

## **I CORINTHIANS: HANDLING BELIEVERS' PRACTICAL PROBLEMS**

### **XVIII. The Biblical Practice Of Church Donations**

**(1 Corinthians 16:1-4)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. The people Paul discipled in Corinth lived in a city that was known for its immorality, alcoholism and worldly pursuits (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, "Introduction to the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians: The City of Corinth," p. 1619), so the formidable influence of the city's culture on the Corinthian believers left Paul addressing "(a)berrant beliefs and practices of an astonishing variety" in his letters to them, *Ibid.*
- B. However, in a vision Paul received from God as he ministered at Corinth in Acts 18:10b NIV, God told him, "I have many people in this city," so Paul was to keep on ministering regardless of the trials he faced there.
- C. Since the Early Church utilized financial donations from the congregation in promoting the discipling ministry of the Church, Paul gave directions on the Biblical practice of church donations in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4.
- D. We view the passage for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

#### **II. The Biblical Practice Of Church Donations, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4.**

- A. Biblical church donations should be made for materially needy believers who minister to others, 1 Cor. 16:1:
  - 1. The donations in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 were for needy Jerusalem believers who ministered to others:
    - a. The Jerusalem saints were notoriously poor and in need of financial assistance (Romans 15:26), what in part may have occurred due to persecution (cf. Acts 8:1-3) along with famine in Israel (Acts 11:27-30).
    - b. Believers elsewhere wanted to aid Jerusalem saints, for from them had come the Gospel, Romans 15:27.
  - 2. The same principle applies to ministers in the local church: a congregation owes its minister(s) material remuneration for the ministry of the Word of God for the congregation's welfare, 1 Corinthians 9:9-14.
  - 3. In addition, the local church should give to messengers like evangelists who travel about proclaiming the Gospel (cf. 3 John 5-7), what would also include missionaries like the Apostle Paul (Philippians 4:10-18).
  - 4. In 1 Timothy 5:8-12, Paul directed that widows who had no family to support them but who had reputably long ministered to other believers were to be supported by the local church.
- B. Biblical church donations should be made on a regular and consistent basis, 1 Corinthians 16:2a:
  - 1. Since the people at Corinth earned their income each day, Paul directed them to save up part of each day's earnings for what they desired to donate each Sunday when they met together, 1 Corinthians 16:2a.
  - 2. In today's world, many people are paid monthly, and some earn on a commission basis, so it is also fitting for one to give on a Sunday once-a-month, or whenever a commission is earned in the fiscal year.
- C. Biblical church donations should be made in line with the donors' personal budgets of their incomes, v. 2b:
  - 1. Paul directed that the donors collect the money they earned each weekday and keep it in "a private fund ('by him') at home from which fund he makes distributions," *Ibid.*, Ryrie, fn. to 1 Corinthians 16:2.
  - 2. Such a fund would obviously involve budgeting one's whole income, for the donor would still have to use some of his income to pay for housing, food, clothing, and health costs that he incurred.
- D. Biblical church donations should be made in line with how God prospers each donor, 1 Corinthians 16:2c.
- E. Biblical church donations should be made without pressure from the leaders on donors, 1 Corinthians 16:2d:
  - 1. Paul did not want collections to occur when he came to get the money to deliver it to the Jerusalem saints.
  - 2. He thus wanted "no last-minute collections" lest people gave "grudgingly (2 Cor. 9:5) – as would be true if it were wrung out by emotional appeals or personal pressure" with Paul's presence, B. K. C., N. T., p. 546.
- F. Biblical church donations once collected should be handled by multiple parties whom the donors trust, v. 3-4:
  - 1. Paul submitted to the will of the donors on who should handle the collections made by the donors, and he offered to be one of those responsible to handle the money if the donors so desired, 1 Corinthians 16:3-4.
  - 2. The words "whomsoever" (KJV) [*hous*] and "them" (KJV) [*toutous*] are plurals in the Greek text (U. B. S. Grk. N.T., 1966, p. 618) so Paul also implied the need for *multiple* handlers of the collection of donations in order to provide the credibility of checks and balances in the handling of the collected moneys.

***Lesson:*** *Biblical church donations should be made for materially needy believers who minister, on a regular and consistent basis, in line with the donors' budgets of their incomes, in line with how God prospers them, without pressure from religious leaders, and the collected donations should be handled by multiple parties who meet the approval of the donors as to their character and competence in getting the collections to the intended recipients.*

***Application:*** *May we adhere to the Biblical practice of donations in the local church.*