

**A Review of Tom Roberts' Book:
"The Church is the Pillar and Ground of Truth" (1 Timothy 3:15)**

Tim Haile

In a new book, Tom Roberts joins Mike Willis, Dan King and others in an attempt to defend non-church, individually funded evangelistic and worship organizations. Brother Roberts' treatment of the facts and Scriptures related to this subject is vastly different from his usual practice. He has misrepresented the position of his opponents and he has engaged in wild speculation about various Scriptures. This is particularly seen in his baseless speculations about "Noah's Other Boat" and the possibility of Paul preaching as a member of the "paid staff" of the School of Tyrannus (pages 34, 35). One could just as easily say that Noah built a nuclear powered submarine, but the Scriptures say nothing about it! These particular sections of Tom's book read more like a fiction novel than a serious analysis of issues. Tom shamelessly argues from the silence of the Scriptures. He leaves the solid ground of honorable exegesis and wanders into the quicksand of opinion and imaginative speculations.

Brother Roberts has seriously misrepresented those of us who oppose business Bible lectureships and worship programs. It appears that he has attempted to answer his opponents without carefully reading or hearing their arguments. This makes him guilty of sheer *folly*, for it is a folly and a shame to answer a matter before hearing it (Proverbs 18:13). For example, brother Roberts said, "*1 Timothy 3:15 is not a proof-text in either sense for denying Christians the right to teach, sing, pray, edify, or practice benevolence outside the local church*" (Page 4). He claimed that some "*assert that teaching the Bible is the exclusive work of the church*" (pg. 22). And on page 27 he says, "*Are individuals authorized to teach, sing, pray or practice benevolence outside the local church? As ludicrous as it sounds, some are denying individuals these rights.*" Brother Roberts alleges these things with **absolutely no proof or citation** whatsoever! I must say that I have read extensively on this subject and I know of no one who teaches what Tom alleges in the above quotes. No one that I know denies the right of individual Christians to "teach, sing, pray, edify, or practice benevolence" outside of the local church! No one that I know asserts "that teaching the Bible is the exclusive work of the church!" These are outlandish and baseless charges. Either brother Roberts is completely ignorant of the position that he presumes to answer, or he is guilty of deliberate misrepresentation of others. We do not object to individuals teaching, singing or praying outside of the local church. We object to individuals forming and funding man-made religious organizations for these purposes. There is a difference between *individual* action and *joint* action.

Tom Roberts is not the first one to make these false charges. Other GOT principals have made similar accusations, and they have refused to correct them. I have observed a tendency among men to mimic the words and actions of those with whom they are affiliated, or to whom they are joined in some organic fashion. Party loyalty, and the desire for acceptance and praise from ones friends, causes men to adopt the language and tactics of those friends. To their shame, GOTF partisans are either ignorantly, or deliberately regurgitating the false allegations and mischaracterizations that are spewed forth from their leaders. Writers have been reduced to mere redactors.

It is one thing for a man to carelessly repeat the false charges that his friends have made against his opponents. Men generally assume the best of their friends, and would not assume them to be liars. However, it is quite another thing for men to knowingly misrepresent others. The deliberate telling of an untruth is a *lie*. The irritating fact of the matter is that, whether the misrepresentation is deliberate or not, the outcome is the same. Brother Roberts' misrepresentations make his opponents appear unreasonable and foolish. I am deeply disappointed that brother Roberts has chosen party loyalty over truth and fairness. In an effort to achieve a polemic advantage he has employed the old carnal tactic of constructing a straw opponent. As everyone knows, it is quite easy to knock the stuffing out of a straw man. It is difficult to answer the arguments of one who speaks as the oracles of God.

