

The Organization and Government of the Church

A. Introduction: What is the Church and how should we experience the Church?

This is not the first time that I have made a serious study of “the church.” In about 1970, the Lord used me and Norbert Ward {deceased 1980} to plant a local church in Franklin, Tennessee. In that effort, we examined the Scriptures and sincerely tried to sort out tradition from the clear teaching of God’s Word concerning the church. We did not claim to be the “True Church.” I believe that the Lord has taught me a few things in the years following.

These discussions will be informal. Also, they are a “work in progress,” which means that I don’t have an outline which I prepared months or years ago. That is not to say that what is being presented is new or novel; only that this particular organization of subjects is not rigid. Matt, our other Co-pastor, will be leading some of these discussions.

My resources include: The Doctrine of the Church, John thornberry; Local Church Practice, various writers; Sound of Grace, {articles on the church} John Reisinger and others; Body Dynamics, John MacArthur, Jr.; Worship: Together We Celebrate, Leslie B. Flynn; plus many other books and articles on the church. The Scriptures are the only authoritative guide.

I encourage you to study and write down your questions. You may think of some issues that I haven’t included. We will attempt to get honest answers to all questions.

When I began this fresh study of “the church,” I felt as though I had entered a very large room and as I looked around I noticed that the room had many doors along its walls. Each door that I opened led to a different aspect of “the church.”

1. The large room begged the question: **What is the Church?**
 - Is the church an *organism* or an *organization*? Or both?
 - Is the church **only** a local assembly of believers?
 - Is there an universal church? {invisible; catholic}
 - When did the church begin? Eschatological implications?
 - Why are there so many denominations? Is there more than one true church?
2. One door opened to a room that had books and articles on:
 - What is the purpose of the church?
 - What is the church supposed to do?
 - How does the church decide things?
3. Another door led to questions about church leaders:
 - Pastor, deacon, elder, pope, minister of music, minister of bingo, etc.
 - If we can understand who the leaders are, then, how do we choose them?
 - Do we pay them? Who gets paid? Why?
 - How do we get rid of them?

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4. Yet another door introduced ordinances:
Baptism: subjects for? mode of? administrator?
Lord's Supper - who may partake? frequency? what is it?
What about confession, confirmation, extreme unction?
5. And another door led to church discipline:
Should we exercise discipline? Why? When? Who? How?

There were so many doors in the great room that I was afraid to open any more just now!

B. Presuppositions: What I believe to be true without "proof."

1. One of my favorite tricks when dealing with any subject is to honestly try to recognise and define my presuppositions.
2. My first presupposition is that the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, is the only source of authority for a study of "the church." It is quite legitimate to examine extra biblical material in order to understand the meaning of Bible words. But is not permissible to allow extrabiblical material to correct, amend, add to , or subtract from the Bible.
3. My second presupposition is, that while tradition is very important, it may not override clear biblical teaching. This is really the same as my first presupposition, so I guess I only have one presupposition!
4. From Sound of Grace. The 'True Church' Syndrome, by John Reisinger:

This article cautions about two assumptions that many people make when they attempt to do what we are attempting to do here, that is, study "the church."

Assumption Number One: Jesus established a church on this earth and promised that this church would prevail in all ages.

Assumption Number Two: We can only expect God's blessing when we organize and operate our local church exactly like this 'true New Testament role model church.'

Reisinger says," My philosophy teacher in college once said, 'A philosopher is a blind man, in a dark room, looking for a black cat, that is not there.'" ' "...I believe the 'black cat that isn't there' in the Scripture is the clear role model of the physical organization that men call the true New Testament Church when referring to a a local assembly {their own} of believers. There just is no such animal in the New Testament Scriptures. I totally reject the two basic assumptions mentioned at the beginning of this article. The institutionalist is wholeheartedly convinced that he has found the cat that is not there." We will discuss several examples of local institutions called churches that believe they have found the black cat that is not there.

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C. What is the Church?

Matthew 16:18 *“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church {ekklesia}, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”*

ekklesia (ek-klay-see'-ah); a calling out, i.e. (concretely) a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both): KJV-assembly, church.

We will give our main attention to **ekklesia** because the New Testament writers used that word 115 times to describe a Christian convocation. *Ekklesia* is translated “church” 112 times and “assembly” 3 times.

Two other Greek words are associated with the idea of Christian assembly:

Sunagoge which appears 57 times to refer to Jewish assemblies, is used only once in James with Christian significance:

James 2:1-4 *1My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. 2For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, 3and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," 4have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?*

Episunagoge, which means “a gathering together,” is also used only once to describe a Christian assembly in Hebrews 10:25.

Heb 10:24-25 *24And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

Now following Reisinger’s argument for *ekklesia*.

The English word “church” is heavy with connotations that have little to do with *ekklesia*.

The difficulty comes when determining whether there are two different definitions for the word when it is applied to Christians. There is no disagreement that the Greek usage of the word applied to both a spiritual and a secular group. But does the New Testament use the word *ekklesia* in two distinct ways when referring to the people of God?

Is the church: An organism? An organization? Or, both?

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The Plymouth Brethren magnify the universal / invisible concept. They insist the *ekklesia* is an organism and not an organization. They have no church membership {on paper}, and no ordained clergymen. Roman Catholicism and Landmark Baptists emphasize the local / visible concept of *ekklesia*. In their view the *ekklesia* is a visible physical organization, instituted by Christ and left in control of duly authorized leaders here on earth. Landmark Baptists call the universal *ekklesia* concept the “doctrine of the great spiritual whore.”

In the “Landmark” view, the church is always a literal physical assembly of Christians.

{Prov 22:28 *Do not remove the ancient landmark Which your fathers have set.*}

They teach: “The New Testament usage of the term *ekklesia* denotes an assembly or a gathered group, a congregation....The words church and assembly are therefore synonymous. It is, therefore, essential for a church to church before it can be a church! That is, an assembly must assemble. A church that has never assembled or met together in an organized fashion and for a specific purpose, never having been functional, would certainly not be a church in the scriptural sense!” The New Testament Church, Dr. W.R. Downing.

Dr. Downing continues: “A universal, invisible church could have: No address or location, yet every church in the New Testament was located at a particular place...No pastor, elders, or leaders that were functional, No deacons, or property...No treasurer...No prayer meetings...No missionaries, etc....”

There are Landmark Baptists Churches which claim to be the “True Church.” According to their teachings, you cannot be saved unless you are a member of their church. They claim to trace their origin back to John the Baptist! They hold that only ordained elders of their church may administer baptism. They teach that if you were not baptized by an elder, who was baptized by an elder, who was baptized by an elder, and on back to John the Baptist, your baptism is not valid! They hold “close communion.” By that they serve the Lord’s Supper to members of their church only. Another term for this practice is “fencing the table.”

These distinctions are not exclusive to Landmark Baptists. Roman Catholics and those who call themselves the “Church of Christ” hold similar views.

Why would these “local / visible church only” hold so strongly to such views?

It can be demonstrated that these groups share a concept of authority that is almost identical: Every group emphasizes “God ordained authority” for their particular church practices or the authority of their “duly authorized leadership.”

The problem with defining visible / invisible, local / universal arises from translating *ekklesia* into “church” or “assembly.” Now the translations are not wrong, but the connotations that derive from the English words are what leads to dogmatic views.

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ekklesia (ek-klay-see'-ah); a calling out, i.e. (concretely) a popular meeting, especially a religious congregation (Jewish synagogue, or Christian community of members on earth or saints in heaven or both): KJV-assembly, church.

Quoting Reisinger: "...I personally, until recently, would have said that 'assembly' was probably the best way to translate *ekklesia*. I would no longer do that. I would now translate it so that it clearly expresses exactly what everyone agrees is the actual meaning of the word. I would translate *ekklesia* as **the called out ones** since that is precisely what the word means. This is not only the true and accurate translation of the word *ekklesia*, it also demonstrates the first major truth, namely, that the *ekklesia* of Christ is *they*, meaning people, not an *it*, meaning an *organization*. If you cannot speak of the *ekklesia* as 'they' but constantly think and speak in terms of 'it' you have not totally come out of Romanism!"

It would be a good exercise for us to read "church" as "the called out ones."

More from Reisinger: "The reluctance to translate *ekklesia* by 'called out ones' may be an honest mistake, but it may also be that we do not want to destroy the basic concepts that we have and constantly use, of the *ekklesia* of Christ. For instance, if *ekklesia* means 'they,' or people and not 'it,' meaning an organization, it has far-reaching implications. If *ekklesia* is correctly translated 'called out ones' there will never, among other things, ever be another unregenerate child sprinkled with water in 'baptism' because it is believed that he is part of the 'called out ones' {the *ekklesia*} by physical birth. That would be seen as an open contradiction, and so it would be. Many men who baptize babies will agree with what I have just said. They freely admit their whole view of infant baptism rests solely on their view of the nature of the *ekklesia*."

The Paedobaptist will counter with the argument that if the Baptist Church has one unsaved member, then its concept of "regenerate membership" is destroyed. We answer that that an individual's membership based on a false profession of faith and membership based on non-profession of faith is two different things. Accepting a hypocrite {only because we cannot see his heart} who has made a false profession of faith is a totally different matter than knowingly saying unbelievers are truly members of the *ekklesia*. The *ekklesia* as "believers only" and the church as "believers and their children" are two totally different concepts that have far-reaching consequences.

There is no argument that *ekklesia* is a compound of two Greek words "ek," which means "out," and "kaleo," which means "to call." Look at a few verses where *kaleo* or *klesis* is used to see that the "kaleoed" and "the Christians" are the same people.

Gal 1:6 "*I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel,....*"

Gal 1:15 "*But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,....*"

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Eph 4 *“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were **called** in one hope of your **calling**; An organism? The universal church, the invisible church, the catholic church....”*

What has any of these “callings” to do with joining a visible or local church?

The “called out ones” are the people of God.

It is my conviction that the church is **universal and invisible**, defined as all believers of all time, from Adam to the last soul redeemed before the end of the age.

Someone has said:

“THE Church will be found in the churches, but the churches are not THE Church.”

So it is also my conviction that “the church,” “the called out ones,” may form a New Testament organization whose members are part of a local assembly of believers and are included in the universal church.

