**GERBER’S & THE CHURCH**

***Souls Are Our Business***

When I was a young lad back in Tennessee, I had an older sister, a younger brother, and two sisters who were four and six years younger than me. That means there was always the little glass jars in our house that were filled with yummy foods like mushed carrots, strained peas, pureed sweet potatoes, crushed bananas, and many other mouth-watering and face-painting flavors. The Gerber’s Baby Food Company all began back in 1927 when Dorothy Gerber started straining solid foods for her seven-month old daughter Sally. She then asked her husband to try processing other fruits, vegetables and meats at the local canning factory where he worked in Fremont, Michigan. Workers in the canning plant started requesting samples for their own babies, thus beginning an industry that exploded over the past century.

After World War 2 ended there was an incredible baby boom in America that resulted in 76,000,000 babies being born between the Boomer years of 1946 to 1964. That set the stage for Gerber’s to increase sales dramatically. But now there was great competition with dozens of other baby food companies. To stand out above the rest Gerber’s came up with an advertisement scheme that sold mothers by the millions:

“**Babies Are Our Business … Our *Only* Business**.”

Selling off all their other ventures to focus on this one product line (they put all their eggs in one basket, so to speak) the nation bought into this philosophy believing they had only the baby’s health in mind.

Gerber’s can no longer make that claim of single-minded focus (they have become a very diversified corporation with mergers into all kinds of things like insurance, toys, clothing, transportation, etc). But I believe a similar motto can be expressed from the New Testament concerning the mission of the Lord’s church:

“***Souls are our business … our only business***.”

Far too many churches that claim their roots in Christianity have become like the present day Gerber’s company. They have chosen to diversify and become all things to all men by catering to far more than what Christ authorized His church to be and do. The “Social” Gospel has all but replaced the simple gospel of Christ. Appeals to the “whole” man is now the popular craze in Christianity, wherein they offer ministries to every age group and every imaginable need. Like the early day Gerber’s, the gospel of Christ focuses on one thing and one thing only, the salvation of a man’s soul. Nothing more, nothing less.

Romans 1:16-17 is, and should be, the clarion call of every Christian: “*For I am not ashamed of* ***the gospel of Christ****, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek, for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith*.’”

If every believer in Christ would embrace this great doctrine, then it would once again be said of us as was said of those great evangelists who traveled with Paul, “*These who have turned the world upside down have come here too*” (Ac. 17:6). They did that by their laser focus on one thing --- preaching and teaching the good news of Jesus crucifixion and resurrection to save sinful men!

It seems that what was once called “The Great Commission” has been downgraded as old-fashion and archaic. “*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*” (Mk. 16:15), and “*Go and make disciples of all nations*” (Matt. 28:19) has been put on the shelf and replaced with Twelve-Step programs, Feed-The-Poor plans, Teen Challenge counseling, Boy Scout and Girl Scout outreach, and a hundred other social and family agendas. These churches have taken on the role that God designed the home and individuals to do, which is exactly opposite what the apostles said their job was: “*It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables … but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word*” (Ac. 6:2-4). It’s ironic that churches today are not about “the ministry of the word” but serving tables.

The Lord’s church has a mission – save souls! This is done when we look into the fields that are white unto harvest and pray that God sends laborers (you and me) into those fields (Matt. 9:37-38). Our prayer should be like Paul’s prayer: “*My hearts desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved*” (Rom. 10:1). He followed up that prayer by saying, “*I have become all things to all men that I might by all means save some*” (I Cor. 9:22). He humbly proclaimed, “*I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls*” (2 Cor. 12:15). He could truthfully say, “*I am innocent of the blood of all men*” (Ac. 20:27). I wish I could say that.

In every church Paul preached the same message, he beat the same drumbeat: “*the church is the pillar and support of the truth*!” (I Tim. 3:15). The church has but one action item. Here it is in language so clear that anyone who can see through a ladder should be able to see it:

**“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”**

Simple, isn’t it? Equip each saint to go into the work of ministry in order to edify every member of the body of Christ. That’s as plain as the nose on my face (no comments, please). You need help to misunderstand that. The church is solely in the business of service to souls! One job: Save souls, then keep souls saved. That’s it.

Souls are our business … our *only* business.

Do you agree with that statement? If so, let’s determine to achieve the mission that Christ began when He declared, “*the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost*” (Lk. 19:10). Let us tell the world, “*the Son of Man has not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many*” (Matt. 20:28).

What Christ came to do He has now given His church to fulfill. Gerber’s ventured away from their motto and mission, let us not do the same.

SOS means Save Our Souls. Let’s sing: *Rescue the perishing, care for the dying*…” – Rick