

c. Para-church ministries

The line is fine between this and the inter-denominational ministries but the idea is that the parachurch activity is individually sponsored by a body outside the normal ecclesiastical lines and without a special appeal or dependence on ecclesiastical groupings. I will mention a few and maybe the idea will be more clear...possibly less.

(1) The "rescue" missions..mostly the result of the conversion of some person and that party's interest in others. The works were often the outgrowth of a party's special attention to a particular problem or field of service...others might join in later but generally such works were "beside the church". The modern beginnings were in the 1820's in this country and the popularization came with General Booth and the Salvation Army in England, distinctly para church when Booth's own religious organization was sufficiently distanced from his work that he had to move outside of it. Rescue missions are plentiful in the United States..the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago, the Water Street Mission in New York being representative both in age and in the parachurch identification.

(2) The YMCA and counter part YWCA. From the middle of the 19th century a parachurch effort to help persons who travelled and were itinerant to have moorings and Christian help and friendship. The drift of these bodies into theological liberalism is one of the sad stories of our times.

(3) The Boy Scouts...Wow! But originally with a strong religious thrust to teach the reality of a Divine presence and to help the attendants be "devout".

(4) Outreach bodies:

(a) the collegiate level: The League of Evangelical Students, Inter-Varsity, Campus Crusade.

(b) the popular level :Youth for Christ, the Word of Life, etc. ministries

(c) special ministries: Christian Service Association, etc.

There are far more of these than could be mentioned individually if the whole course were given to it. (This is true of some of the foregoing data as well.) So we have to rather close it there. Most of these bodies sense their need of and dependence on the church as a body politic but operate outside of it in a total degree thus making them para-church rather than interdenominational in character.