Reisinger says: “Nothing I have said rules out the need for an organized local congregation of like-minded Christians, with a constitution, church officers, church discipline, and a lot of other things. I believe every child of God should be a part of a congregation of Christians and submit to the love and oversight of their brothers and sisters in Christ. However, that does not do away with either my personal responsibility to Christ or to all my ‘called out’ brothers and sisters in other congregations. What it does mean is that in every thing connected with our idea of *ekklesia*, we have to make sure we do not believe and practice a lot of things that grow out of a totally wrong view of the *ekklesia* or the ‘called out ones.’ “

The *ekklesia* that God creates is the Body of Christ. Every person in that *ekklesia* is “in Christ.” It is significant that the “body of Christ” is never used in the plural sense and is always connected with all of the “called out ones,” or the *ekklesia* of Christ.

The Church {*Ekklesia*} as the Body of Christ

Rom 12: *“4For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.”*

1 Cor 10:16-17 *“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.”*

1 Cor 12: *“12For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 14For in fact the body is not one member but many. 15If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,” is it therefore not of the body?*

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16And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 17If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? 18But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. 19And if they were all one member, where would the body be? 20But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. 21And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 23And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unrepresentable parts have greater modesty, 24but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, 25that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. 26And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. 27Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. 28And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. 29Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way."

Eph 1:22"And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

Eph 4: "4There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Eph 4:11"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,"

Eph 5: 30"For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

Col 1:18"And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence."

Col 1:24"I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church, "

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Col 3:12”Therefore, **as the elect of God**, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were **called** in one **body**; and be thankful. 16Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

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More on *ekklesia*:

It is possible that too much emphasis has been placed on “the called out *ones*.”

Also, it may be that “*ones*” is an improper extension of the idea of *ekklesia*.

The word *ekklesia* means “a calling out,” and it refers to **people** and not an **it**. It does not mean **only** an organization as the Landmark Baptists and Roman Catholics define the church which excludes the idea of an invisible or universal church.

Another distinction of *ekklesia* is that it has an **eschatological** meaning, i.e., the church assembled in heaven with Jesus Christ, who “loved the church and gave Himself for it.”

The fine point that I am trying to put on *ekklesia* is that it is “a calling out” to **assemble!**

Please do not infer from what has been said up to now that I would give aid and comfort to a person who professes to have faith in Jesus Christ, but who has little or no interest in meeting with the church or supporting the church.

When we assemble, where we assemble, how often we assemble is up to our *ekklesia*: as long as we don't find the black cat that is not there!

ekklesia--

A gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place, an assembly

- a) an assembly of the people convened at the public place of the council for the purpose of deliberating
- b) the assembly of the Israelites
- c) any gathering or throng of men assembled by chance, tumultuously
- d) in a Christian sense:
 - 1) an assembly of Christians gathered for worship in a religious meeting
 - 2) a company of Christian, or of those who, hoping for eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, to observe their own religious rites, to hold their own religious meetings, and to manage their own affairs, according to regulations prescribed for the body for order's sake
 - 3) those who anywhere, in a city, village, constitute such a company and are united into one body
 - 4) the whole body of Christians scattered throughout the earth
 - 5) the assembly of faithful Christians already dead and received into heaven

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CHURCH

The word "church," which is derived from kuriakos, "of or belonging to the Lord," represents in the English Versions of the Bible of the New Testament the Greek word ekklesia; Latin, ecclesia. It is with the signification of this word ekklesia as it meets us in the New Testament, and with the nature of the society which the word is there used to describe, that the present article is concerned.

I. Pre-Christian History of the Term.-Although ekklesia soon became a distinctively Christian word, it has its own pre-Christian history; and to those, whether Jews or Greeks, who first heard it applied to the Christian society it would come with suggestions of familiar things. Throughout the Greek world and right down to New Testament times (compare Acts 19:39), ekklesia was the designation of the regular assembly of the whole body of citizens in a free city-state, "called out" (Greek ek, "out," and kalein, "to call") by the herald for the discussion and decision of public business. The Septuagint translators, again, had used the word to render the Hebrew qahal, which in the Old Testament denotes the "congregation" or community of Israel, especially in its religious aspect as the people of God. In this Old Testament sense we find ekklesia employed by Stephen in the Book of Acts, where he describes Moses as "he that was in the church (the Revised Version, margin "congregation") in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38). The word thus came into Christian history with associations alike for the Greek and the Jew. To the Greek it would suggest a self-governing democratic society; to the Jew a theocratic society whose members were the subjects of the Heavenly King. The pre-Christian history of the word had a direct bearing upon its Christian meaning, for the ekklesia of the New Testament is a "theocratic democracy" (Lindsay, *Church and Ministry in the Early Centuries*, 4), a society of those who are free, but are always conscious that their freedom springs from obedience to their King.

II. Its Adoption by Jesus.-According to Matt 16:18 the name ekklesia was first applied to the Christian society by Jesus Himself, the occasion being that of His benediction of Peter at Caesarea Philippi. The authenticity of the utterance has been called in question by certain critics, but on grounds that have no textual support and are made up of quite arbitrary presuppositions as to the composition of the First Gospel. It is true that Jesus had hitherto described the society He came to found as the "kingdom of God" or the "kingdom of heaven," a designation which had its roots in Old Testament teaching and which the Messianic expectations of Israel had already made familiar. But now when it was clear that He was to be rejected by the Jewish people (compare verse 21), and that His society must move on independent lines of its own, it was natural that He should employ a new name for this new body which He was about to create, and thus should say to Peter, on the ground of the apostle's believing confession, "Upon this rock I will build my church." The adoption of this name, however, did not imply any abandonment of the ideas suggested by the conception of the kingdom. In this very passage (verse 19) "the kingdom of heaven" is employed in a manner which, if it does not make the two expressions church and kingdom perfectly synonymous, at least compels us to regard them as closely correlative and as capable of translation into each other's terms. And the comparative disuse by the apostolic writers of the name "kingdom," together with their emphasis on the church, so far from showing that Christ's disciples had failed to understand His doctrine of the kingdom, and had substituted for it the more formal notion of the church, only shows that they had followed their Master's guidance

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in substituting for a name and a conception that were peculiarly Jewish, another name whose associations would enable them to commend their message more readily to the world at large.

III. Its Use in the New Testament.-Apart from the passage just referred to, the word *ekklesia* occurs in the Gospels on one other occasion only (Matt 18:17).

1. In the Gospels: Here, moreover, it may be questioned whether Our Lord is referring to the Christian church, or to Jewish congregations commonly known as synagogues (see the Revised Version, margin) The latter view is more in keeping with the situation, but the promise immediately given to the disciples of a power to bind and loose (verse 18) and the assurance "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (verse 20) are evidently meant for the people of Christ. If, as is probable, the *ekklesia* of verse 17 is the Christian *ekklesia* of which Christ had already spoken to Peter, the words show that He conceived of the church as a society possessing powers of self-government, in which questions of discipline were to be decided by the collective judgment of the members.

2. In Acts: In Acts the *ekklesia* has come to be the regular designation for the society of Christian believers, but is employed in two distinct senses. First in a local sense, to denote the body of Christians in a particular place or district, as in Jerusalem (Acts 5:11; 8:1), in Antioch (13:1; 15:22), in Caesarea (18:22)-a usage which reappears in the Apocalypse in the letters to the Seven Churches. Then in a wider and what may be called a universal sense, to denote the sum total of existing local churches (9:31 the Revised Version (British and American)), which are thus regarded as forming one body.

3. In the Pauline Epistles: In the Pauline Epistles both of these usages are frequent. Thus the apostle writes of "the church of the Thessalonians" (1 Thess 1:1), "the church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1). Indeed he localizes and particularizes the word yet further by applying it to a single Christian household or to little groups of believers who were accustomed to assemble in private houses for worship and fellowship (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Philem verse 2)-an employment of the word which recalls the saying of Jesus in Matt 18:20. The universal use, again, may be illustrated by the contrast he draws between Jews and Greeks on the one hand and the church of God on the other (1 Cor 10:32), and by the declaration that God has set in the church apostles, prophets, and teachers (12:28).

But Paul in his later epistles has another use of *ekklesia* peculiar to himself, which may be described as the ideal use. The church, now, is the body of which Christ is the head (Eph 1:22 f; Col 1:18,24). It is the medium through which God's manifold wisdom and eternal purpose are to be made known not only to all men, but to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places (Eph 3:9-11). It is the bride of whom He is the heavenly Bridegroom, the bride for whom in His love He gave Himself up, that He might cleanse and sanctify her and might present her to Himself a glorious church, a church without blemish, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing (5:25 ff). This church clearly is not the actual church as we know it on earth, with its divisions, its blemishes, its shortcomings in faith and love and obedience. It is the holy and catholic church that is to be when the Bridegroom has completed the process of lustration, having fully "cleansed it by the washing of water with the word." It is the ideal which the actual church must keep before it and strive after, the ideal up to which it shall finally be guided by that Divine in-working power which is able to conform the body to the head, to make the bride worthy of the Bridegroom, so that God may receive in the church the glory that is His (Eph 3:21).

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IV. The Notes of the Church.-Although a systematic doctrine of the church is neither to be found nor to be looked for in the New Testament, certain characteristic notes or features of the Christian society are brought before us from which we can form some conception as to its nature.

1. Faith: The fundamental note is faith. It was to Peter confessing his faith in Christ that the promise came, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt 16:18). Until Jesus found a man full of faith He could not begin to build His church; and unless Peter had been the prototype of others whose faith was like his own, the walls of the church would never have risen into the air. Primarily the church is a society not of thinkers or workers or even of worshippers, but of believers. Hence, we find that "believers" or "they that believed" is constantly used as a synonym for the members of the Christian society (e.g. Acts 2:44; 4:32; 5:14; 1 Tim 4:12). Hence, too, the rite of baptism, which from the first was the condition of entrance into the apostolic church and the seal of membership in it, was recognized as preeminently the sacrament of faith and of confession (Acts 2:41; 8:12,36; Rom 6:4; 1 Cor 12:13). This church-founding and church-building faith, of which baptism was the seal, was much more than an act of intellectual assent. It was a personal laying hold of the personal Saviour, the bond of a vital union between Christ and the believer which resulted in nothing less than a new creation (Rom 6:4; 8:1-2; 2 Cor 5:17).

