The Lord's Church Competing With Community Churches
1 Tim. 3:15

Introduction:

A. The constant pressure to compete with various churches in community.
   1. Other churches seem to offer so much to the community.
      a. Social services.
      b. Recreation facilities.
      c. Health care - physical and mental.
   2. Other churches seem to capture most of the attention.
      a. Activities publicized and praised by news media.
      b. Officials praised as community leaders.
   3. Other churches attract more people from the community.
   4. All kinds of pressure attract and keep "our share" of those others are getting.
      a. Envious members pressure elders, preachers, etc. to compete.
      b. Weak members wonder why "our church" cannot compete.
      c. Preachers pressured into becoming PR men in the community.

B. There are good reasons why the Lord's church cannot compete with others on their level.

Discussion:

I. The Lord's Church Is Limited To Scriptural Authority For Its Practice. (2 Tim. 3:16).
   A. Our faith must not stand in human wisdom. (1 Cor. 2:4,5).
   B. We cannot go beyond what is written. (2 John 9-11; 1 Cor. 4:6).

II. The Lord's Church Is Not Authorized To Practice A "Social Gospel."
   A. Focuses on preparing eternal life rather than this life.
      1. Spiritual health rather than physical/mental health.
      2. Spiritual exercise rather than physical exercise.
   B. Supports spiritual goals and activities rather than social ones.
      1. Social and physical needs met at "home" rather than "church". (1 Cor. 11:22,34).
      2. Christians operate through other agencies to meet "secular" needs and responsibilities.
   C. Leaves social, economic, political, and other such services to proper agencies of this world.

III. The Lord's Church Is Limited In Its Attraction To People In The Community.
   A. Because its spiritual nature does not appeal to the majority. (Mt. 7:13,14).
      1. Weak and foolish to many. (1 Cor. 1:20-2:5)
      2. Does not appeal to carnal minds of the majority. (1 Cor. 2:14)
      3. Does not offer what the carnal mind is looking for. (1 Cor. 1:22)
   B. Because it cannot scripturally adapt itself to appeal to carnal minds.
   C. Because it cannot use many tactics often used to attract and keep numbers.
      1. "Super-salesmanship" approach to evangelism. (2 Cor. 4:2; 10:3-5).
      2. "Bait and switch" approach -- carnal attraction then spring "spiritual" trap.
      3. Emotionalism.

IV. The Lord's Church Cannot Always Compete And Win In The General Area Of Good Works.
   A. Cannot always "out-visit" denominational folks.
   B. Cannot always "out-relieve" denominational folks.
   C. Cannot always "out-friendly" denominational folks.
   D. Cannot always "out-empathize" denominational folks.

V. The Lord's Church Can Complete and Win Only In The Spiritual Realm.
A. It is pillar and ground of truth. (1 Tim. 3:15).
B. It is equipped for spiritual service. (Eph. 4:11-16)
C. It offers, in spiritual realm, what no other institution can.
   1. By preaching the pure gospel. (Gal. 1:8,9; 1 Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim. 4:2-4).
      a. Limiting music to singing. (Eph. 5:19)
      b. Offering up prayers. (Acts 12:5);
      c. Observing the Lord's Supper on first day of week. (Acts 20:7)
      d. Preaching/teaching apostles doctrine. (Acts 2:42)
      e. Giving into church treasury. (1 Cor. 16:2).

Conclusion:
A. Let's quit pressuring ourselves, elders and preachers to out do denominationalists.
B. Let's realize that we are unique and do not need to compete with others in every realm.