

# Individually Supported Missionary “Aggregates”

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Brother Martin continues to condemn the work of the Guardian of Truth Foundation while inconsistently overseeing his own collectivity for the teaching and preaching of the Gospel. Brother Martin is one of several brethren who make the argument popularized by Daniel Sommer, Leroy Garrett, and Carl Ketcherside that the church is the only collectivity which can preach the gospel. All the while each of these men, like brother Martin, were blind to the fact that he operated his own collectivity. Brother Martin's collectivity is [www.bibletruths.net](http://www.bibletruths.net) which receives the donations of eight men who contribute their time, labor, and products (but not money) of their labor to this organization which brother Martin owns and oversees. Brother Martin is operating a “one-man missionary society” which gives away the gospel. (Please note, I am not against what brother Martin is doing; I am calling attention to his inconsistent application of the “church is the only collectivity” doctrine.)

In his November 29, 2005 post (“‘We Have A Right,’ A Response to a Response”), brother Martin writes defending his collectivity “[www.biblequestions.org](http://www.biblequestions.org)” as follows:

[Www.biblequestions.org](http://www.biblequestions.org) is a site that belongs to the Holly Street church in Denver, where I preach and serve as one of the elders. [Www.bibletruths.net](http://www.bibletruths.net) serves as the reference site for the eight men who answer Bible questions and also for the many respondents to the Bible Questions site. However, I am the sole owner. I have no organization, no treasury, and no staff writers. Yet, it appears Mike wants to argue that Bible Truths is tantamount to the Guardian of Truth Foundation that has all the components necessary to being in every sense of the description, a foundation, entity, or society. If I accepted monies for Bible Truths, you would not be able to have an IRS deduction. Furthermore, I have never taken a penny from any toward the defraying of the expense associated with owning and publishing Bible Truths. To intimate that Bible Truths and the Guardian of Truth Foundation are tantamount is utterly ridiculous. Perhaps Mike's logic ability is so superior to mine that I just cannot see his argued parallel (sic).

Yes, I do have a few articles in Bible Truths that were written by men other than myself. Does this make Bible Truths and the G. O. T. F. equal? I have never denied the existence and right of individuals concurrently working together as did Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18: 24-28). Notice, please, what I wrote in my original article that in part prompted Mike's, "A Response To We Have A Right":

"May I kindly suggest that the issue is not simply whether two or more individual Christians may work together...! Aquila and Priscilla constituted two Christians who worked together outside the immediate local church climate to teach Apollos (Acts 17: 24-28). It is utterly simplistic to the extreme to contend that the whole privately funded missionary society issue is whether or not two 'Christians may work together to teach the gospel...! What is of importance and needed in order for, "We Have A Right" to accomplish its goal in justifying private missionary orders is for them to produce Aquila and Priscilla, etc. forming the 'Protector of the Truth Foundation,' let's call it, through which Christians collectively work in protecting and preaching the gospel. Ignored and abused by 'We Have A Right,' I predict, will also be the matter of distributive action that is individual, but performed in an aggregate setting. The Lord's Supper is an example of such action (I Cor. 11: 18-34). Again, though, when an institution with its own treasury, board of directors, etc. is injected into the given set of circumstances, the matter of 'distributive action in the aggregate setting' is eliminated and true collective action enters (the action of the foundation). Hence, a defense for human institutions based on distributive action is not tenable.

Note the following:

1. [www.bibletruths.net](http://www.bibletruths.net) is not the church. The site which the church operates is [www.biblequestions.org](http://www.biblequestions.org). Whatever this is it is not the church as brother Martin himself tells us.
2. [www.bibletruths.net](http://www.bibletruths.net) is not an individual work. This site “serves as the reference site for the eight men who

answer bible questions.” It is the work of eight men and, I might add, it is under the oversight of the web master, Don Martin.

3. Www.bibletruths.net is performed in an aggregate setting. The adjective “aggregate,” according to Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, means “formed into a whole, mass, or sum; united; combined; total; as, the *aggregate* amount of charges.” The noun “aggregate” means “a mass, assemblage, or collection of distinct things. . . 3. A mass formed by the union of homogeneous particles; an agglomerate of different minerals which are separable by mechanical means; 4. The total sum, quantity, or number of anything.” Note that the connotation of aggregate is the blending of many things together into one collective substance. So when brother Martin tells us that www.bibletruths.net is an “aggregate” he is telling us that it is a collectivity. This collectivity is under the oversight of brother Martin. This collectivity receives donations– the work of the eight men who donate their time and the product of their labor to this collectivity which he oversees. Brother Martin wants us to know that the donations are not monetary. So what? What Scripture distinguishes between monetary donations and other kinds of donations. When King Saul executed Ahimelech, the priest at Nob, for supporting David, Ahimelech had made no monetary donation to David. Rather Ahimelech gave David food and the sword of Goliath. But Saul judged that to be support of David. Can our brother not see that there are other kinds of donations than monetary donations? If one donates a building to a school, would that be support? If one donated his labor (as a lawyer or CPA) to a school, would that not be monetary support? The average man can see that. Brother Martin does receive donations from individuals so that he can freely disseminate the gospel; he just limits the contributions which he receives to non-monetary contributions. I ask him, “What Bible verses teaches that one can make non-monetary contributions to a collectivity but cannot make monetary contributions to that same collectivity?”