2. Fellowship: If faith in Christ is the fundamental note of the Christian society, the next is fellowship among the members. This follows from the very nature of faith as just described; for if each believer is vitally joined to Christ, all believers must stand in a living relation to one another. In Paul's favorite figure, Christians are members one of another because they are members in particular of the body of Christ (Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:27). That the Christian society was recognized from the first as a fellowship appears from the name "the brethren," which is so commonly applied to those who belong to it. In Acts the name is of very frequent occurrence (Acts 9:30, etc.), and it is employed by Paul in the epistles of every period of his career (1 Thess 4:10, etc.). Similar testimony lies in the fact that "the koinonia" (English Versions "fellowship") takes its place in the earliest meetings of the church side by side with the apostles' teaching and the breaking of bread and prayers (Acts 2:42). See COMMUNION. The koinonia at first carried with it a community of goods (Acts 2:44; 4:32), but afterward found expression in the fellowship of ministration (2 Cor 8:4) and in such acts of Christian charity as are inspired by Christian faith (Heb 13:16). In the Lord's Supper, the other sacrament of the primitive church, the fellowship of Christians received its most striking and most sacred expression. For if baptism was especially the sacrament of faith, the Supper was distinctively the sacrament of love and fellowship-a communion or common participation in Christ's death and its fruits which carried with it a communion of hearts and spirits between the participants themselves.

3. Unity: Although local congregations sprang up wherever the gospel was preached, and each of these enjoyed an independent life of its own, the unity of the church was clearly recognized from the first. The intercourse between Jerusalem and Antioch (Acts 11:22; 15:2), the conference held in the former city (15:6 ff), the right hand of fellowship given by the elder apostles to Paul and Barnabas (Gal 2:9), the untiring efforts made by Paul himself to forge strong links of love and mutual service between gentile and Jewish Christians (2 Cor 8)-all these things serve to show how fully it was realized that though there were many churches, there was but one church. This truth comes to its complete expression in the epistles of Paul's imprisonment, with their vision of the church as a body of which Christ is the head, a body animated by one spirit, and having one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all (Eph 4:4 ff; Col 1:18; 3:11). And this

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unity, it is to be noticed, is conceived of as a visible unity. Jesus Himself evidently conceived it so when He prayed for His disciples that they all might be one, so that the world might believe (John 17:21). And the unity of which Paul writes and for which he strove is a unity that finds visible expression. Not, it is true, in any uniformity of outward polity, but through the manifestation of a common faith in acts of mutual love (Eph 4:3,13; 2 Cor 9:1).

4. Consecration: Another dominant note of the New Testament church lay in the consecration of its members. "Saints" is one of the most frequently recurring designations for them that we find. As thus employed, the word has in the first place an objective meaning; the sainthood of the Christian society consisted in its separation from the world by God's electing grace; in this respect it has succeeded to the prerogatives of Israel under the old covenant. The members of the church, as Peter said, are "an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (1 Peter 2:9). But side by side with this sense of an outward and priestly consecration, the flame "saints" carried within it the thought of an ethical holiness—a holiness consisting, not merely in a status determined by relation to Christ, but in an actual and practical saintliness, a consecration to God that finds expression in character and conduct. No doubt the members of the church are called saints even when the living evidences of sainthood are sadly lacking. Writing to the Corinthian church in which he found so much to blame, Paul addresses its members by this title (1 Cor 1:2; compare 6:11). But he does so for other than formal reasons—not only because consecration to God is their outward calling and status as believers; but also because he is assured that a work of real sanctification is going on, and must continue to go on, in their bodies and their spirits which are His. For those who are in Christ are a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), and those to whom has come the separating and consecrating call (2 Cor 6:17) must cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (7:1). Paul looks upon the members of the church, just as he looks upon the church itself, with a prophetic eye; he sees them not as they are, but as they are to be. And in his view it is "by the washing of water with the word," in other words by the progressive sanctification of its members, that the church itself is to be sanctified and cleansed, until Christ can present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph 5:26-27).

5. Power: Yet another note of the church was spiritual power. When the name *ekklesia* was given by Jesus to the society He came to found, His promise to Peter included the bestowal of the gift of power (Matt 16:18-19). The apostle was to receive the "power of the keys," i.e. he was to exercise the privilege of opening the doors of the kingdom of heaven to the Jew (Acts 2:41) and to the Gentile (10:34-38; 15:7). He was further to have the power of binding and loosing, i.e. of forbidding and permitting; in other words he was to possess the functions of a legislator within the spiritual sphere of the church. The legislative powers then bestowed upon Peter personally as the reward of his believing confession were afterward conferred upon the disciples generally (Matt 18:18; compare verse 1 and also verses 19,20), and at the conference in Jerusalem were exercised by the church as a whole (Acts 15:4,22). The power to open the gates of the kingdom of heaven was expanded into the great missionary commission, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations" (Matt 28:19)—a commission that was understood by the apostolic church to be addressed not to the eleven apostles only, but to all Christ's followers without distinction (Acts 8:4, etc.). To the Christian society there thus belonged the double power of legislating for its own members and of opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers. But these double functions of teaching and government were clearly recognized as delegated gifts. The

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church taught the nations because Christ had bid her go and do it. She laid down laws for her own members because He had conferred upon her authority to bind and to loose. But in every exercise of her authority she relied upon Him from whom she derived it. She believed that Christ was with her alway, even unto the end of the world (Matt 28:20), and that the power with which she was endued was power from on high (Luke 24:49).

V. The Organization of the Church.-It seems evident from the New Testament that Jesus gave His disciples no formal prescriptions for the organization of the church. In the first days after Pentecost they had no thought of separating themselves from the religious life of Israel, and would not realize the need of any distinct organization of their own. The temple-worship was still adhered to (Acts 2:46; 3:1), though it was supplemented by apostolic teaching, by prayer and fellowship, and by the breaking of bread (2. 42,46). Organization was a thing of gradual growth suggested by emerging needs, and the differentiation of function among those who were drawn into the service of the church was due to the difference in the gifts bestowed by God upon the church members (1 Cor 12:28). At first the Twelve themselves, as the immediate companions of Jesus throughout His ministry and the prime witnesses of the Christian facts and especially of the resurrection (compare Acts 1:21-22), were the natural leaders and teachers of the community. Apart from this, the earliest evidence of anything like organization is found in the distinction drawn by the Twelve themselves between the ministry of the word and the ministry of tables (Acts 6:2,4)-a distinction which was fully recognized by Paul (Rom 12:6,8; 1 Cor 1:17; 9:14; 12:28), though he enlarged the latter type of ministry so as to include much more than the care of the poor. The two kinds of ministry, as they meet us at the first, may broadly be distinguished as the general and prophetic on the one hand, the local and practical on the other.

1. The General and Prophetic Ministry: From Acts 6:1 ff we see that the Twelve recognized that they were Divinely called as apostles to proclaim the gospel; and Paul repeatedly makes the same claim for himself (1 Cor 1:17; 9:16; 2 Cor 3:6; 4:1; Col 1:23). But apostle ship was by no means confined to the Twelve (Acts 14:14; Rom 16:7; compare Didache 11:4 ff); and an itinerant ministry of the word was exercised in differing ways by prophets, evangelists, and teachers, as well as by apostles (1 Cor 12:28-29; Eph 4:11). The fact that Paul himself is variously described as an apostle, a prophet, a teacher (Acts 13:1; 14:14; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11) appears to show that the prophetic ministry was not a ministry of stated office, but one of special gifts and functions. The apostle carried the good tidings of salvation to the ignorant and unbelieving (Gal 2:7-8), the prophet (in the more specific sense of the word) was a messenger to the church (1 Cor 14:4,22); and while the teacher explained and applied truth that was already possessed (Heb 5:12), the prophet was recognized by those who had spiritual discernment (1 Cor 2:15; 14:29; 1 John 4:1) as the Divinely employed medium of fresh revelations (1 Cor 14:25,30-31; Eph 3:5; compare Didache 4:1).

2. The Local and Practical Ministry: The earliest examples of this are the Seven of Jerusalem who were intrusted with the care of the "daily ministrations" (Acts 6:1 ff). With the growth of the church, however, other needs arose, and the local ministry is seen developing in two distinct directions. First there is the presbyter or elder, otherwise known as the bishop or overseer, whose duties, while still local, are chiefly of a spiritual kind (Acts 20:17,28,35; 1 Tim 3:2,5; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:2). See BISHOP. Next there are the deacon and the deaconess (Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:8-13), whose work appears to have lain largely in house to house visitation and a practical

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ministry to the poor and needy (1 Tim 5:8-11). The necessities of government, of discipline, and of regular and stated instruction had thus brought it to pass that within New Testament times some of the functions of the general ministry of apostles and prophets were discharged by a local ministry. The general ministry, however, was still recognized to be the higher of the two. Paul addresses the presbyter-bishops of Ephesus in a tone of lofty spiritual authority (Acts 20:17 ff). And according to the Didache, a true prophet when he visits a church is to take precedence over the resident bishops and deacons (Didache 10:7; 13:3). See CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

LITERATURE. --Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*; Lindsay, *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Cents.*, lects I-V; Hatch, *Bampton Lectures*; Gwatkin, *Early Church History to AD 313*; Kostlin, article "Kirche" in *See Hauck-Herzog, Realencyklopadie fur protestantische Theologie und Kirche*; Armitage Robinson, article "Church" in *Encyclopaedia Biblica*; Fairbairn *Christ in Modern Theology*, 513-34; Dargan, *Ecclesiology*; Denney, *Studies in Theology*, Ch viii.

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ASSEMBLY

1. ekklesia NT:1577, from ek, "out of," and klesis, "a calling" (kaleo, "to call"), was used among the Greeks of a body of citizens "gathered" to discuss the affairs of state, Acts 19:39. In the Sept. it is used to designate the "gathering" of Israel, summoned for any definite purpose, or a "gathering" regarded as representative of the whole nation. In Acts 7:38 it is used of Israel; in 19:32,41, of a riotous mob. It has two applications to companies of Christians, (a) to the whole company of the redeemed throughout the present era, the company of which Christ said, "I will build My Church," Matt 16:18, and which is further described as "the Church which is His Body," Eph 1:22; 5:23, (b) in the singular number (e. g., Matt 18:17, RV marg., "congregation"), to a company consisting of professed believers, e. g., Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 1:2; Gal 1:13; 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess 1:1; 1 Tim 3:5, and in the plural, with reference to churches in a district.

There is an apparent exception in the RV of Acts 9:31, where, while the KJV has "churches," the singular seems to point to a district; but the reference is clearly to the church as it was in Jerusalem, from which it had just been scattered, 8:1. Again, in Rom 16:23, that Gaius was the host of "the whole church," simply suggests that the "assembly" in Corinth had been accustomed to meet in his house, where also Paul was entertained. See CHURCH.

2. paneguris NT:3831, from pan, "all," and agora, "any kind of assembly," denoted, among the Greeks, an assembly of the people in contrast to the council of national leaders, or a "gathering" of the people in honor of a god, or for some public festival, such as the Olympic games. The word is used in Heb 12:23, coupled with the word "church," as applied to all believers who form the body of Christ.

