ARE WE CUTTING OUR THROATS?

Are you aware that some folks wearing the name "Church of Christ" tell us that we cannot follow the example of giving and sending as taught in Acts II:27-30? I was told in my own house by one of the "Delta Plan" advocate's that any one practicing giving according to the example in Acts II:27-30 are "cutting their own throats", and Bro. Kenneth Baldwin drew his finger across his throat to illustrate the point. I was told that there were probaly more than one (I) congregation in Jerusalem, hence the mode of giving in Acts II:27-30 was not suitable to follow. Let us test the Delta Plan advocate's doctrine by the word of God and determine whether it be true or false.

Let us read Titus I:4-5. "To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." Unquote. Now let us examine our speculating brethrens position, i.e. that there probaly was more than one congregation in Jerusalem, and see their imagined "comfort" go down the drain. Acts II:29-30, states "Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." Unquote. Suppose there were two (2) or more congregations in Jerusalem! No difficulty arises. Read Acts I5:I-4I, note that the congregation, or congregations in Judea HAD ELDERS, note this fact in verses 6, 22, 23, that the congregations has elders. Note Titus I:5, that Paul left Titus in Crete to "ordain elders in every city as I had appointed the". No, I do not claim that Judea and Crete are the same place, for they are not. But it is plain to be seen that it was God's will to appoint elders in every city where a congregation existed, provided there were men who could meet the qualifications. Since the church or churches in Jerusalem were the FIRST to be established, it is a certainty that God would waste no time in

appointing elders there. Hence, if Jerusalem had two or more congregations, the gift from Antioch was sent to the elders in the congregations, if more than one existed. No difficulty and our "Delta Plan" advocate's doctrine sank to the bottom of the sewerage disposal.

Now let us read Acts II:27-30, "Now in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caeser. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea: which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." Unquote. What happened? A dearth was prophesied by "Agabus", a prophet. Next, the dearth came to pass. Next, the disciples, when they learned of the coming of the dearth in the days of Claudius Caeser, made up their minds to send help, as they were able, and they sent their help or gift to the brethren who dwelt in Judea, to THE ELDERS BY THE HANDS OF BARNABAS AND SAUL.

We make NO claim that the elders of ONE congregation received the gift, and then after much consultation of the "Corresponding Member", plus the Papa in the geographical center of brotherhood, and then after much debating, decided to dole out a little of the gift to the elders of another congregation, for those elders to dole out to the membership. How does the Bible plan work? There was the making known that a great dearth was coming. Then we are told (in the N. T., Acts II: 27-30) that the dearth came in the days of Claudius Caeser, and when the disciples at Antioch heard of the need of the Judean brethren, every man made up his mind to send relief. Did they send it?? Or did they "sit on the stool of do nothing" and not send it? We are told by the same misguided folks that it cannot be proven that the relief was sent! To bad, they can't remember verse 30. Have ye read and believed verse 30. "Which also they did, and sent it by the hands of Barnabas and Saul." Unquote. The scripture says they sent relief to those brethren in need, and they sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

We noticed that no "Centralized Agency or Control was exer-

cised over the Antioch congregation, instead, they of their love of truth, love of God and love of fellow Christians, determined all to send the relief that each member was able to give; and furthermore they sent their relief or gift to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. We notice the Antioch brethren did not have to phone or write the brethren over at Philippi and ask their permission nor get their agreement before they could give to relieve the needs of the Judean brethren. We notice the Antioch brethren had not joined any manmade plan and had not "pooled" their money in a "Centralized Control Agency" and had NOT written the "Centralized Corresponding Member". In those days there was no "Papa" in the geographical Center of The Brotherhood, at the "PLAN" headquarters, and there was NO three or four congregations (plural number) money, and no one had to call or write to Bro. Sobberly, or Bro. McHay, nor Bro. Balddome, nor Bro. Whizbang and ask: May we have some money to keep Bro. Hornblower in the field?

In those days, the disciples were simple folks, (not simpletons) not presuming to know more than the scriptures, and were content to act according to its divine orders. They had the love for the truth, hence they were not sent any strong delusions to believe a lie and be damned, neither did they divide the brotherhood over "How to give , send, receive and minister". Some folks change the divine plan of giving and helping each other. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches (congregations) of Galatia, even so do ye". "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come". Hence, we see we must give each week, upon the first day, and that is the Lord's day, commonly called "Sunday". To do it any other way will bring the wrath of God upon us along with His punishment. Study 2 Cor. 9:1-9, along with I Cor. 16:1-5. I Cor. 16:3 "And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem". Who is giving the gift? The congregation of Corinth. To Whom was the gift given?

To the congregation/s in Jerusalem. Question. Did the congregations of Galatia send the gift over to the congregation of Corinth and tell them to give a little to the congregation/s of Jerusalem? And dole out a little to the congregation at Ephesus? NO, the congregation of Corinth sent their gift directly from themselves to the congregation/s in Jerusalem. They did not write the "Corresponding Member" nor the "PAPA" in the center of the brotherhood. They sent directly.

In Acts II:27-30 read God's way of distribution of gifts. "Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea: which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. These brethren sought to please God by giving and sending according to "God's Plan". The disciples did NOT adopt a denominational plan to either collect or to send the gift to those in need, instead, they obeyed the "will of God" as it is written in the scriptures. Mankinds ideas, thoughts and plans of his own making, designed to "help God", does NOT help God, but rather helps man bring the wrath and punishment upon themselves. Let us all help God according to God's plan, and not according to the plans of mankind which are at variance with God's plan. Men often feel that they can improve upon God's Plan or system. This is Satan's DECEPTION. The ONLY way to "help" God, is by doing exactly as He commands. No more, no less.

J. S. MORSE

Route #2, Hammon, Oklahoma 73650