About Tom's Title

The title of brother Roberts' book is, "*The Church is the Pillar and Ground of the Truth.*" This is completely misleading, for this book is not a defense of God's plan for the *church*; it is a defense of individually funded evangelistic, edification, benevolence and worship societies. Rather than honor God's church as the pillar and ground of the truth, his book actually indicts those of us who **do** exalt the church as God's chosen evangelistic society! A more fitting title for Tom's book would have been, "The Para-Church, or Non-Church Evangelistic Society is the Pillar and Ground of the Truth." Or, given Tom's arguments on 1 Timothy 3:15, and his specific defense of the **Guardian of Truth and the Truth Lectureship** program, perhaps his title should have been, "The Guardian of Truth is the Pillar and Ground of the Truth." Incredibly, brother Roberts argues that the local church cannot be "the pillar and ground of the truth," but human organizations, such as the Guardian of Truth Foundation, do qualify as the pillar and ground of the truth! This is absolutely unbelievable. According to Tom Roberts, individual saints function as the pillar and ground of the truth when they function *jointly* through a human organization, but these same saints do not function as the pillar and ground of the truth when they function jointly through the local church! Brother Roberts' bias *for* GOTF makes him biased

against God's local church arrangement. I never cease to be amazed at how far people will go to defend their pet religious projects and organizations. Of course, denominationalists have done it for years, and let us remember that many denominations do practice some of the things that God has instructed local churches to do. By adding the works of worship, edification and evangelism to the works of publishing and selling religious material, GOT has become a religious denomination.

1 Timothy 3:15

We learn from his book that brother Roberts holds the view that the "church" of 1 Timothy 3:15 is the *universal* church, not the *local* church. In making this argument he described the *universal church* as the "*ideal which correctly represents the revealed truth of the gospel*" (pg. 4). He therefore concludes that this verse provides scriptural authority for members of the universal church to form, fund and operate *man-made* organizations for the purpose of conducting evangelism and other things. He is wrong in his conclusion, for the universal has no organic function, nor does it employ the use of human organizations. It is composed, not of organizations, but of *individuals*.

If the "church" of 1 Timothy 3:15 is the universal church, as alleged by brother Roberts, then Paul is actually saying that each saint is "the pillar and ground of the truth." So, even if the "church" of 1 Timothy 3:15 does refer to the universal church, the verse still doesn't prove what brother Roberts needs for it to prove. It doesn't authorize individual saints to form and fund religious organizations other than the local church to do the works of the local church.

Brother Roberts' approach to 1 Timothy 3:15 actually begs an important question. If we assume that the "church" of this verse is the universal church, and we also assume with brother Roberts that this verse authorizes saints to establish and support organizations for the purpose of conducting worship, edification, benevolence and evangelism, then why would we not use for these purposes the very organization *that God has provided*, which is the local church? According to the New Testament, the local church is the organization through which saints conduct corporate worship (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20-34; 14:23, 26; 16:1, 2); the local church is the organization that sends out preachers and conducts evangelism (Acts 13:1-3; Acts 14:27; 1 Thess. 1:1, 7, 8); the local church is the organization that edifies saints (Eph. 4:12-16; Acts 11:26; 16:5; Heb. 10:25). Why would we assume, as does brother Roberts, that it authorizes *human* organizations and not the *divine* organization?

What About The Dead Saints?

Brother Roberts and others say that the *universal* church is the pillar and ground of the truth. Have these men forgotten the nature and composition of the

universal church? The universal church includes *all saints, both living and dead* (Heb. 12:23). So, Tom must believe that "revealed truth" is pillared and supported as much by *dead* saints as by living saints. Perhaps brother Roberts will explain to his readers and hearers how **dead saints** can be involved in the support, defense and propagation of the truth, and more particularly, how they go about forming and funding non-church religious organizations!