3. plethos NT:4128, "a multitude, the whole number," is translated "assembly" in Acts 23:7, RV. See BUNDLE, COMPANY, MULTITUDE.

Note: For sunagoge, see ASSEMBLE, Note (2).

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Summary and Discussion:

1. What does it mean to be a member of the church?

2. What is a members' commitment to the church?

To pray for others, especially for the leadership.

To love one another.

Regular attendance.

Tithes and offerings.

Avoid talebearing.

Give and receive discipline, individual and corporate.

3. What should the church do for the members?

Preach the word of God “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for edifying of the body of Christ....”

Pastoral counseling {marriage, family, financial}

Ordinances {Lord's Supper & Baptism}

Weddings and Funerals

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The following discussion points are taken from Nine Marks of a Healthy Church by Mark Dever.

The idea of the church is that in the goodness of God He does not intend for Christians to be alone. We have seen that the *ekklesia* is made up of those **called out to assemble**. We have also looked at the concept of the universal church, made up of all the redeemed in Christ of all time. Even if we are in the universal church, we are still alive and need to actively participate in a local assembly of believers. That brings us to this discussion of the local church. According to Dever there are at least nine marks of a healthy church. As we discuss these marks, ask yourself, “How do we, this church measure up and what do we need to strengthen?” That is based on the assumption that we accept these tests of a healthy church.

1. Expositional Preaching.
 Assumes the authority of Scripture.
 Submission to God’s Word.

2. Biblical Theology.
 The doctrine of God in its entirety.
 Recognizing the place of tradition.

3. Biblical Understanding of the Good News.
 What is the Gospel?

4. Biblical Understanding of Conversion.
 Repentance and Faith.

5. Biblical Understanding of Evangelism.
 Its Necessity.
 Responsibility for “Results.”

6. Biblical Understanding of Church Membership.
 Commitment.
 Discipleship.
 Discipline.

7. Biblical Church Discipline.
 Redemptive not Punitive.

8. Concern For Promoting Christian Discipline and Growth.
 Community and Love.

9. Biblical Church Leadership.
 Plurality and Equality of Elders.
 Elder Leadership versus Pastor - Deacon Leadership

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1. Expository Preaching.

The church has changed over the centuries from the simple assembly of believers, usually meeting in private households. There are still small groups of believers who for various reasons meet in hotel conference rooms or other borrowed facilities.

I learned from Warren Wiersbe last week not to refer to any church as a “small church.” Every group of believers is made of those for whom “Christ loved and gave Himself for!”

There are what may be called “high church.” Very liturgical, formal, structured: nothing ever happens that is not on the program which was prepared weeks and months ahead of the service. These services are more of a display or performance to be observed rather than to be participated in.

Some churches have gone to nearly all praise songs and drama. There is a lot to stir the emotions but almost no preaching.

Other churches which still have preaching have greatly limited the preacher’s time. If the preacher goes for over 20 minutes, he has taken too much time away from the “worship.”

Then there are churches that still hold to the centrality of the pulpit but the sermons are more suited for the Kawanis Club or the Civitan Club. Good, well prepared and expertly delivered, and no biblical content.

That brings us to the case for expository or expository preaching. In case you haven’t been paying attention, that is what Matt and I do almost all of the time. Why? There is nothing really wrong with topical messages. Charles Spurgeon, who had some measure of success, preached topical sermons. But the best method, for the health and spiritual growth of the church is expository preaching.

Cf Nehemiah 8:8 Reading, explanation, and application of the Word of God.

Expository preaching starts with the presupposition of the authority of Scripture.

Discuss: infallible inerrant plenary

Cf 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Quoting Dever: “Someone may accept the authority of Scripture, believe in the inerrancy of the Bible; yet if that preacher does not preach expositionally, he will never preach more than he already knows. A preacher can take a portion of Scripture and exhort the congregation on a topic that is important without really preaching the point of the passage.”

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Dr. James Massey, How to preach the Book of Hebrews:

1. Select the boundaries of the textural unit. Very difficult in Hebrews because the epistle is so connected.
2. Find the relation between other complementary texts to enrich the sermon.
3. Develop the sermon on the meaning discovered in the text or it is not the Word of God!

According to Dever, and I agree with his premise, the church has the charge to insist that the preachers feed them on the Word of God.

Dr. Massey & Mark Dever both discussed that the Word of God is the only basis for church discipline. Look at the great responsibility placed in the church by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17 & by Paul in 2 Timothy 4:1-5.

The Reformation began with the movement to return to the authority of the Scripture. The Word of God says, "The just shall live by faith." When Martin Luther read that in the Bible and understood that the church did not teach this truth, he stood for the truth of God's Word.

A reformed church is simply one that is continually reforming to the Scriptures.

Cf Luke 24:27; Acts 6:4;

So in this corner of the Kingdom of God you have pastors who are committed to the centrality of the pulpit, expository preaching, and the authority of Scripture

But equally important, pray that this local church will be committed to hearing the Word of God. Do we meet this mark of a healthy church?

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2. Biblical Theology

Expository preaching is important, yet any type of preaching is open to abuse. All preaching must be tested for biblical soundness. { 1 Timothy 6:3; 2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 2:1 }

A false teacher can use Scripture and twist it to seemingly support false doctrine. The basis for Bible-based cults is a perversion of Scripture or some extra-biblical authority. The Mormons want to be considered just another Christian Church {except they teach they are the only true church.} The Jehovah's Witness corrupt the Scriptures with a fraudulent Bible.

We may not agree on every matter of interpretation. But we must agree on the authority of the Scripture, otherwise we will have bedlam instead of harmony.

So how do we know we have biblical theology?

We do not shun to preach the whole counsel of God.

There are preachers who claim to believe in the doctrine of election but are afraid to preach it to their congregation. Yet they will take a doubtful doctrine of eschatology, yes Dispensationalism as promoted in the Left Behind series, and hold it up as a test of fellowship.

Are people basically good? Or, are they spiritually dead in trespasses and sin?

Do people need to "make a decision," or do they need to be born again?

Did Christ accomplish anything on the cross or did He simply make salvation "possible

Will we remain faithful {perfectly}, or will Christ remain faithful?

Our understanding of the Bible is very important.

Denial of the sovereignty of God is a dangerous position to take.

Biblical theology is a sign of a healthy church.

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3. Biblical Understanding of the Good News

What is the Gospel?

It is not: "Make a decision for Jesus," or "Let go and let God."

The Gospel: 1 Corinthians 15: 1-4
2 Corinthians 5: 20-21
1 Timothy 1: 15

Four things by which we may test a message to see if it is the Gospel:

1. Man the sinner.
2. Christ the Savior.
3. Judgement is certain.
4. Jesus is not a beggar.

It is a lie and not according to Scripture to tell someone that Jesus died for you and that He will save you if you will only make a decision to let Him. It is correct to tell anyone that Christ died for sinners. If you are convicted of sin and judgement and will trust only Jesus for your righteousness you can be saved. But the point is that God is sovereign and man is not.

The most misunderstood distinction concerning the atonement of Christ is the difference between its sufficiency and its efficiency. The death of Christ was sufficient for the human race. But the intent of the atonement was not to save everyone. The effect of the atonement will prove its intent.

Should we tell everyone about Jesus and His love? Of course! But don't omit sin and guilt against a holy God. If I am not a helpless and lost sinner, I don't need a Substitute. Would a God of love send anyone to hell? A better question is. "Why would God save anyone?"

A healthy church know the gospel and shares it.

Don't confuse large numbers of people with health.

Matt 7: 13"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Matt 7:21"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

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4. Biblical Understanding of Conversion

An old Baptist Statement of Faith reads:

We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King, and relying on Him alone as the only and all sufficient Saviour.

Notice what this statement says about our conversion, our turning. We turn because we are "deeply convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ,..." And how does that turning - which is composed of repentance and faith - happen? It is "wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God;...." Cf Acts 11:18; Ephesians 2:8

One result of misunderstanding the Bible's teaching of conversion may well be churches full of people who have made sincere commitments at one point in their lives, but who evidently have not experienced the radical change which the Bible presents as conversion.

Understanding the Bible's view of conversion is one of the marks of a healthy church.

5. Biblical Understanding of Evangelism

This week {August 14, 2000} I heard a well-meaning preacher say that, "the purpose of the church was evangelism." Then he said the purpose of the church was, "to see that people go to heaven." Then he said, "the bottom line was to win people to Jesus."

This is a very difficult distinction to make and most Baptist people, especially preachers, who readily agree with the above statements don't understand evangelism.

First of all the purpose of the church is to worship God. Everything else flows out of that single purpose. If my purpose is evangelism, then I might compromise the Gospel in order to get results. This same preacher showed a video which depicted a preacher who was undergoing a lot of stress, but who was happy "because he was going to baptize someone next Sunday." I am honored and thrilled to baptize anyone who has come to Christ in repentance and faith. But I won't knowingly baptize someone who has simply "made a decision for Jesus."

Why doesn't this church give an "invitation?"

Well, we do. The message is the invitation. We inform people to counsel with one of the pastors to discuss their concern for salvation or to inquire about joining this church.

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If a church's membership is markedly larger than its attendance, the question should be asked: does that church have a biblical understanding of conversion? Then we should ask what kind of evangelism has been practiced that would result in a large number of people who are uninvolved in the life of the church, and yet consider their membership in good standing and evidence of their salvation?

Evangelism springs from a biblical understanding of the Gospel.

A woman was saved during the week and asked her preacher if she should wait until next Sunday to tell anyone. The preacher told her, "If the Lord has saved you, you won't be able to keep it a secret."

Another woman asked the preacher if he thought another man in the church was really saved. He said, "Ask her husband."

Don't get burdened by tracts such as the "Four Spiritual Laws" in your efforts to evangelize. All you can really do is to tell another person what Jesus has done for you. It will be your life's experience. You don't need to memorize anything. But you really need to do it!

Someone defined evangelism as one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.

Another mark of a healthy church is a Biblical understanding and practice of evangelism. The only true church growth is the growth that comes from God.

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6. Biblical Understanding of Church Membership

There is no New Testament record of "church membership" as we know it today. Paul, in some of his letters, named individuals, but nowhere is there a list of the "charter members" of the Church at Ephesus, or any other place.

There was no "church shopping," where someone looks for a church that suits their interpretation of "church." Why? Because there was just the church. Schism was warned against, but it was too early in the history of the church for one faction to spit off and form another similar church, nearly the same, except for whatever the split was about.

One thing is certain, "The Lord knows who belongs to Him."

