

# **The Local Assembly**

**Versus**

**The Sects, Tabernacles  
and Denominations**

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**By F. W. Mehl**

# THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY

## Versus

### The Sects, Tabernacles and Denominations

It becomes more and more apparent that the above subject be treated frankly and plainly. For it is evident that many believers are under the impression that the Assembly is merely an improvement or that it is simply nearer to the Word of God than the best in the sects, tabernacles and denominations. This is erroneous. The Assembly is something altogether different. It is not a matter of degree but of kind.

The truth as it relates to the Assembly cost many believers much. But we are living in days when this truth is being whittled away. This leaves many in a haze as to what an Assembly is and why they are there.

Once men labored to carry the gospel into virgin territory so far as Assembly testimony was concerned. They lifted up axes upon thick trees to make boards withal, to be gathered together to become the dwelling place of God — that is, under God to plant Assemblies. Now, however, too many arm-chair teachers are using axes and hammers upon the beautiful carved work thereof (Ps. 74.5, 6) and instead of teaching the beauties inherent in an Assembly and so encourage the Lord's people to maintain their privileges and responsibilities, they vitiate their little strength by suggesting the

adoption of the ways and means of the religious world.

About a hundred years ago so-called "Higher criticism" from Germany invaded christianity. This did no damage to the Assemblies as it wouldn't be tolerated for one moment. Now, (as if we didn't have enough of the same in this land) we are invaded with what might be termed "Lower criticism" from over the sea. The very foundations of principles that formed the Assemblies all over the land and kept them happily together are being questioned. The seeds of disrespect, dissatisfaction are being sown; innovations that once led many out of the sects and systems of men, are being introduced.

Apart from musical instruments, solo singing, bible schools, chapels and organizations, and what not, men of God of old went forth in dependence upon their God, oftentimes suffering hardships and persecutions to preach the gospel and plant Assemblies. And who is there that will say, that under God they were not successful in planting Assemblies over much of the United States and Canada? Now, however, it is many of these Assemblies that are being invaded and taken over by men with modernistic ideas, and who would court the favor of that which we once left at much cost, by introducing methods that would make us popular with the religious world.

All this is done with great protestations of love. But when christians who have con-

victions of wrong as to the innovations and protest their adoption, their protests are overridden and their consciences violated with impunity.

In some periodicals circulated among us, there is a process being used which could be styled "brain washing" that is, the constant repetition of terms such as: Chapels, Bible Schools, Musical Instruments, Solo Singing, Organizations of one kind and another, and even sharing in crusades in the religious world.

The repeated reading of these things especially by the younger christians has the effect of indoctrinating their minds that all must be according to the Word of God. It is no wonder then that many who see these things in the denominations get the thought the Assembly is just an improvement upon them. But in what way they are hardly able to tell. This makes it rather easy to hobnob with and share in their activities.

In a recent publication referring to some of the things mentioned in the foregoing, they were called "Really trivial". Yet how often these loving christians would force these "trivial" things upon other christians and violate their consciences to the extent of causing divisions.

And now, without going into much detail I should like to point out some differences between an Assembly and the very best in the sects and systems of men.

The Assembly is different as to origin. In

the last analysis, only God can plant an Assembly; For it is an organism, a living thing. Sects, tabernacles and denominations are begun by men. They are mere organizations of one kind or another.

In 1 Cor. 3:9 we find a term which can only be applied to a local Assembly. There it is called; "God's husbandry". Literally it is; "Ye are God's tilled field." Luther, in the German translated it thus: "Ye are God's work acre." Fertile soil is full of living bacteria. How beautifully this emphasizes the truth that the Assembly is a living organism. It is the place where God puts His lovely plants, redeemed sinners, who have been born again and have life.

As to the charge sometimes made, that even in the Assemblies there are at times unsaved ones, we reply that as we "are laborers together with God" in this matter the human element of making mistakes is involved. In spite of care that is exercised some unsaved may get in, but it is still true: "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." (Matt. 15:13)

As in nature the soil is plowed, stirred and cultivated, to make the living bacteria available to the plants for growth, and also to destroy weeds, so, in the Assembly, God's work acre. He uses His servants and His Word to cultivate His people that they might make spiritual growth and also that weeds, that is, errors of various kinds might be eliminated and kept out.