Brother Roberts' Church Examples

Brother Roberts asked the question about "which church fulfills" the role of pillar and ground of the truth, "Is it the *local church*, or the church *universal*?" He answers, "*May I suggest that we need to think again if we think it is any local congregation? In what sense could the church at Laodicea be the pillar and ground of the truth in light of its condition?*" He also cited Pergamos, Thyatira and Corinth in an effort to prove that it cannot be the local church (page 3). I am again amazed at brother Roberts' hermeneutical approach. He takes a very unusual approach to the Scriptures in order to make this point. Rather than cite examples of *faithful* churches, he cites examples of *unfaithful* churches. His exegetical method is skewed. He conveniently skipped over **Smyrna** in order to get to Pergamos and Thyatira. And he skipped **Philadelphia** in order to get to Laodicea. Why did he do this? Why did he fail to mention these churches? He skipped these churches because they disprove his point. Jesus commended these churches for their *stand for the truth*. They were *faithful* churches. In order to support his theory, Tom needs to cite examples of churches that did not support the truth.

Brother Roberts also cited Corinth, yet he conveniently passed over **Philippi** and **Thessalonica**. Might this be because Philippi was *commended* for her long time support of Paul in "*the defense and confirmation of the gospel*" (Phil. 1:7)? It sounds to me like the church at Philippi supported the truth (*see also* Phil. 4:15, 16)! It is also very easy to see why Tom avoided any reference to the church at Thessalonica: The church at Thessalonica "**sounded out the word of the Lord**" to the extent that they were "*examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe*" (1 Thess. 1:7, 8). The evangelistic actions of the church at Thessalonica demonstrate the absolute fallacy and folly of brother Roberts' argument. The local church at Thessalonica was amazingly successful in its evangelistic endeavors. In fact, no better illustration of 1 Timothy 3:15 can be produced. The church at Thessalonica was truly a "pillar and ground of the truth."

I also noticed that brother Roberts didn't mention the churches in **Jerusalem** and in **Antioch** of Syria. These churches were highly evangelistic. It is important to note that when the Holy Spirit wanted Paul and Barnabas to be

sent on an evangelistic mission, He turned to the local church at Antioch, saying, "*set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.*" These men were "sent out" by both the local church and the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1-4). The local church at Antioch became Paul's base of operations in 3 evangelistic missions. This passage powerfully expresses God's view of the role of the local church organization in performing evangelistic work. God did not turn to a human organization for this work; He turned to a local church.

These local churches provide a perfect model of a group of people functioning as the "*pillar and ground of the truth.*" Brother Roberts is obviously the one who needs to "think again." His defense of human religious organizations puts him in the awkward position of denigrating local churches of Christ.

Brother Roberts' Faulty Hermeneutic

From a purely polemical perspective, brother Roberts was wise to not mention any of these churches that I have cited, for they do not fit within the framework of his pro-human organization, pro-GOTF agenda. They, in fact, demolish his argument. By ignoring examples of local churches functioning as the pillar and ground of the truth, brother Roberts shows his dishonesty in the handling of the Scriptures. He also shows his bias in favor of human religious institutions. This bias has caused brother Roberts to employ a faulty hermeneutic. Since his position will not allow local churches to be identified as the pillar and ground of the truth, it forced him to cite examples of *unfaithful churches*. In so doing, he appeals, not to God's divine arrangement, but to man's failure to comply with that arrangement. This is NOT how one determines God's will. Had he been honest with the Scriptures and with his readers, brother Roberts would have cited God's pattern, not the *exceptions* and *violations* of that pattern. Brother Roberts knows full well that the very New Testament letters that addressed the sinning churches that he cited for his examples of failure, also contained instructions about what those churches needed to do in order to correct their errors. His argument is both foolish and dangerous.

One does not teach others about the work of the church by citing examples of unfaithful churches. We are to cite the examples of *faithful* churches, as I did above. I fear that brother Roberts is like Saul before his conversion. His eyes are covered with scales. His explanation of Bible passages has been affected by his political affiliations. As with Saul, these scales will fall from his eyes once he frees himself of his blind bias towards human institutions.