But it is obvious that membership is an orderly thing to have. We are instructed to exercise church discipline. That would have to apply to those who are under the authority of a local church. Even those few individuals who attend for long periods of time and for various reasons do not "join," are still subject to discipline.

What constitutes a member of a church?

Confession of faith in Jesus Christ; baptized as a believer; requested membership.
Name is one the roll.

Is that all there is to it?

Genuine desire to meet with the people of God.
Regular attendance at all services {allowing for providential hinderences}.
An interest in other people and there life's circumstances.
Scriptural giving {ten percent minimum}.

Is this "legalism?"

A recent survey of Southern Baptist Churches shows that the typical church has 233 members and 70 in Sunday morning worship. There are no churches in the survey where giving exceeds ten percent of the combined family incomes.

Vineland Park Baptist Church is much above the average.

As of August 19, 2000 we have 74 members.

Our Sunday morning attendance will average 78.

This includes about 13 non members who are regular in attendance.

That means 65 of 74 members are regular.

Our giving needs some improvement, but we are above average in that also.

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A healthy church has more people attending than are members. This is because the members are committed to support the church, and the other people are interested in the ministry of the church and are considering membership.

We are developing a Purpose and Mission Statement which will be presented and discussed in detail with the view that we will adopt an agreed upon Statement.

Next we will update our Church Covenant; Constitution and By-Laws so that they encompass and support our Purpose and Mission.

This is in no way meant to be cruel. It is, in fact, cruel to allow membership to lapse into a meaningless matter of having your name on a list. A recovered practice of careful church membership will have many benefits. It will make our witness to unbelievers more clear. It will make it difficult for weaker sheep to go astray from the fold. It will help to shape and focus discipleship of more mature Christians. It will aid the pastors in knowing exactly who they are responsible for.

Another mark of a healthy church is a biblical understanding of church membership.

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7. Biblical Church Discipline

Biblical church discipline was commonly practiced by churches since Christ instructed us what to do and how to do it. However, church discipline, properly exercised, is rarely found in evangelical churches today. Why?

1 Cor 5:1-8; 2 Cor 6:14-7:1; 1 Tim 6:3-5; 2 Tim 3:1-5

Well, didn't Jesus forbid judging others? Matt 7:1 Please continue to read verse 6, and the rest of the chapter. Cf Matt 18:15-17; cf Luke 17:3

It may not fit the "church growth" model which says "open the front door and close the back door," but there are some people who should not be allowed continued membership.

Church discipline is meant to be restorative; never punitive. The objective is to recover the member to spiritual health. However, if after Scriptural counseling, there is no evidence of repentance, that person should be excluded, always praying that they may one day be restored to fellowship.

Biblical church discipline is simply obedience to God's Word. There are five positive reasons for corrective church discipline. Its purpose is positive:

1. For the individual disciplined;
2. For other Christians as they see the danger of sin;
3. For the health of the church as a whole;
4. For the corporate witness of the church;
5. And most of all, for our holiness to reflect the holiness of God.

It should mean something to be a member of the church, not for personal pride, but for the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

Biblical church discipline is another mark of a healthy church.

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8. Concern For Promoting Christian Discipleship and Growth.

We should have a heart-felt desire to see church growth without any concern for numerical growth for the sake of increased numbers. It is grossly unhealthy for a believer to be a "babe in Christ" for years and years. Spiritual growth is seen as optional only for a few zealous "fanatics." It is easy to emphasize statistics: baptisms, budgets, buildings and miss the really important fact of true spiritual growth.

It troubles me that followers {disciples} of popular singers {e.g., Brittany Spears} know how they dress, what they eat for breakfast, what their philosophy of life is, and then try to imitate their idol. But a person can say that they are a follower of Jesus and hardly ever read His Word or pray, or even care what He thinks about how they are living.

Baptist churches, because of weak theology, have produced a generation of "Christians" who have made a "decision," "joined the church," and dropped out. After all, someone told them, "Once Saved, Always Saved." That statement is only true if "saved" is scripturally defined. The doctrine is Perseverance of the Saints. "He that endures to the end will be saved." {Matt 10:22}

Another heresy that has damaged, even condemned, many souls is the so-called "carnal Christian theory." The idea comes from an incorrect interpretation of 1 Cor 3:1. Paul is not allowing that they remain "as carnal." He is simply pointing out that that is the way they are acting and that they should stop it!

This is not an effort to promote a superficial, high energy, "praise the Lord," at every other breath, Christian. It is simply a desire to see church members desire to "grow in the grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ." This too is a sign of a healthy church.

The Organization and Government of the Church

9. Biblical Church Leadership.

In the New Testament, in every instance, there were elders {plural} in every church. There were also deacons who were a separate office from the elder. Rather than work through all of the arguments, I will give the conclusion of much study. Of course, I can and will explain the reasoning behind these conclusions. The conclusion on leadership is as follows.

There are only two biblical offices in the church and they are only to be filled by men.

The offices are elders and deacons.

There may be other offices, such as treasurer, or moderator, but these are offices that could be filled by an elder or a deacon. It is allowable to have a woman a church clerk because the office of clerk does not have any biblical qualifications.

In every church there were elders who were equal in authority. There may be more than two elders, but never less than two. There was no "senior elder." Some of the elders were pastors and teachers and labored in the Word. These elders who spent full time in the Word were compensated for their labor. Every elder must be able to teach, but not every one did so. The elders governed the flock, but were not to "lord it over the flock." The final authority in church discipline and other important matters was the congregation. However, the church was not a pure democracy, i.e., every single issue was not brought before the church to be voted on. There was mutual trust between the congregation and the elders who governed. The elders were called and approved by the congregation and could be dismissed by the congregation.

The deacons were to assist the elders in the day to day business of caring for widows and orphans, the church property {there were no church buildings in the New Testament times}. The deacons did not govern nor were they required to be able to teach.

The following are some notes on elder and deacon.

The Organization and Government of the Church

A REVIEW OF THE WORDS:

ELDER, BISHOP, OVERSEER, PASTOR, SHEPHERD, PREACHER

ELDER (noun) PRESBUTERION

- a) The council or senate among the Jews; Luke 22:66; Acts 22:5
- b) The elders or bishops in a local church, "the presbytery" 1 Timothy 4:14

ELDER (adjective) PRESBUTEROS

- a) Of age, of two persons Luke 15:25; or more than two, John 8:9. or a person advanced in life, Acts 2:17, "old men," Hebrews 11:2; Matthew 15:2; Mark 7:3,5 and many other N.T. ref. the feminine of the adjective 1 Timothy 5:2
- b) Of rank, Matthew 16:21; 26:47, those who managed the affairs of the public in various cities, Luke 7:3.
- c) In Christian churches, those who, being raised up and qualified by the work of the Holy Spirit, were appointed to have the spiritual care of, and to exercise oversight over the churches.

To these the term bishops, EPISYOPOI, or overseers is applied (Acts 20:17, 28; and Titus 1:5, 7). Bishop, overseer is the nature of their work; elder, PRESBUTEROI, their maturity of spiritual experience.

There was a **plurality** of these appointed in each church, Acts 14:23; 20:17; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:5.

The duty of elders is established by the verb, EPISROPEO, look at, take care of, see to it, oversee, care for.

They were appointed according as they had given evidence of fulfilling the qualifications, Titus 1:6-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 5:2.

- d) The twenty-four elders enthroned in Heaven around the throne of God, Rev. 4:4 .
- e) Fellow-elder, SUMPRESBUTEROS, "with" 1 Peter 5:1.
- f) Greater, MEIZON, comparative degree of great, translated "elder" Romans 9:12 (KJV).

The Organization and Government of the Church

BISHOP (overseer), EPISKOPOS, epi-over; skopeo-to look.

Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 2:25

Elder and **Bishop** are interchangeable.

Elder means maturity, bishop is the function-to oversee.

When bishop is singular it is describing what a bishop should be, 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:7 Christ Himself, 1 Peter 2:25

The "office" Acts 1:20; 1 Timothy 3:1, lit (if any one seeketh) overseeship, there is no word in the Greek here to represent office.

PASTOR, POIMEN, a shepherd, one who tends herds or flocks (not merely one who feeds them), is used metaphorically of Christian "pastors," Ephesians 4:11.

Pastors guide as well as feed the flock; compare Acts 20:28 with vs 17, which indicates that this was the service committed to elders (overseers or bishops); so also in 1 Peter 5:1,2 "feed the flock... taking the oversight..." This is the function (to pastor) given to the elder (bishop or overseer.)

SHEPHERD, POIMEN, sometimes translated pastor.

- a) Used in its natural significance, Matthew 9:36; Luke 2:8; John 10:2, 12
- b) Metaphorically of Christ; Matthew 26:31; Mark 14:27; John 10:11,14,16; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25
- c) Metaphorically of those who act as pastors in the churches, Ephesians 4:11.

CHIEF SHEPHERD, ARCHIPOIMEN, is said of Christ only, 1 Peter 5:4

PREACHER, KERUX, a herald

- a) Preacher of the gospel, 1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11.
 - b) Of Noah, as a preacher of righteousness, 2 Pet 2:5.
- Anyone can be a herald, Romans 10:14, not necessarily an elder or bishop.

Note: Bishop (elder) and deacon are the only two offices in the church for which qualifications are given.

The Organization and Government of the Church

DEACONS

1 Tim 3:8-13

8Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, 9holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. 10But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. 11Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. 12Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. 13For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Another Scripture, Acts 6:1-6

"1Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. 2Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. 3Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; 4but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." 5And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, 6whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them."

The Organization and Government of the Church

What is the purpose of the church?

Our purpose is to worship God in spirit and truth and to all things decently and in order.

What is the church supposed to do?

Edify, encourage, minister, and evangelize.

How does the church decide things?

We intend to reform to the Scriptures and especially to the New Testament as it reveals how the church was organized and led.

Who are the leaders of the church?

The New Testament recognizes two offices of leadership in the church. Those offices are elders and deacons.

How are these offices filled?

The church itself corporately recognizes and calls its elders and deacons.

Who is responsible for leadership of the church?

Elders govern the church, but do not lord it over the flock.

The church is not “democratic.”

How are elders defined and qualified?

Elders are also called bishop, pastor, shepherd, preacher.

These terms describe the functions performed by the elders.

Deacons serve the church and assist the elders.

