

## **THE WORK OF BENEVOLENCE IN THE CHURCH**

Many view the work of the church in a three-fold way: evangelism, benevolence, and edification. In reality, the work of the church is to seek and save the lost (Lk.19:10). Benevolence and works of edification help to accomplish the goal of saving souls and keeping them saved. Benevolence is vital to the functioning of the church. It is a reflection of our love for God. It is an opportunity to open doors which may otherwise be closed to primarily evangelistic outreach. When we engage in benevolent work, we learn to love the world less and less.

Benevolence is an oft-neglected work of the church. Great sums of money are budgeted for evangelistic outreach. Large portions of the contribution are set aside for efforts of edification. But how much of the church budget is set aside for benevolent work? In some congregations, I have seen the brethren budget NOTHING for works of benevolence! Suffice it to say, we do not consider benevolence to be a major work of the church. Often the benevolent work being done in most congregations is a reactionary measure, meaning that brethren generally work in a benevolent way only when confronted with a crisis that demands action. Brethren, we must be pro-active in our benevolent endeavors! We should look for opportunities to do good to all men (Gal.6:10). In so doing, we become more like our heavenly Father, for He is certainly good and gracious unto us (Jas.1:17). When we engage in benevolent work, we are imitating the first-century church (Acts 4:34-35). When we are busy doing benevolent work, we learn a greater love and appreciation for those we help, for we take a greater interest in those things in which we invest our time, energy, money, etc. When we are a benevolent people, we learn to value our blessings even more (Eph.4:28). Helping those in need should cause us to reflect more soberly upon those blessings we enjoy. And, benevolence brings us the greater blessing. It is Jesus who said, "It is better to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

All of this has been said to draw your attention to our benevolence outreach here at Sixth Avenue. We are working to make our outreach more efficient and more organized, in hopes that we may do even more good through this program of work. We are in need of 25-30 families/individuals who would commit to giving \$30 each month so that food items may then be bought in bulk. All others are still encouraged to give as you have been so good to do. It is hoped that the regular monthly contributions to this work will enable this program to flourish, knowing that these donations can be counted on each month. You have answered the call time and again to continue this good work. We know you will do so again even now. Through your help, and with God giving the increase, our benevolence program will bear much fruit to the honor and glory of God.

*Patrick Morrison*