4. Brother Martin writes, “I have never denied the existence and right of individuals concurrently working together.” Since he believes that churches work “concurrently” in the preaching of the gospel, can he also say, “I have never denied the existence and right of churches concurrently working together”? I think this question will force the issue for brother Martin. Does he mean “concurrent” or “together”? When we speak of churches working “concurrently” we mean “occurring at the same time.” The Holly St. church at Denver does its work in evangelism; the church at Boston St. church does its work. But should they join hands and work together under common oversight, then they have created another collectivity, such as occurs in the sponsoring church arrangement. In the same fashion, when one individual does his work and another individual does his work, they are working concurrently. But when they pool their labor under common oversight (eight individuals working together under one web master), they are no longer doing distributive work; they are doing collective work.

5. Brother Martin has not explained to us why he chooses to not to attack those other collectivities that teach and preach the gospel and/or offer worship, such as Gospel Truths, Inc., the Preceptor Company, Biblical Insights, Inc., *Think* magazine, R.J. Stevens singing school, the various summer camps operated around the country. Brother Martin leaves one with the impression that he is on a vendetta against the Guardian of Truth Foundation, not a person sincerely trying to apply consistently the principles which he believes. (And, on the idea of divorces for causes other than fornication which brother Martin tries to inject into this discussion, why has he not attacked Maurice Barnett for teaching the same thing as I believe in an article which appeared in the February 1993 issue of *Gospel Anchor*?) It is hard to take seriously those who selectively apply the principles they affirm.

6. Brother Martin says www.bibletruths.net has “no organization, no treasury, and no staff writers.” Does it have a web master who determines what goes on the web? The web master has total control over the things contributed for publication on the web. What he means is that the organization of his web site is operated by an unrestricted dictator. He says it has no treasury. Now either someone is donating the space for him to post his web site (in which case he is receiving another kind of donation) or someone pays for that site. If

someone pays for that site, there is a treasury of some sort because money is transferred from one account (that of brother Martin) to another account (that of the service provider). What he means is that he does not receive monetary contributions from others; he only receives non-monetary contributions. He says he has no “staff writers.” No, he has “eight men who answer Bible questions.” Can you tell me what Bible verse makes it wrong to have regular writes for a magazine who are called “staff writers” but makes it right to have “eight men who answer Bible questions” as regular writers for a web site?

7. [www.bibletruths.net](http://www.bibletruths.net) gives away the gospel free of charge and is in competition with the church. Anyone can see that his [www.bibletruths.net](http://www.bibletruths.net) site is in competition with the [www.biblequestions.org](http://www.biblequestions.org) web site and the web sites of churches operated all over the country. [www.bibletruths.net](http://www.bibletruths.net) is doing the work of the church to the same degree that the Guardian of Truth Foundation is doing the work of the church when it sponsors a lectureship. If he can say that [www.bibletruths.net](http://www.bibletruths.net) is not doing the work of the church and in competition with the church, he should be able to see that the Guardian of Truth Foundation is not doing the work of the church or in competition with the church.

8. Brother Martin says, “If I accepted monies for Bible Truths, you would not be able to have an IRS deduction.” So what? What Bible verse would make it wrong to receive a monetary contribution if it is tax deductible and right to receive it if it is not tax deductible? This is a distinction without a biblical difference.

### **Conclusion**

The neo-Sommerites are just as much of a threat to the unity of God’s people as were the original Sommerites. We do not have to wonder what the impact of their influence will be; we can look back at our history to study what happened when Daniel Sommer, Leroy Garrett, and W. Carl Ketcherside preached and applied their “church is the only collectivity which can teach the gospel.” Their teaching unnecessarily divided brethren by making what should be a matter of human judgment and personal choice a condition for salvation and a test of fellowship. After years of preaching that excluded practically everyone from their fellowship, these brethren made a pendulum like swing from the right to the left which resulted in a liberalism that condemn nothing and fellowship anyone. As the neo-Sommerite position is being resurrected and propagated anew, I fear first for the division that it will create among those who should be working together and, in the more distant future, the greater potential for danger which it will create when those who have excluded practically everyone from their fellowship will make their own pendulum-like swing to the left.