Brother Roberts' Argument Is Fundamentally Flawed

As I mentioned before, brother Roberts described the universal church as the "*ideal which correctly represents the revealed truth of the gospel*" (pg. 4). Some observations:

1. Brother Roberts carefully selected examples of *unfaithful* New Testament churches in order to prove his theory that the "ideal" church must be the universal church. But, per the local church examples that I cited above, is it not also possible to have an "ideal" *local church*? If there is an "ideal" universal church, then there exists also the possibility of an "ideal" *local church*.

2. Brother Roberts ignores the fact that the faithful saints that comprise the universal church are also members of local churches. If these saints are "ideal" in their upholding of the truth in their individual lives, then why are they not equally "ideal" in their function with others in their respective local churches? More specifically, per the purpose of Tom's book: If these saints are "ideal" in their upholding of the truth in their *joint function in human organizations*, then why are they not equally "ideal" in their joint function with others in their respective local churches?

3. In addition to the problem that Tom has in explaining the role of *dead* saints in the defense and propagation of the gospel, there is another problem with his view. He also needs to explain which saints classify as the "ideal." He tells us in his book that the saints at Corinth, Laodicea, Thyatira and Pergamos did not qualify, so he obviously means *faithful* saints when he speaks of the "ideal" church. Now, let us remember brother Roberts' purpose for making the "church" of 1 Timothy 3:15 the *universal* church. He seeks to prove that saints operate as "the pillar and ground of the truth" when they function *jointly* through man-made religious organizations such as the Guardian of Truth Foundation. This raises an important question about the definition and identity of "ideal" saints: Does he consider those saints who oppose the forming and funding of human religious institutions as members of the "ideal" church? Does brother Roberts classify his detractors on this issue as "*the pillar and ground of the truth?*" According to his book the answer is no. His book is an indictment of those of us who teach that the local church is God's prescribed *organization* for *joint action* by saints.

For further study on 1 Timothy 3:15, including my analysis of the context of that chapter, see my article on the Bible Banner website at <http://www.biblebanner.com/articles/general/1Tim315.pdf>.

More Charges of "Sommerism"

Brother Roberts alleges that, "*the errors of Sommerism are being repeated today*" (pg. 21). In his **39** page book, Tom Roberts makes **31** references to *Daniel Sommer, Sommerites and Sommerism*. Reading brother Roberts' new book, and the one edited by Mike Willis and Dan King (*We Have a Right*), it appears that these men believe that all they have to do to discredit the arguments of their opponents is to simply label them as "Sommerites." The intensity of their criticism of Daniel Sommer makes Guardian of Truth personnel sound more like members of the Christian Church than of Churches of Christ. I am beginning to wonder if they are more comfortable siding with Sommer's Sand Creek *opponents*, than with him. After all, recent writings by GOT personnel do prove that they have no objection to the missionary society *concept*; their only objection is to the *church support* of such institutions. Even Tom Roberts' book makes this clear. His Jesus-Group argument (redacted from Mike Willis) defends the practice of monetary contributions to man-made evangelistic organizations. Too, any devout defender of instrumental music in worship would be quite proud of Tom's argument about "Noah's Other Boats." It is a great argument (provided that one believes God's silence to be authoritative).

Would The Real "Sommerite" Please Stand Up!

Tom Roberts said, say, "*None likes to be labeled a 'Sommerite,' but the similarity of the arguments is unmistakable.*" Mike Willis, Dan King, Tom Roberts and others of the GOT group are quick to label their opponents as "Sommerites," yet they as quickly claim that Sommer moderated his position in his later years. This moderated position that they ascribe to him is actually *their own position*. Given Sommer's alleged change to what is now the GOT position, it would seem logical that the real Sommerites are the members and supporters of the GOT group! The principle of *repentance* would demand that Sommer be credited with the view that he last held, not with the "erroneous" view from which he turned. So, if I were to engage in the GOT practice of *labeling*, then I could accurately call the members of the GOT group "Sommerites," for they now hold the view that he held.

