

# Where the Social Gospel Always Leads

-Mark Roberts

This article in the Dallas Morning News caught my eye, with its incredible title: "Dallas-area churches plan to ditch Sunday services for community service." Churches will not meet on Sunday? How could that be?

The article, written by Jana J. Martin, went on to explain:

"There will be thousands of empty seats in North Texas churches this weekend, and pastors think that's a good thing. Instead of filling pews to listen to sermons and sing praises, members of more than 50 area churches are being encouraged to head out into their communities to join in community service projects on Saturday and Sunday. Many of the participating churches plan to cancel Sunday worship services.

"We believe the Scriptures tell us to love God first and love others. And we want to demonstrate that by serving them," said Richard Covington, minister of community at The Heights Baptist Church in Richardson and one of the organizers of the event. Volunteers will paint houses, repair fences, clean up neighborhoods, and distribute staple items to the homeless, among other projects. The movement is a partnership between the local churches and World Vision, a Christian humanitarian organization. The goal is not just to do good works for a weekend, Covington said, but to help Christians make community service an integral part of their daily life. "We want to be what Christ wants us to be," he said Covington. Those interested in taking part or learning more about the volunteer effort can visit [www.goandbe.org](http://www.goandbe.org).

Source:

<http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/latestnews/stories/043010dnmetechurchservice.2c4ae9e.html>

Several observations are in order. First, is it wrong to do good works? Certainly not. A number of passages, like [James 1:27](#) and [Galatians 6:10](#), command individual Christians to be about the business of helping others. The parable of the Good Samaritan ([Luke 10](#)) forever reminds Christians of the need to watch for those in need and help. Jesus'

example of service at the Last Supper further emphasizes the need for His disciples to be ready to serve, even in menial ways. Also “on point” here is the truth that the church is to be involved in benevolence when saints are in distress ([Acts 11:27-30](#)). Benevolence and good works are a significant part of Christianity.

But to cancel the worship of Almighty God to go and do good works? What passage could possibly be used to even remotely support such thinking? Even more importantly, why is this an either/or situation. Why should it be with either do good works or worship? Why can't both be done? What kind of false dichotomy is this?

Yet here the pernicious evil that is the social gospel is seen most clearly. The social gospel teaches that Christianity is about improving this world. It seeks to help people in the here and now. It is a doctrine that sprang from the infidelity and modernistic scholarship of the early 1900's. Since the Bible was no longer to serve as our moral and ethical guide what possible could churches have, since they existed largely to expound and teach the Bible? The answer was the social gospel. The church should “do good” and help orphans, the jobless, drug addicts and just about any and everybody else being run over and downtrodden in society.

Now churches are largely viewed in our world as charitable institutions. That is the church's function in our world, at least according to many. Indeed, if someone stops by the building for a handout they are, you can be certain, incensed to find a church that doesn't offer unlimited benevolent funds!

The “skip worship for good works Sunday” is just another step away from anything approaching Christianity as the social gospel works deeper and deeper into manmade churches. Since the Bible isn't really God's word how we worship and even if we worship is up in the air. What is not up in the air is the need to do good works, so worship gets cut and out people go to be involved in benevolence.

Stunning, isn't it? This is the harvest that comes when the social gospel's seeds are sown. If doing good works is the church's major reason for existing then canceling services is a no-brainer.

It might be fitting to notice that these good works were not scheduled on Tuesday evening or Thursday morning, where people would be asked to give up leisure time or even (gasp!) work. There is no time (apparently) to do these good works except on Sunday. So when something has to be cut from the schedule who gets the axe? God does.

The social gospel has confused men and women on what Christianity is about and what is of primary importance (salvation from sin). As a result many churches today are confused as to what they should be doing on Sunday morning ... and are just as confused as to what they should be about the rest of the week.