

October, 2007

Pause Ponder Profit

Use Of The Term "Anti" Among Churches Of Christ

by Gene Lyles

The use of the term "anti" has been among us roughly for the past 150 years. It came into use in the 1840s due to opposition of arrangements which sought to tie local churches together in cooperative efforts. The opposition really exploded in 1849 when the American Christian Missionary Society was formed. Those who opposed the society were classed as "anti-cooperative" brethren.

In 1859 an instrument of music was brought into the worship service of the brethren in Midway, Kentucky. This opened the door to another great controversy concerning whether instrumental music in worship to God was authorized by the New Testament scriptures. Brethren knew beyond question that instrumental music was not mentioned in worship to God by the New Testament scriptures. They also knew beyond question that it was, vehemently rejected in worship to God by the early Christians. Therefore many great preachers such as Moses E. Lard, J. W. McGarvey, L. B. Wilkes, W. H. Hopson, and Jacob Creath strongly

objected to its use in worship. Those favoring the instrument identified the opposition as "anti-instrument" brethren.

In the early 1900s, individual communion cups were introduced as a more sanitary way of dispensing the fruit of the vine at the Lord's table. Because this was a different procedure, some opposed it on the grounds that the word "cup" in Matt. 26:27, Mk. 14:23, and Lk. 22:17 was in the singular, therefore only one container could be used to administer the fruit of the vine. Even though the context of these accounts clearly referred to the cup as the fruit of the vine, not the container, those who did not understand this continued their opposition and were called "anti-multiple-cup" brethren.

About this same period of time some churches started increasing the study of the scriptures by designating a period of time before the regular worship service to study the Bible in separate groups according to age levels. These were identified as Bible classes, and were under the supervision of the elders. Up to this time, most churches only met together in one general assembly. The arrangement of the general assembly did not change. The Bible class arrangement was only added to increase the study of the scriptures. It gave each local church a greater opportunity to do more self-edification in accordance with Eph. 4:14-16. But because it was different from what brethren were accustomed to, some brethren opposed it and were classed as "anti-class" brethren.

Sometime in the late 1920s or early 1930s some local churches had grown to a point of being able to own their own buildings and hire a preacher to work with them on a regular basis.

(Continued on page 2)



During this time most local churches were still meeting in school buildings and rented halls, and were not financially able to support a preacher on a regular basis. They usually acquired the services of a "circuit preacher" and might not have preaching more than once or twice a month. Due to this change in procedure by the larger churches, some brethren began opposing the practice of a "located preacher", and identified him as a "hireling". Those brethren were identified as "anti-located-preacher" brethren.

In the late 1940s, after World War II had ended, the old question of church cooperation came up again. Faithful brethren had vehemently opposed all forms of church cooperation which tied churches together. But because the need was great to send preachers abroad, it was decided that there must be some scriptural way to tie churches together in a combined effort to accomplish this task.

By this time some churches had grown to a point having large commodious buildings that would seat up to two thousand people. Their elders were well educated men, and in many cases had become very wealthy and prominent in the community. One church in particular that fell into this category was the Broadway church in Lubbock, Texas. Because they had proved to be very successful as a growing and thriving church from a materialistic standpoint, they felt they could offer a plan of evangelism that would enable churches to cooperate without the formation of a human organization. This was to be called the "Broadway Plan". It appeared to be very innocent and went like this. Let all the churches that want to have part in the evangelization of Germany send their money to the Broadway church and their elders would have the oversight and control of the use of such funds. No missionary society, no conventional arrangement — just the elders of a local church

Surely no one could possibly object to this.

However, this seemingly wonderful plan was not anything new. It had been attempted as far back as 1910 by the church in Henderson, Tennessee with the intent to, do some urgently needed evangelization in Western Tennessee. But it was short lived. When David Lipscomb heard about it, he quickly "shot the props" from under it through the pages of the Gospel Advocate by pointing out that it was just another missionary society under a board of elders. Here are his very words; "Now what was that but the organization of a society in the elders of the church? The church elders at Henderson constitute a board to collect and pay out the money and control the evangelist for the brethren of West Tennessee, and all the preachers are solicitors for this work". (The entire account of this controversy may be found in the January & February issues of the Gospel Advocate of 1910).

Thus it goes without saying that the "Broadway Plan" met with much opposition from some of the most outstanding preachers among us — such men as Foy E. Wallace Jr., W. W. Otey, W. Curtis Porter, Roy E. Cogdill, Cecil B. Douthitt, John T. Lewis, and C. R. Nochol. It seems the promoters of the Broadway plan were mainly connected with the various colleges among us, and through the influence of these college professors, the Broadway Plan prevailed. This form of church cooperation became known as the sponsoring church. Although no New Testament authority for such could be found, it has become widely accepted among liberal churches of Christ. Those who opposed it were again branded as "anti-cooperative" brethren.