Furthermore an Assembly is begun by saved people being gathered only to Christ. They disown every human name and all else, as they go forth unto Him outside the camp bearing His reproach. (Heb. 13:13) This is according to the Word of God. The sects and denominations are begun, controlled and fostered by men. They call themselves after the name of some man, doctrine, or thing. The Holy Spirit gathers only to Christ. All else divides.

The Assembly is different as to: worship.

Nowhere in Christendom is there anything like the breaking of bread meeting, in the Assembly. It is really the collective worship meeting.

It is the only place where this ordinance is observed in simplicity according to the Word of God as found in I Cor. 11:23-26. What a wonderful exercise this is! With the Lord Jesus in our midst (Matt. 18:20) and the Spirit of God as president and our spiritual enabler and guide, we break bread in remembrance of Him who died for us.

It is the place where the priesthood of all believers can function according to the Scriptures. There are only poor imitations of this elsewhere. Even where the Lord's Supper is sought to be carried out the prerogative of the Holy Spirit is usurped by some one man in an official way and so the priesthood of all believers is denied in a practical way.

How solemn then and yet how soul satisfying it is when two or three, or two or three

hundred sit down to break bread; to worship God in spirit and in truth; to remember Him who is in the midst; and to realize the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit of God throughout. Dear child of God, the Assembly is different in its worship. You will look in vain for this elsewhere. So value highly this wonderful privilege.

The Assembly is different as to ministry.

In the sects and systems of men there is a definite and official clergy and laity recognized. In Revelation 2:15 we find these words "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." Some have pointed out that the word, Nicolaitanes' is an untranslated Greek word meaning, "Rulers over the people". It is really clerisy. It is lording it over the people, styled, "the laity". These clerics are educated fitted and qualified by Seminaries and Bible Schools. They then take over a group of people at a stipulated salary. Whatever errors they were indoctrinated with in these schools, of course are perpetuated upon the people over which they have control. However, it would be safe in saying, that if their salary failed to materialize most of them would also fail in their service. One might ask, "isn't the laborer worthy of his hire?" Our reply is, most certainly; but it all depends on who you hire out to.

In the Assembly evangelists, pastors and teachers are acknowledged. They are gifted as such by the head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 4:11) these are fitted by

**Him: "For the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12).**

Some of these work with their own hands at some secular calling to provide things honest in the sight of all men, to sustain themselves, as they seek to carry out the particular gift God has given them in the Assembly. Others, such as evangelists go forth with the Word of life into virgin fields and foreign lands, for His Name sake taking nothing of the gentiles or unbelievers. (3 John 7). These are often called upon to suffer need and persecution. However, as they look to God for all their needs they are brought through their trials and are sustained by Him, in His service. These things are not learned in the schools of men. Only God can give the grace to go on, whether it is to suffer need or to abound.

In this connection, it is hard to understand how some in the Assemblies get warmed by a strange fire and fervor in regard to popular men in the religious world and who not only go to hear them but also encourage others to so do. Furthermore we have heard of some who contributed hundreds of dollars to such a cause while perhaps some servant of Christ who is laboring according to the Word of God in a new place, and who may be in need doesn't merit even a small gift. Yes, there is a big difference between ministry and service in the Assembly and the denominations.

Furthermore there is a difference too as to popularity.



This becomes obvious when an Assembly is planted and functions according to the Word of God.

When servants of Christ carry the gospel into new fields and see precious souls saved, nearly everyone seems to rejoice. And at times audiences are large. But when the new converts are baptized and after teaching them to observe all things commanded by the Lord (Matt. 28:19, 20) and these are gathered together in assembly capacity they are at once bitterly and abusively reproached by the religious element in the place. And this is no isolated case but rather the usual. Why? Simply because they have disowned every name but the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the last analysis this is the stone of stumbling the rock of offense. Why then should we court the favor of that which is contrary to Scripture and which underneath the veneer of artificial love only despises us with utmost contempt.

Let us therefore gladly go forth unto Him outside the camp, and remain there, bearing His reproach.

Dear Child of God, I have sought, with the utmost brevity, to point out these differences between a local assembly and all else in the religious world. It is different in origin: in worship; in ministry; in popularity.

**Additional copies of this pamphlet maybe  
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