

# Preacher's Pen points

## Pillar and Support of What?



(Note: I believe every local church is independent and autonomous and must account to God for the decisions they make about the Lord's work. However, there are times when it is appropriate to note departures from God's way, even though it might not always be welcomed by others. It is concern for the truth and the souls of men that prompts this critique of another church's work.)

### A Financial Planning Seminar

Recently there came to our mailbox a flyer from Hermitage church of Christ advertising a special seminar it will host called "No Debt...No Sweat". The goal of the seminar is to offer sound financial advise including strategies for getting out of debt and investing for retirement.

No one could successfully deny that the lack of financial discipline has been hurtful to families nor that the church can be affected by these family problems. It cannot be denied that false teachers often exploit the dire circumstances of individuals to proclaim a "health and wealth" gospel that fattens their pocketbooks while diminishing the wealth of those most in need. And it is clear that the Scriptures do teach the importance of saving for the future, paying our obligations, and sharing with others, though it offers few if any "strategies" for accomplishing these goals. So on the surface it might appear that hosting a financial planning seminar is a great thing. However I submit that there is a more fundamental issue involved. **To what extent should the church be involved in the proclamation of manifestly secular knowledge, though based on spiritual principle?**

One may just as easily acknowledge that families suffer not only from a lack of financial discipline

but a lack of physical health and nutritional discipline. Since the Scriptures acknowledge the principle of bodily stewardship, why would not the same logic justify a congregation producing a physical fitness seminar that would help families with strategies for getting in better shape or a seminar offering strategies for healthier cooking?

### The Mission of the Local Church

The NT carefully defines the mission of the church: *I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.* (1 Tim. 3:15). The unique mission of the church is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, the truth that frees men from sin in all aspects of life. The church's ultimate priority is to help people understand that the root of all earthly problems is sin and to proclaim God's loving sacrifice in our behalf to bring about repentance and salvation. And, the church should teach all principles of righteous living, including those texts that discuss the Christian's use of his finances. To this we have no objection!

However, the "No debt...No sweat" seminar departs subtly but significantly from this divinely-authorized mission, moving into the arena of secular instruction. The church is not the pillar and ground of secular truth (whether it be finance, PE, nutrition, etc.); but it is the primary means by which the world will know about Jesus Christ and the salvation He brings. We should not be satisfied until we have exhausted every effort to proclaim this message; and to this alone the church should be fully dedicated until every person in the world has heard the gospel of Christ.

—Johnny Felker(www.truthchasers.com)