The Organization and Government of the Church

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The Organization and Government of the Church

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Acts 11:30

30 This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.
NKJV

Acts 14:23

23 So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. NKJV

Acts 15:2

2 Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question. NKJV

Acts 15:4

4 And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. NKJV

Acts 15:6

6 Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. NKJV

Acts 15:22

22 Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren. NKJV

Acts 15:23

23 They wrote this letter by them:
The apostles, the elders, and the brethren,
To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:
Greetings.
NKJV

Acts 16:4

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. NKJV

Acts 20:17

17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. NKJV

Acts 21:18

18 On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. NKJV

Acts 22:5

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5 as also the high priest bears me witness, and all the council of the elders, from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished. NKJV

1 Timothy 5:17

17 Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. NKJV

Titus 1:5

5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you-- NKJV

Hebrews 11:2

2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. NKJV

James 5:14

14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. NKJV

1 Peter 5:1

1 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: NKJV

1 Peter 5:5

5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."
NKJV

is not a valid reference

1 Timothy 5:19

19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. NKJV

1 Peter 5:1

1 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: NKJV

2 John

1 THE ELDER,

To the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known the truth, 2 because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever: 3 Grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

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3 John

1 THE ELDER,

To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth: 2 Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things
NKJV

1 Timothy 3:1

1 This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.
NKJV

1 Timothy 3:2

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good
behavior, hospitable, able to teach; NKJV

Titus 1:7

7 For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not
given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, NKJV

The Organization and Government of the Church

The following notes were “lifted” unedited from:
Charles Davis, Highlands Baptist Church, Waco, Texas {1986}

THE PROCLAMATION (KERYGMA) OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH*

1. There was a strong conviction that the age of the newly formed community was the age of the fulfillment of prophecy (cf. Acts 2:16; 3:18,24). This accounts for the strong appeal to OT testimonies. So basic is this in the formation of the church that the NT generally witnesses to the continuity of the Christian message with OT predictions of the coming age.
2. The core of the message was the death and resurrection of Jesus, mentioned in all the speeches. Reference was made to Messiah’s Davidic descent, and to his human life and works. Both the death and resurrection of Jesus were the result of the divine initiative (cf. the reference to the definite plan of God, Acts 2:23), although human responsibility for the death was also recognized.
3. It is the exalted Christ which constituted the major focus in the kerygma. We should not expect, and in fact do not find, a fully developed Christology, but the early believers all knew that Jesus was Lord and Christ (2:33-36), that he was the Servant (3:13), that he was the rejected stone (4:11), and that he was prince and Saviour (5:31).
4. The witnesses were bound together in the common conviction that the Holy Spirit was witnessing through them (Acts 2:33; 5:32). The presence and power of the Spirit is an indispensable facet of the church’s sense of mission.
5. There was also the conviction that the present age would be consummated by the return of Christ (Acts 3:21; cf. 10:42).
6. The aim of the proclamation is seen in the exhortation to people to repent and believe and therefore to receive salvation (cf. Acts 2:38, 39; 3:19, 25—26; 4:12; 5:31; 10:43). The basis of the new community was the work of Christ, but the qualification for membership was repentance and faith. The community consisted only of those who sought a new relationship with God through faith in Christ.

*Based on the preaching in the book of Acts adapted from the book
The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments, by C. H. Dodd.

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NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH LEADERS

We should consider New Testament church leaders in view of the calling of the church. We are called in covenant to be committed to Jesus Christ as Lord, to one another in the Body of Christ, and to the world Christ died to save. Our objective is that persons become aware of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, respond to Him in a personal commitment of faith, strive to follow Him in the full meaning of discipleship, relate effectively to His church and its mission in the world, live in conscious recognition of the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, grow toward Christian maturity, and give glory to God.

Functions in carrying out this calling include 1) prayer; 2) praise and worship; 3) proclamation; 4) nurture; 5) fellowship; 6) evangelism and world missions, and 7) ministry to attend to the needs of others, including spiritual, emotional and material needs. This applies especially to the widows, orphans, elderly, sick, poor, homeless and those away from home.

TERMS APPLIED TO NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH LEADERS

The terms Elder and Overseer (Bishop) and Shepherd (Pastor) are used interchangeably in the Scriptures to apply to the same persons. Compare Acts 20:17 and 28; I Peter 5:1—2. It seems that Elder is the title of honor and respect, and the terms Shepherd and Overseer describe the functions.

CHARACTER QUALITIES OF CHURCH LEADERS

(Based on qualifications of Elders and Overseers (Bishops) in 1 Timothy 3:1—7 and Titus 1:5—9)

1. ABOVE REPROACH (NIV,NAS); BLAMELESS (KJV); 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7
2. THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE — 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6
3. ONE WHO EFFECTIVELY CONTROLS HIS HOUSEHOLD, ESPECIALLY HIS CHILDREN — 1 Timothy 3:4—5; Titus 1:6
4. TEMPERATE (NIV,NAS); VIGILANT (KJV) — 1 Timothy 3:2
5. SELF—CONTROLLED (NIV); PRUDENT (NAS); SOBER (KJV)
1 Timothy 3:2; SENSIBLE in NAS Titus 1:8
6. RESPECTABLE (NIV,NAS); OF GOOD BEHAVIOR (KJV)
This word could be translated “of orderly behavior”
because it speaks of order as distinct from disorder.

The Organization and Government of the Church

7. HOSPITABLE (NIV,NAS); GIVEN TO HOSPITALITY (KJV);
Literally: Lover of strangers or foreigners — 1 Timothy 3:2
8. NOT GIVEN TO MUCH WINE (NIV); NOT ADDICTED TO WINE (NAS);
NOT GIVEN TO WINE (KJV) — 1 Timothy 3:3
9. NOT VIOLENT (NIV); NOT PUGNACIOUS (NAS); NO STRIKER (KJV)
1 Timothy 3:3
10. NOT QUARRELSOME (NIV); UNCONTENTIOUS (NAS); NOT A
BRAWLER (KJV) — 1 Timothy 3:3
11. GENTLE (NIV,NAS); PATIENT (KJV) — 1 Timothy 3:3
12. NOT OVERBEARING (NIV); NOT SELF—WILLED (NAS,KJV) — Titus 1:7
13. NOT QUICK—TEMPERED (NIV,NAS); NOT SOON ANGRY (KJV) — Titus 1:7
14. DISCIPLINED (NIV); SELF—CONTROLLED (NAS); TEMPERATE (KJV)
Titus 1:8
15. NOT A LOVER OF MONEY (NIV); FREE FROM THE LOVE OF MONEY
(NAS); NOT GREEDY OF FILTHY LUCRE (KJV) — 1 Timothy 3:3
Also Titus 1:7 NOT PURSUING DISHONEST GAIN (NIV)
16. NOT A RECENT CONVERT (NIV); NOT A NOVICE (KJV) 1 Timothy 3:6
17. HE MUST HAVE A GOOD REPUTATION WITH OUTSIDERS (NIV);
HE MUST HAVE A GOOD REPUTATION WITH THOSE OUTSIDE THE
CHURCH (NAS); HE MUST HAVE A GOOD REPORT OF THEM WHICH
ARE WITHOUT (KJV) — 1 Timothy 3:7
18. UPRIGHT (NIV); JUST (NAS,KJV) — Titus 1:8
This means to be in right relationship with God and with all men.
19. ONE WHO LOVES WHAT IS GOOD (NIV); A LOVER OF GOOD MEN
(KJV) — Titus 1:8
20. HOLY (NIV,KJV); DEVOUT (NAS) — Titus 1:8
21. “HE MUST HOLD FIRMLY TO THE TRUSTWORTHY MESSAGE (FAITHFUL
WORD) AS IT HAS BEEN TAUGHT, SO THAT HE CAN ENCOURAGE OTHERS BY
SOUND DOCTRINE AND REFUTE THOSE WHO OPPOSE IT” (NIV) — Titus 1:9; ABLE
TO TEACH (NIV) — 1 Timothy 3:2

The Organization and Government of the Church

FUNCTIONS OF NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH LEADERS

As indicated previously, the terms Shepherd and Overseer define the functions of Elders.

1. SHEPHERD

John 10 and Psalm 23 describe some of the functions of the “Good Shepherd,” the Lord Jesus. There are certain parallels in the ministry of the under - shepherds of the flock:

- a. He feeds the flock.
- b. He seeks to provide an environment conducive to spiritual growth.
- c. He gives personal attention to the hurts and special needs of the flock.
- d. He walks with the flock through hard places.
- e. He comforts the flock.
- f. He protects the flock from danger:
 - (1) The danger of unregenerate men getting into the fellowship and causing damage and destruction (Acts 20:29)
 - (2) The danger of men within the fellowship seeking to establish parties and divisions (Acts 20:30)
 - (3) The danger of false doctrine (Acts 20:30).
Acts 15:4—29 is an example of this function.
- g. He lays down his life for the flock.(John 10:11)
- h. James 5:14—16 shows that a part of the care provided by the elders is to pray for the sick when it is requested.

2. OVERSEER

- a. Ruling or leading. Read Hebrews 13:7,17,24, and 1 Thessalonians 5:12—13.
The noun form of this word is repeatedly translated “governor” in the Gospels. It is not to lead in our contemporary “democratic” concept, but to lead with substantial authority as a governor would lead. Hebrews 13:17 asserts that believers are to obey their spiritual leaders and submit to their authority. There is a parallel in the principle of submission in the family. It is all in the context of mutual submission and the priesthood of the believer.
- b. I Timothy 5:17 indicates that there are two categories of elders. Those who rule, govern, direct the affairs, or administer and those who do this and additionally give special attention to preaching.
- c. Chapter 15 of Acts also illustrates that the elders dealt with and mediated disagreements among believers. Elders are to encourage believers to carry out the instructions of Matthew 18:15—17 and Matthew 5:23—24.

The Organization and Government of the Church

d. From the Biblical definition of the elders' role, it follows that the elders would direct the church in all matters of church discipline, remembering the twofold objective: the maintaining of the health of the Body of Christ and the restoration of the offender.

In his book *The Christian Assembly*, J. R. Littleproud observes, "We are exhorted to know and to esteem those who are over us in the Lord (I Thess. 5:12,13). How are we to know them? How does the little lad playing on the street know the postman? 'Why, he's the man that delivers our mail,' he would tell you. Just so, we know the real shepherds among the people of God by the work that they do. And we are to esteem them highly in love for their work's sake. The better they serve, the more highly we should esteem them. 'Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine' (1 Timothy 5:17)."

NUMBER OF ELDERS

There was a plurality of elders in the New Testament.
Romans 14:23; Acts 20:17; Titus 1:5; Philippians 1:1.

ESSENTIAL ATTITUDES OF ELDERS

(Based on Hebrews 13:7; Hebrews 13:17 and 1 Peter 5:1—7.)

