



**Devotional Message by Malcolm Watts:
Biblical Warrant**

Reading: Acts 15: 1-6, 22-31.

There were two events which clearly showed the love and support of the early churches for one another, in both material and spiritual matters.

In material matters: Paul organised a collection for the poor at Jerusalem, which he mentions in Romans 15:25,26 and 1 Cor. 16:1. He and Barnabas were committed to the work of “teaching and preaching the word of the Lord” (Acts 15:35), but Paul was also mindful of material needs, and he therefore organized and collected the necessary “relief.” Widows needed support (Acts 6:1-7); famine had increased the problems of poverty; and believers were in very real need (Acts 11:27-30). This gives us a precedent for looking beyond our confines and boundaries to provide material help to other churches.

In spiritual matters: controversy had broken out at Antioch, caused by Jewish brethren wanting the Gentiles to submit to the ceremonial law. This had brought trouble to a number of churches, and Paul and Barnabas were sent to meet with the apostles and elders at Jerusalem to discuss this matter and to decide upon a course of action (Acts 15:1-6). Agreement was reached and peace was established through letters sent to various churches (Acts 15:22-31; 16:4,5). They had assisted in a matter of spiritual and doctrinal importance. This provides us with a warrant to provide such help wherever we can, strengthening and supporting other churches in the Truth of God's Word.

We look to the Lord to help us and to bless this work. We trust churches will be helped and the cause of God strengthened in this land.

Visiting churches

With the easing of Covid restrictions, it is now possible for us to visit churches. Two members of CSF attended the mid-week meeting at Robert Street Chapel in Lower Gornal to talk about the work. It was an encouraging time. The church's greatest need is for a Pastor.

We recently held a meeting on Zoom with Pastors from the North of England to discuss the needs of the area. An in-person meeting is now planned.

Preachers' list

We have produced a list of Pastors and preachers who are willing to supply the pulpits of those on our support list. We believe this will be a useful and practical way to assist churches.

It will be helpful for churches to see which men are nearby or who are willing to travel distances to preach.

We are also mindful, in the Lord's providence, this might lead to the calling of a Pastor to a church.

Practical help

We have been looking at additional, practical ways of helping churches.

We have offered help with creating and maintaining websites. Two churches are already benefitting from this service.

We may also be able to give other support and practical help, including financial advice. An independent examination of accounts will soon be undertaken.

Prayer

We are praying for the churches, and for our land. We pray for closer ties and strong bonds in Christ as the years progress so that we may encourage one another. May our blessed Lord hear our prayers for an outpouring of His Spirit in these dark days.



“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain.” (Revelation 3:2)