselves. And these socials are often held in some mountain park, or some seaside resort, and the church provides transportation for all. Since we have buses bringing children to Sunday school, we may as well provide transportation {to and from social activities} for the young people at church expense. After all, it is the parents of these young people who contribute to the church treasury, so why not use part of what they give on Sunday for enjoyment of their children? So runs the argument of brethren who give more time and attention to their civic clubs than they give to reading their Bible. Recreation and entertainment are good for young people, and old people might live longer and be of more service to the Lord if they participated in such to a reasonable extent. But such activities are the responsibility of the home, not the church of the Lord. The truth of the matter is that the church is involved in a work which it is not authorized to do and which it uses the time and energy of its members in work which is a responsibility of the home. This is not to be taken to mean that the young people of the church should never have a social gathering, go on a picnic, or have physical exercise. But it is to say that these matters are the responsibilities of the home.... Some among us today teach that as long as a member of the church is doing a thing, it is the same as the church doing that thing. A church member may spank his child for disobedience, but it is not the duty of the church to take over the job of spanking children. And there are a hundred other ways of illustrating the same point. It is our job to study God’s word and learn what each {the local church and the individual} is authorized to do, to keep a line of distinction between them, and let the church be the church and the home be the home.”

Another of the socialites’ champions is **N.B. Hardeman.** In his often referenced **Tabernacle Sermons** (Vol. 5, p. 50, 53), Hardeman is quoted as follows:

“Again, I say to you, with caution and thought, that it is not the work of the church to furnish entertainment for the members. And yet many churches have drifted into such effort. They enlarge their basements, put in all kinds of gymnastic apparatus, and make every sort of an appeal to the young people of the congregation. I have never read anything in the Bible that indicated to me that such was a part of the work of the church. I am wholly ignorant of any scripture that even points in that direction... I submit to you preachers that we should be exceedingly careful lest in our enthusiasm to make a big show, we turn apart from the straight and narrow path and have within our midst something that the Lord does not want.”

Still another of the socialites’ champion is **H. Leo Boles.** He wrote that the local church was, “not to furnish entertainment” for either “its members” or “for the world” (**Boles Outlines Outline # 27**).

B.C. Goodpasture is a favorite champion of the socialites. Relative to church entertainment he wrote: “For the church to turn aside from its divine work to furnish amusement and recreation is to pervert its mission. Amusement and recreation should stem from the home rather than the church. The church, like Nehemiah, has a great work to do; and it should not ‘come down on the plains of Ono’ to amuse and entertain” (**Gospel Advocate, May 20, 1948**).

Lastly, hear the words **Foy E. Wallace** (another favorite champion of the socialites) on the issue at hand. He wrote: “The church at Corinth made a ‘church dinner’ out of the Lord’s Supper. That is the only place in the Bible where I have ever read anything about a ‘church dinner’ and it was condemned” (**The Gospel for Today p.500**).