

# Moment of Truth

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as time and opportunity permit.  
Ed Smithson, Editor

## “WELFARE CHURCHES”

For the most part, you have never heard the term “welfare churches.” It is a term that should have never been invented. But my great friend, **Roy H. Lanier, Jr.** has coined the term to describe what is going on in many of our mission efforts.

In the New Testament when churches were newly established, they were put on their own when the preachers left. It appeared that the Lord meant for people who were converted to the truth to be self-sufficient. There is no indication that when the church was newly established, someone else paid their bills.

A “welfare church” is a church established or helped to be established by a congregation or group that continues to be “involved” to the point of making decisions and spending money to keep the church going. Now, will someone please show, from the New Testament, where such occurred.

By the time some of us came along it was such a universal practice that when new congregations were established, the church involved in that just automatically supported them until they could support themselves. That led to the erroneous idea that we were supposed to feed the new churches early on, and many times far into the future. So the new ones depended on others to keep them going. Thus, the new churches became “welfare churches,” and many of them really expected it.

Churches in the New Testament were autonomous churches; by that I mean they “sailed their own ships.” In other words, they supported themselves and made their own decisions, judgments and mistakes. The greatest mistake, in the judgment of this writer, is when a church USURPS the authority of another church and inserts itself into the business of another church; that is a violation of autonomy.

It is true that New Testament churches helped Grecian widows that had been neglected (Acts 6). It is also true, that churches sent and supported preachers to preach the gospel to others (Acts 8, 9, 13); but nowhere does it suggest those churches supported the new churches once established. No welfare churches!



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