During this same period of time another issue came to the surface — the orphan home question. Great preachers (and this includes David Lipscomb), had helped to establish various

institutional homes to care for orphans. They made it clear that these homes were not to be supported by churches, but by individual Christians. However, since their initial establishment, many of these homes sought for, and gained, support from various churches. Church support of such homes had not been a "heated issue" up to this point, but the sponsoring church issue caused it to become a "heated issue". Here is how:

Since those who opposed the sponsoring church also opposed church support of human institutions, the opportunity was ripe to use this highly charged emotional issue to take the heat off the sponsoring church issue. So by a very subtle move the orphan home issue was brought to the forefront. Their strategy was to switch the controversy to this highly charged emotional issue, thus defense of the sponsoring church would become unnecessary. Believe you me it worked. About all we heard from this point forward was "Our brethren who don't believe in caring for orphans". When brethren heard this, they turned their backs on any who fell into this category. The deceitfulness and dishonesty involved in this subtlety was unbelievable.

In debates, those who opposed the sponsoring church and church support of human institutions, were very successful in their opposition, not only by showing from the scriptures that such was unauthorized, but by showing how great preachers of the past had also opposed these unscriptural undertakings. The only problem was that most of the brethren who favored these unscriptural undertakings would not attend the debates. In view of the fact that the promoters were unable to defend their unscriptural undertakings, they developed extreme bitterness toward the opposition. When brethren become bitter, they invariably resort to derisive descriptions of their opponents. So in this case the promoters coined a new and very derisive

expression called "anti-ism" — a meaningless term unknown to the world about us, and used only by those who practice the sponsoring church arrangement, and church support of institutional orphan homes.

Strange as it may seem, we find that it is opposition to these two issues in particular to which the promoters apply the term "anti-ism". One can oppose the missionary society, instrumental music, premillennialism, faith only, grace only, family life centers, new hermeneutics, restructure of the church, and a host of other unscriptural undertakings, and not be guilty of so-called "anti-ism". But if one opposes the sponsoring church and church support of institutional orphan homes, he is guilty of "anti-ism". Such unrestrained bitterness and malice was not manifested to this extent, even by the society and instrument brethren of the late 1800s.

One thing that should help those who favor the sponsoring church and church support of institutional orphan homes, is to observe the digressive pattern of the various churches that followed this course. These churches are now so far removed from the teaching of Christ that even these promoters cannot stem the tide of their continued digression. Most of these churches are now using preachers who teach the social gospel, the doctrine of faith only, the doctrine of unlimited grace whereby when once saved, one cannot be lost, the need of a new hermeneutics, and the idea of restructuring the church to conform to the needs of the twenty first century.

The determination of these promoters to hold on to the practice of centralization and institutionalism (which initially started this new digressive movement) robs them of their right to oppose these additional digressive steps which have followed. Sure, they can oppose them, but look at their inconsistency! Thus to these initial

(Continued from page 3)

promoters we say; "Don't call the kettle black until you put out the fire which you kindled that caused the kettle to be black". Another way of putting it: "When you opened the flood gate of digression, don't expect to stop the flood that is bound to follow".

The following quote was taken from *The Gospel Guardian* (Vol. 1, May 26, 1949). It informs us that things haven't changed much in almost sixty years.

Betrayal

"In 1753 a charter was issued by the state of New York to a school to be founded in New York City for the purpose of 'teaching and engaging children to know God in Jesus Christ.' Money donated by the founders and others was given with the understanding that it would be spent for this purpose. In a recent survey made in that school it was revealed that of all the students who believe in the existence of God at the time of their enrollment, **75% of them are atheists at the time of their graduation!** A constant parade of agnosticism, doubt, skepticism, ridicule, belittling of faith, and pseudo-scientific erudition by the professors and instructors in the school is robbing the students of their faith. Its present directors have betrayed the trust of its founders. We'd like to see General Eisenhower's explanation of the perfidy of his trustees at Columbia."

— Fanning Yater Tant



Non-profit Org.
U. S. Postage Paid
Permit # 356
Paragould, AR

Second and Walnut
Church Of Christ
400 N. 2nd St.
P. O. Box 356
Paragould, AR 72451

Address Service Requested

Pause — Ponder — Profit is a monthly publication of the Second and Walnut Church Of Christ, Paragould, Arkansas.

Sunday
Radio 1490 AM . 9:00 A.M.
Bible Study 9:45 A.M.
Worship..... 10:45 A.M.
Worship..... 6:00 P.M.
Wednesday
Bible Study..... 7:00 P.M.

Preacher: James A. Brown
Phone: 870-236-3371
www.paragouldchurchofchrist.com