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...inspiration of the Scriptures, the reality of Biblical miracles, the immortality of the human soul or spirit, life beyond this life, the resurrection, the judgment, eternity, heaven, and hell. Belief gradually gave way among many to unbelief. Still, it was acknowledged that religion has a place in the lives of men, so religious teaching and efforts began to be redirected toward man's obvious physical and mental and social needs in this life. Thus, the "social gospel" movement was born. Churches began to redirect their efforts toward human problems and needs that are limited to this life, and to move away from spiritual values --salvation from sin, reconciliation to God, obedience to the commandments of God, preparation for eternity. The saving of souls and the reforming of human character gave way to ministering to the uneducated, the poor, the sick. From this foundation the church kindergartens, secondary schools, kitchens, "**fellowship**" halls, and "**family life centers**" have come. They are a prostitution of the church's function; they are unauthorized by the Scriptures; and they do not work. Many of the denominations that have depended upon them for decades (the Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the Disciples of Christ, for example) have lost members and are smaller in number than they used to be.

Churches in the New Testament did not employ such things, but how they grew. Theirs was a spiritual mission with eternity in view. All they had with which to attract the lost was the gospel of Christ, themselves as living examples of that gospel, a Savior who was willing and able to save, fellowship with God and the children of God, and the hope of eternal life in heaven. They did not resort to material gimmicks to attract and to hold the lost, nor should we. They knew the difference between their fellowship in Christ and what passes for "**fellowship**" in religion today. Let us emulate them.

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