

“We” or “They” Members

Dub McClish

Once I was visiting with a member of the church who had been unable to attend worship for a while because of illness. He had been away so long that he had subconsciously excluded himself from the church. I know this was so because he kept talking about the church in terms of what “they” were doing instead of what “we” were doing.

It is lamentable, but true, that some members never think of the church in any terms except “they.” These brethren seem to view the church as sort of a corporation that operates from the church building. They thus think in terms of how “they” are going to spend the money, what “they” should be doing or what size crowd “they” had Sunday. Perhaps it makes some folk more comfortable to occupy the role of mere observers of what the church is doing, instead of including themselves as participants. This allows them to criticize “the church” without criticizing themselves, they think. It also allows them to justify their refusal to render the service they should be giving the Lord in His church. The “they” members have never been known to accept responsibility in the church, for they do not feel themselves a part of it. The church is a remote institution to them.

Thankfully, not all members are of this attitude. There are some who are “we” members. These are people who think in the first person, instead of the third person, when they think of the church and its work. The “we” members speak of what **we** are doing or are going to do, how **we** are using the Lord’s money, and what **we** should be doing. These people conceive of the church as a cohesive group of people composed of all of the members, functioning together, each having his or her respective responsibilities to serve Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-21; Eph. 4:14-16). The “we” members are rarely found criticizing the church, because they realize this would be a criticism of themselves. The “we” members are dedicated, loyal, dependable disciples who include themselves in the activities of the church. When workers are needed, they think of themselves instead of others. When money is needed, they consider how much they can

give. When a Gospel meeting series is announced, the “we” members immediately feel it is their personal duty to bring others and support it faithfully themselves.

“They” members are always on the fringe, as if on the outside looking in, while “we” members are in the center of the activity, making good things happen. It may seem a small thing whether one refers to the church as “we” or “they,” but this terminology actually indicates how one views his relationship to the church. Most of the progress enjoyed in any church is accomplished by the “we” members.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Edifier*, weekly bulletin of Pearl Street Church of Christ, Denton, TX, August 8, 1991, of which I was editor.]

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