

The Difference Is: [concluded from page 283703]

by Bill Crews

... organizations have a right to exist, but no right to be fastened upon local churches for their existence. This is true of educational, benevolent, recreational and commercial institutions of all kinds.

What **difference** does it make whether elders limit the work of the congregation under them to the ability of that congregation or assume sponsorship of a vast program of work which only the funds of many other congregations can make possible? The **difference** is that the former is authorized by the New Testament, while the latter is not. Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5:2 limit the oversight of elders to the church in which they were appointed elders. They are over that church, its members, its resources and its work, not over another church or those of another church.

What **difference** does it make whether a church limits its work to preaching the gospel, edifying its members and providing for its needy or also involves itself in such worthy endeavors as day nurseries; kindergartens; secondary schools; clinics; care for unwed mothers; seminars on money management, health, exercise and nutrition; recreation; entertainment; scout troops; ball teams; camping trips; sight-seeing tours; dinners; luncheons; etc.? The **difference** is that the word of God authorizes the former, even making them obligatory, but does not authorize the latter. "Family life" centers, so-called "fellowship halls," kitchens swimming pools, and gymnasiums may be popular "in" things today, but churches of the Lord in the first century had no such things and did not engage in the activities that they were designed to accommodate.

283704