Furthermore, Daniel Sommer, like many of his contemporaries, held the old view of *evangelistic oversight*. This position is espoused by Mike Willis in his article, "*Autonomy or Isolation.*" (I answered Mike's arguments at <http://www.biblebanner.com/articles/general/isolate.pdf>.) I know of no GOT board member or magazine writer who challenged Mike's false position. This includes Tom Roberts. Again, if I were to follow the GOT practice of labeling, then Tom Roberts, Mike Willis and all GOT contributors are the real "Sommerites."

Why Not "Franklinites?"

Near the end of his life, Benjamin Franklin, who was greatly admired by Daniel Sommer, strongly encouraged Sommer to continue his stance with regard to human institutions. Franklin *agreed* with Sommer. I wonder why the defenders of individually supported religious societies don't accuse their opponents of being **Franklinites**? Given the relationship between Franklin and Sommer, wouldn't a "Sommerite" also be a "Franklinite?" I wonder why GOT writers do not derogatorily call others and me *Franklinites*? Could the reason be that their bookstore has sold so many of Franklin's books for so many years? Could it be that such an association could damage the popularity of Franklin's material, and that book sales would suffer by such an application of his name? Surely not!

Brother Roberts went on to say, *"None likes to be labeled a 'Sommerite,' but the similarity of the arguments is unmistakable."* So, brother Roberts reasons that if one makes arguments that are "similar" to those that are made by others, then it is acceptable to label him with the name of that person. By Tom's own reasoning it would be perfectly acceptable for me to call him a **Campbellite**! After all, he does hold views "similar to" those held by Alexander Campbell.

On pages 27 and 28 of his book, Tom Roberts describes how the local church is "limited," in contrast to the individual. His larger point is to prove that, whereas the local church is "limited" by God in what it can do, comparable man-made organizations (like GOTF) *are not* so limited. This argument is similar to one made by W.K. Pendleton in defense of the American Christian Missionary Society. He argued that local churches were inadequate to carry out the work of evangelism on their own. On the basis of Tom's principle of "similarity," this means that Tom Roberts is a **Pendletonite**.

Since his book regurgitates the failed arguments of Mike Willis and other GOT foundation members regarding the "Jesus Group," Synagogue evangelism, the school of Tyrannus...etc, then perhaps I should call Tom Roberts a **Willisite**? He does parrot the arguments that Willis has made. But wait a minute. Brother Roberts writes using first person plural pronouns, speaking of "*what we are doing*" (in reference to the GOT lectures, pg. 22). Given this fact, then perhaps it would be more appropriate for me to refer to brother Roberts as a **GOTF-ite**. Perhaps I will use "**GOTite**," as it rolls off the tongue more smoothly.

All of this may sound silly, but I wish to make the point that labeling does nothing in the way of addressing or answering the argument. Labeling is a desperate and childish tactic. It is an act of sheer desperation by those who lack a sound defense of their behavior. Members of the GOT group have been dismissing their detractors as "Sommerites" for far too long. It is time for them to cease with their foolishness and answer the argument.

"Noah's Other Boat"

By page 34 of brother Roberts' book he had already abused some Bible passages, ignored other pertinent passages, and totally misrepresented his opponents. These errors surprised me about Tom, but they did not prepare me for what I was to read on pages 34 and 35 of his book. He attempts to defend human religious societies on the basis that Noah may have built "other boats" for "pleasure or for livelihood." Brother Roberts sounds like a sectarian trying to defend instrumental music in worship, or an institutionalist trying to defend the sponsoring church arrangement and church sponsored recreation. His point is that God's specific instruction for Noah to build an ark to the saving of his house did not prevent him from building other arks. After spending some time constructing his argument (from evidence found only in the fertile recesses of his overactive imagination, not from the Bible), he is then forced to admit, "*I don't know that Noah had another boat.*" Brother Roberts finally states the truth, and this truth presents a genuine problem for him. It is a tacit admission that his argument is constructed upon pure conjecture. He has no proof of his major premise, yet he boldly asserts conclusions from that premise. In other words, he just makes things up and assumes them to be analogous to what he and others of the GOT group are doing in their religious exercises. It appears that in his zeal to defend GOT, brother Roberts forgot the principle of the *silence of the Scriptures* (Heb. 7:11-14; Acts 15:24). He also forgot about the sin of *presumption* (Psa. 19:13), and of the importance of speaking as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11; Isa. 8:20).