WATCHFULNESS: The word translated "watch" in Hebrews 13:17 speaks of watching like wakeful shepherds.

WILLINGNESS: 1 Peter 5:2

EAGERNESS TO SERVE: (NIV) 1 Peter 5:2

HUMILITY: "Not lording it over" (NIV) 1 Peter 5:3—6

DESIRE TO BE WORTHY EXAMPLE: "Examples to the flock"
(1 Peter 5:3)

ACCOUNTABILITY: Hebrews 13:17

COMPLETE DEPENDENCE UPON GOD: 1 Peter 5:7

The Organization and Government of the Church

CHARACTER QUALITIES OF THE SERVANT LEADER

(Based on 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9)

Presented by Charles Davis to Antioch Training School, November, 1997

1. ABOVE REPROACH (NIV, NAS); BLAMELESS (KJV)

1 Timothy 3:2 — Literally “one who cannot be laid hold upon.” Titus 1:7 - Different Greek word, literally, “one against whom it is impossible to bring a charge of wrongdoing.” After objective and thorough examination, there is no scriptural basis for making an accusation against him.

2. THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE - 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6

Literally, “a man of one woman.” Totally and exclusively devoted to his wife.

3. TEMPERATE (NIV, NAS); VIGILANT (KJV) - 1 Timothy 3:2

One who is usually moderate in thought, speech and behavior.

One who is on guard against excess.

4. SELF-CONTROLLED (NIV); PRUDENT (NAS); SOBER (KJV)

1 Timothy 3:2; SENSIBLE in NAS Titus 1:8.

One who is sensible, wise, balanced in judgment, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking. Having common sense, not given to impulsiveness.

5. RESPECTABLE (NIV, NAS); OF GOOD BEHAVIOR (KJV) 1 Timothy 3:2

This word could be translated “of orderly behavior” because it speaks of order as distinct from disorder. One who demonstrates a well-ordered life. In the Christian context, it speaks of an integrated life around the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

6. HOSPITABLE (NIV, NAS); GIVEN TO HOSPITALITY (KJV) 1 Timothy 3:2

Literally, “lover of strangers or foreigners.” One who is open and loving toward those who are different from him.

7. NOT GIVEN TO MUCH WINE (NIV); NOT ADDICTED TO WINE (NAS); NOT GIVEN TO WINE (KJV) 1 Timothy 3:3

Literally, “does not sit long at his wine.” The Biblical standard is moderation. Since one out of nine persons who ever takes a drink becomes either a problem drinker or an alcoholic, it seems that the only guarantee of moderation is total abstinence. Compare Romans 14:21. “What you allow in moderation, your children will excuse in excess.” Proverbs 20:1; Proverbs 23:29—35.

8. NOT VIOLENT (NIV); NOT PUGNACIOUS (NAS); NO STRIKER (KJV)

1 Timothy 3:3

Not always ready to strike out at others. One who is characterized by forbearance, not quick tempered.

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9. NOT QUARRELSOME (NIV); UNCONTENTIOUS (NAS); NOT A BRAWLER (KJV)
1 Timothy 3:3

One not given to quarrelling and argumentation. One who does not go around with a chip on his shoulder. One who does not get his feelings hurt easily and frequently. Not one who causes others to be constantly on guard about what they say or do for fear of offending him. Barclay translates this peaceable,” thus not a disturber of the peace.

10. GENTLE (NIV, NAS); PATIENT (KJV) 1 Timothy 3:3

Not unduly rigorous. Not making a determined and stubborn stand for one’s just due and legal rights. Characterized by flexibility, forbearing spirit, “sweet reasonableness.”
(See Philippians 4:5. Noun form of same Greek word.)

11. ONE WHO EFFECTIVELY CONTROLS HIS HOUSEHOLD, ESPECIALLY HIS CHILDREN 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6

One who has a well-ordered household, a healthy family life, and well-behaved children. (This is generally understood to pertain to those children still under the authority of the parents.) “A man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient” (Titus 1:6).

12. NOT OVERBEARING (NIV); NOT SELF-WILLED (NAS, KJV) Titus 1:7

Literally, “not pleasing himself.” One who is not eager to have his own way. Not one who obstinately maintains his own opinion, or asserts his own rights, while he is indifferent to the rights, opinions and interests of others.

13. NOT QUICK-TEMPERED (NIV, NAS); NOT SOON ANGRY (KJV) Titus 1:7

In the Greek “me orgilon.” The word “orgilon” comes from the Greek work “orge” which speaks of sustained, deliberately nurtured anger as contrasted to the Greek word “thumos” which speaks of anger that quickly blazes up and quickly subsides. This kind of man is not quick-tempered because he does not have a set disposition to anger. He is not basically an angry man. Proverbs 22:24—15; Proverbs 29:22; James 1:19—20.

14. DISCIPLINED (NIV); SELF-CONTROLLED (NAS); TEMPERATE (KJV) Titus 1:8
Literally, “having power over one’s self.” Characterized by self-discipline.

15. NOT A LOVER OF MONEY (NIV); FREE FROM THE LOVE OF MONEY (NAS); NOT GREEDY OF FILTHY LUCRE (KJV) 1 Timothy 3:3. Also, Titus 1:7
NOT PURSUING DISHONEST GAIN (NIV).

One who is not characterized by greed and unbalanced interest in material matters and financial gain. One who does not have a wrong value system. Jesus taught us to love persons and use things. A wrong value system causes us to love things and use persons.

16. NOT A RECENT CONVERT (NIV); NOT A NOVICE (KJV) 1 Timothy 3:6

Not a beginner in the Christian faith. A person may have been a Christian for many years and yet still be a beginner in the things of the Lord. The servant leader must be a mature Christian. Read the entire verse: I Timothy 3:6.

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17. HE MUST HAVE A GOOD REPUTATION WITH OUTSIDERS (NIV); HE MUST HAVE A GOOD REPUTATION WITH THOSE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH (NAS); HE MUST HAVE A GOOD REPORT OF THEM WHICH ARE WITHOUT (KJV)

1 Timothy 3:7

The word translated “report” is the Greek word “marturian.” It speaks of a testimony in court or judicial evidence. The Greek word translated “good” speaks of good quality. So “good report” means good quality of testimony that can stand close examination in court, i.e., good judicial evidence. If this man were “put on trial” (by believers and non-believers alike) for being a mature and dedicated follower of Jesus, there would be enough solid evidence to convict him. (Compare 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 and Colossians 4:5-6.) This Greek word “marturian” is the word from which our English word “martyr” comes. Christians had convictions (testimonies) that caused them to remain faithful to Jesus even when it meant certain death. This happened so often in the civil trials of Christians that the word “marturian,” i.e. “court testimony” came to be equated with death, thus “martyr.” The servant leader has convictions for which he is willing to die rather than deny. Obviously, these non-negotiable convictions must be based on abundantly clear, self-evident interpretation of Scripture and not on any “private interpretation” highly subject to debate among Bible-believing Christians. (Please read 1 Peter 3:15—17.)

18. UPRIGHT (NIV); JUST (NAS, KJV) Titus 1:8

The one who is just is first of all justified. The verb is “to justify,” i.e., to acquit, declare not guilty. This Greek word, here translated “upright, just” is elsewhere often translated “righteous.” It means to be put right or in right relationship. The just man has received Jesus into his life as Lord and Savior and has been declared not guilty by God and has been put in right relationship with God by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ. As a result, the just man acts justly, rightly. He is rightly related to others. He has a clear conscience. He can turn 360 degrees and not see a person who can point an accusing finger at him and say, “You offended me, you did me wrong and you did not do everything possible to make it right.” This man always seeks in all things and in all relationships to do what is fair, just and right in God’s sight. He is a just man. Compare Micah 6:8.

19. ONE WHO LOVES WHAT IS GOOD (NIV); A LOVER OF GOOD MEN (KJV)

Titus 1:8

One who is an ally and enthusiastic supporter of the good, including persons, deeds and things.

20. HOLY (NIV, KJV); DEVOUT (NAS) Titus 1:8

One who is morally pure, i.e., characterized by moral excellence. One of unassailable character. One who devotedly seeks to live in harmony with God and God’s will. One who is careful of his duties toward God and toward man. His life reflects positively the character and reputation of God.

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21. INTENSELY LOYAL TO THE REVEALED WORD OF GOD AS BEING COMPLETELY TRUSTWORTHY AND AUTHORITATIVE. AND ABLE TO TEACH IT BY PRECEPT AND EXAMPLE, IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE BELIEVERS AND TO CONVICT OR CONVINCE UNBELIEVERS WHO CONTRADICT THE FAITH. (This is a paraphrase of the verse. Read Titus 1:9 in your Bible.) Also see 1 Timothy 3:2, "able to teach."

BISHOP

BISHOP

(bish'-up): The word is evidently an abbreviation of the Greek episkopos; Latin, episcopus.

GENERAL

The Septuagint gives it the generic meaning of "superintendency, oversight, searching" (Num 4:16; 31:14) in matters pertaining to the church, the state, and the army (Judg 9:28; 2 Kings 12:11; 2 Chron 34:12,17; 1 Macc 1:54; Wisd 1:6).

1. Use in the Septuagint and Classic Greek: Nor is it unknown to classical Greek Thus Homer in the Iliad applied it to the gods (xxii.255), also Plutarch, Cam., 5. In Athens the governors of conquered states were called by this name.

2. New Testament Use: The word is once applied to Christ himself, "unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Peter 2:25). It abounds in Pauline literature, and is used as an alternative for presbuteros or elder (Titus 1:5,7; 1 Tim 3:1; 4:14; 5:17,19). The earliest ecclesiastical offices instituted in the church were those of elders and deacons, or rather the reverse, inasmuch as the latter office grew almost immediately out of the needs of the Christian community at Jerusalem (Acts 6:1-6). The presbyteral constitution of Jerusalem must have been very old (Acts 11:30) and was distinct from the apostolate (Acts 15:2,4,6,22,23; 16:4). As early as 50 AD Paul appointed "elders" in every church, with prayer and fasting (Acts 14:23), referring to the Asiatic churches before established. But in writing to the Philippians (Phil 1:1) he speaks of "bishops" and "deacons." In the gentile Christian churches this title evidently had been adopted; and it is only in the Pastoral Epistles that we find the name "presbyters" applied. The name "presbyter" or "elder," familiar to the Jews, signifies their age and place in the church; while the other term "bishop" refers rather to their office. But both evidently have reference to the same persons. Their office is defined as "ruling" (Rom 12:8), "overseeing" (Acts 20:17,28; 1 Peter 5:2), caring for the flock of God (Acts 20:28). But the word archein, "to rule," in the hierarchical sense, is never used.