Brother Roberts' Sophistry

Brother Roberts' argument actually contains a dangerous subtlety. His purpose is to defend the *joint* actions of saints through organizations like the Guardian of Truth Foundation. We know this because this argument is classified with Mike Willis' "Synagogue" argument (p. 33), and Mike Willis' "Jesus-Group" argument (p. 36). These arguments attempt to defend the right of people to form, fund and jointly function through non-church religious organizations. Tom admits that it would have been wrong for Noah to have built another ark "for the saving of his house," but that it was okay for him to build other arks for fishing, ferrying, pleasure or cargo. Tom knows very well that none of his opponents object to individuals engaging in commerce. No one that I know has ever suggested that commerce conflicts with the work of the local church. There is no conflict, for local churches do not sell their services or teaching.

The sophistry of brother Roberts' argument is seen in two ways:

1. The practice under consideration, and which brother Roberts repeatedly mentions in his book, is that of brethren functioning, not as *individuals*, but

jointly through some man-made organization to evangelize, edify and worship. Individuals are certainly authorized to do these things outside of the church, and I know of no one who denies this. The question under consideration among brethren today is whether or not they may form, fund and use *some other organization* for these purposes. Tom's book contains the following chart:

Ark of God	Noah's Other Boats
Divinely Designed	Of Human Origin
Exclusive to God's Purpose	Used As Noah Had Need
Made Of Gopher Wood	Made of Any Kind of Wood
To Save Noah and His Family	For Fishing, Ferry, Pleasure, Cargo

This chart proves nothing with respect to the current controversy. In order for Tom's argument about Noah's other boats to be analogous to what Guardian of Truth Foundation is practicing, and which Tom is defending, he needs his boat chart to look like this:

Ark of God	Noah's Other Boats
Divinely Designed	Of Human Origin
Exclusive to God's Purpose	Used As Noah Had Need
Made Of Gopher Wood	Made of Any Kind of Wood
To Save Noah and His Family	To Save Noah and His Family

I have changed the chart to match the current practice, which is as follows:

Church	Human Society
Divinely Designed	Of Human Origin
Exclusive to God's Purpose	Used As Humans Have Need
Worships, Evangelizes, Edifies, and Takes Up a Collection	Worships, Evangelizes, Edifies, and Takes Up a Collection

In order to justify the current practice of GOT and other human organizations, brother Roberts needs to be able to construct a chart from Genesis 6 or

elsewhere that grants brethren the right to form organizations like the local church to do at least some of the things that local churches do. He has no such passage and he knows it.

2. Tom's argument is also tricky in that it speaks of what an *individual* may do in commerce (build a boat for leisure or livelihood), while attempting to justify what individuals may do **jointly** (form and fund man-made religious organizations). Tom's boat chart needs to look like this:

Ark of God	Noah's Boat <i>SOCIETY</i>
Divinely Designed	Of Human Origin
Exclusive to God's Purpose	Used As Noah Had Need
Made Of Gopher Wood	Made of Any Kind of Wood
To Save Noah and His Family	To Save Noah and His Family

The application would then be as follows:

Church	The GOT Group (or other)
Evangelism	Evangelism
Edification	Edification
Take Up Collection	Take Up Collection
Worship	Worship

It is possible that brother Roberts made this argument and constructed this chart the way he did because he actually believes that some brethren reject the right of *individuals* to engage in lawful commerce. However, since I have never heard or read of anyone holding such an erroneous view (and I have read much on this subject), and since the boat argument is placed alongside several other arguments that are clearly intended to defend man-made religious organizations, I suspect that my analysis is correct.

The School of Tyrannus

Brother Roberts joins others in making wild, unprovable assertions and speculations about Paul's relationship with the "school of Tyrannus" (Acts 19:9, 10). He wrote, *"Is it possible that Paul utilized the school by renting space/rooms for his teaching? I doubt seriously that he was part of the paid staff, but who can*

be sure?" (p. 34). Incredible! Tom means, "who can be sure" *that Paul didn't serve as a paid member of the staff!* What has happened to brother Roberts? He brazenly speculates about things that he cannot possibly know or prove. He reasons and writes on these particular passages like a liberal. He boldly speculates about things about which he admits he *cannot "be sure!"* He makes the same type of appeal with respect to Paul's use of the school of Tyrannus that he makes with "Noah's Other Boat." He argues from the silence of the Scriptures. He engages in sheer speculation.

A simple reading of Acts Acts 19:9 proves that the "school of Tyrannus" was a "lecture hall," as indicated by some translations. Luke says, "*But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.*" The "**he**" is Paul. Thayer tells us that the word translated "reasoning" means "*to converse, discourse with one, argue, discuss.*" If the word "school" means *faculty* or *organization*, then Luke is telling is that Paul disputed "in" (Gr. *en*) or *through* the school faculty. If this is true, then Paul did not teach; the Tyrannus faculty taught! This notion is silly. Thayer says that the Greek word *en* means "*in the interior of some whole; within the limits of some space.*" Obviously, Luke is telling us that Paul preached in the school *facility*, not in the school *faculty!* Louw & Nida, 7.14, p. 83, says the following:

"In Ac. 19:9 it is better to use a translation such as 'lecture hall' rather than 'school,' since one does not wish to give the impression of the typical classroom situation characteristic of present-day schools. One may translate the relevant context of Ac 19:9 as 'every day Paul discussed with people in the lecture hall which belonged to Tyrannus' or '...in a hall where Tyrannus often taught' or '...lectured.'"

The "school-of-Tyrannus" argument that is made by Tom Roberts and others of the GOT group is utter nonsense. They should simply give it up.

The Jesus-Group

Brother Roberts remakes Mike Willis' argument on the Jesus Group. Luke 8:1-3 is cited in an effort to prove the right of men to form and fund non-church organizations to perform church-like functions. The passage says absolutely nothing about a Jesus *organization*. It speaks of certain women providing assistance to Jesus and the apostles. Like institutionalists, Tom, Mike and others rob the passage of its simplicity and beauty by institutionalizing the action. They see *joint, organic* action in every Bible passage that speaks of two or more individuals acting. These brethren have used Matthew 18:16, 17 to show institutional brethren the difference between *individual action* and *joint action*. Perhaps it is time for them to apply the passage to themselves.

I have answered this argument at length, so I will not devote much space to it here. You can find the article at <http://www.biblebanner.com/articles/general/jesgroup.pdf>.

Brother Roberts also repeats Mike Willis' "synagogue" argument, which I have also answered at length. You can find this article at <http://www.biblebanner.com/articles/general/synagog1.pdf>.

Conclusion

I regret that brother Roberts has written this book. His effort to protect and defend a human organization has resulted in his use of poor exegesis and in the flagrant misrepresentation of his brethren. Much of the book is a mere redaction of what other GOTF principals have written. Brother Roberts and others have fallen into the old trap of looking for scriptural approval for a practice *after* they have already committed themselves to it. Pride rarely allows men to give up a practice after they have publicly defended it and committed themselves to it for some period of time. I hope that brother Roberts has not so devoted himself to a defense of human religious organizations that he will not objectively consider my reproofs. I hope he repents of his misuse of the Scriptures and of his misrepresentations of those of us who oppose business Bible lectureships.

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