Moreover, each church had a college of presbyter-bishops (Acts 20:17,28; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 4:14). During Paul's lifetime the church was evidently still unaware of the distinction between presbyters and bishops.

Of a formal ordination, in the later hierarchical sense, there is no trace as yet. The word "ordained" used in the King James Version (Acts 1:22) is an unwarrantable interpolation, rightly emended in the Revised Version (British and American). Neither the word cheirotoneantes (Acts 14:23, translated "appointed" the American Standard Revised Version) nor katasteses (Titus 1:5, translated "appoint" the American Standard Revised Version) is capable of this translation. In rendering these words invariably by "ordain" the King James Version shows a vitium originis. No one doubts that the idea of ordination is extremely old in the history of the church, but the laying on of hands, mentioned in the New Testament (Acts 13:3; 1 Tim 4:14; 2

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Tim 1:6; compare Acts 14; 26; 15:40) points to the communication of a spiritual gift or to its invocation, rather than to the imparting of an official status.

3. Later Development of the Idea: According to Rome, as finally expressed by the Council of Trent, and to the episcopal idea in general, the hierarchical organization, which originated in the 3rd century, existed from the beginning in the New Testament church. But besides the New Testament as above quoted, the early testimony of the church maintains the identity of "presbyters" and "bishops." Thus, Clement of Rome (Ep. 1, chapters 42, 44, 57), the Didache, chapter 15; perhaps the Constitutions, II, 33, 34, in the use of the plural form; Irenaeus (Adv. Haer., iii.2, 3), Ambrosiaster (on 1 Tim 3:10; Eph 4:11), Chrysostom (Hom 9 in Ep. ad Tim), in an unequivocal statement, the "presbyters of old were called bishops and the bishops presbyters," equally unequivocally Jerome (Ad Titus, 1,7), "the same is the presbyter, who is also the bishop." Augustine and other Fathers of the 4th and 5th centuries hold this view, and even Peter Lombard, who preceded Aquinas as the great teacher of the church of the Middle Ages. Hatch of Oxford and Harnack of Berlin, in the face of all this testimony, maintain a distinction between the presbyters, as having charge of the law and discipline of the church, and the bishops, as being charged with the pastoral care of the church, preaching and worship. This theory is built upon the argument of prevailing social conditions and institutions, as adopted and imitated by the church, rather than on sound textual proof. The distinction between presbyters and bishops can only be maintained by a forced exegesis of the Scriptures. The later and rapid growth of the hierarchical idea arose from the accession of the Ebionite Christian view of the church, as a necessary continuation of the Old Testament dispensation, which has so largely influenced the history of the inner development of the church in the first six centuries of her existence.

HENRY E. DOSKER

ANGLICAN VIEW

I. Episcopacy Defined.-Episcopacy is the government in the Christian church by bishops. The rule of the Orthodox churches in the East, of the Roman Catholics, and of the Anglicans is that the consecration of other bishops, and the ordination of priests and deacons can only be by a bishop; and with them, a bishop is one who claims historic descent from apostolic or sub-apostolic times.

II. Offices in the Early Church.-In the New Testament, the office of bishop is not clearly defined. Indeed there appear to have been many degrees of ministry in the infant church: apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, presbyters or elders, bishops or overseers, and deacons.

Due allowance is not generally made for the mental attitude of the apostles and early Christians. They were looking for the speedy return of Christ, and consequently did not organize the church in its infancy, as it was afterward found necessary to do. For this reason, while the different persons who composed the body of Christian ministers did not overlap or infringe on each other's work, yet the relative rank or priority of each minister was not clearly defined.

1. Apostles: The apostles were undoubtedly first, and in them rested the whole authority, and they were the depository of the power committed unto them by Christ.

2. Prophets: Next to the apostles in rank, and first in point of mention (Acts 11:27), came the prophets. So important were these officers in the early church that they were sent from Jerusalem to warn the rapidly growing church at Antioch of an impending famine. Then it appears that there were resident prophets at Antioch, men of considerable importance since their names are recorded, Barnabas, Symeon, Lucius, Manaen and Saul (Acts 13:1). These men received a

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command from the Holy Spirit to "separate me Barnabas and Saul," on whom they laid their hands and sent them forth on their work. The election is conducted on the same lines as the election by the eleven apostles of Matthias, and Barnabas and Paul are hereafter called apostles. It is an ordination to the highest order in the Christian ministry by "prophets and teachers." Whether "prophets and teachers" refers to two distinct ministries, or whether they are terms used for the same one is uncertain. It may be that of the five men mentioned, some were prophets, and others teachers.

In Acts 15:32 we have given us the names of two other prophets, Judas and Silas. Paul tells the Corinthians (1 Cor 12:28) that God hath set some in his church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, and writing to the Ephesians he places the prophets in the same rank. "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry" (Eph 4:11-12 the King James Version). And again, he says that the mystery of Christ is now "revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit" (Eph 3:5). The same apostle in that wonderful imagery of Christians being built up for a habitation of God, says they are "being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph 2:20).

In the case of the ordination of Timothy, which Paul says distinctly was by his own laying on of hands and that of the presbytery, it is of great consequence to note that Paul says to Timothy that his ordination was "according to the prophecies which went before on thee" (1 Tim 1:18 the King James Version). From this it would appear that the prophets, as in the case of Paul himself, guided by the Holy Ghost, chose Timothy for the overseership or bishopric, or it may be, which is just as likely, that Timothy was set apart by the laying on of hands by some prophets, to the rank of elder or presbyter which did not carry with it the "overseership." It is at any rate evident that in the selection of Timothy, Paul is insistent on pointing out that it was through the prophets (compare 1 Tim 1:18; 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6).

In Revelation, the term prophet constantly occurs as a term denoting rank equivalent to that of apostle: "ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets" (Rev 18:20); "blood of prophets and of saints" (Rev 16:6; 18:24). The angel calls himself "thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets" (Rev 22:9 the King James Version). The words prophesy and prophesying are used in a general sense, and it does not mean that they were in every case the formal utterances of prophets.

3. Elders or Presbyters: The ministry of the elders of the Christian church was modeled after that of the synagogue in which there were elders and teachers. The Christian elders or presbyters were most likely a council of advice in each local Christian ekklesia. They appear to act conjointly and not separately (Acts 15:4,6,22; 16:4; 20:17; James 5:14).

4. Teachers: Teachers were the equivalent of those teachers or catechists of the synagogue before whom Our Lord was found in the temple. Evangelists were persons who probably had the gift of oratory and whose function it was to preach the glad tidings. Philip was one of them (Acts 21:8).

5. Evangelists: In the instructions to Timothy he is bidden to do the work of an evangelist, that is to say, to preach the gospel. This was to be part of his work in the ministry.

In writing to Timothy, Paul twice says that he himself was ordained preacher, and apostle and teacher. This does not mean that he held three grades of the ministry, but that his duties as an apostle were to preach and to teach. The fact that the apostles called themselves elders does not thereby confirm the view that the bishops mentioned by them were not superior to elders, any

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more than the fact that the apostles called themselves teachers, or preachers, makes for the view that teachers, or preachers, were the equals of apostles.

6. Bishops: Bishops or overseers were probably certain elders chosen out of the body of local elders. Under the Jewish dispensation, the elders stayed at home, that is, they did no ministerial visiting, but it was soon found necessary as the Christian church grew to have someone to attend to outside work to win over by persuasion and exposition of the Scriptures those inclined to embrace Christianity. This necessitated visiting families in their own homes. Then, it became necessary to shepherd the sheep. Someone had to oversee or superintend the general work. The Jewish elders always had a head and in a large synagogue the conditions laid down for its head, or legatus, were almost identical with those laid down by Paul to Timothy. He was to be a father of a family, not rich or engaged in business, possessing a good voice, apt to teach, etc.

The term episkopos was one with which the Hellenistic Jews and Gentiles were well acquainted; and it became thus a fitting term by which to designate the men called out of the body of elders to this special work of oversight. Then, again, the term episkopos was endeared to the early Christians as the one applied to Our Lord-"the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Peter 2:25). The duties of elders, or presbyters, are not clearly defined in the New Testament.

In the Acts, the term is found only twice, one in reference to Judas, "his bishopric (or overseership) let another take" (Acts 1:20 the King James Version), and in Paul's address to the elders of Ephesus, he warns them to feed the church over which they have been made overseers or bishops (Acts 20:28). It is impossible to say whether this "overseership" refers to all the elders addressed, or to such of those elders as had been made "overseers," or "bishops."

In the epistles, we find the church more clearly organized, and in these writings we find more definite allusions to bishops and their duties (Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1-2; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 2:25).

Paul tells Timothy, "If a man desire the office of a bishop (or overseer) he desireth a good work." "A bishop (or overseer) must be blameless" (1 Tim 3:1-2 the King James Version). He tells Titus that "he is to ordain elders in every city" and that a "bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God" (Titus 1:5,7 the King James Version).

On the other hand, there are numerous texts where elders and their duties are mentioned and where there is no reference whatever to bishopric or oversight. The epistles show that of necessity there had grown to be a more distinct organization of the ministry, and that following the custom of the synagogue to some of the elders had been committed a bishopric or oversight. At the same time the rank of a bishop, or overseer, was not yet one of the highest. Paul does not enumerate it in the order of ministry which he gives to the Ephesians-apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

That Timothy had an oversight over the elders or presbyters is evident from the fact that Paul enjoins him to rebuke those that sin: "Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the mouth of two or three witnesses. Them that sin reprove in the sight of all" . (1 Tim 5:19-20).

This, of course, refers to a formal trial by one in authority of persons inferior to him in rank.

It has been asserted that the terms elder and bishop in the New Testament were equivalent and denoted the same office or grade in the ministry. This assertion seems unwarranted. They do not naturally denote the same grade any more than do apostle and teacher, or angel and prophet.

7. Deacons: The deacons were the seven appointed to take charge of the temporal affairs of the church. Their appointment was perhaps suggested by the alms-collectors of the synagogue. In the New Testament they do not appear as deacons to have had any part in the sacred ministry, except, in the case of Philip the evangelist, if it be assumed that he was a deacon, which is uncertain.

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Nowhere is it recorded that they laid hands on anyone, or were considered as capable of bestowing any grace. In the epistles they are mentioned with the bishops-"bishops and deacons" (Phil 1:1), thus showing the nature of their influence as the helpers of the "bishops" in the management of the growing funds, or properties of the church.

III. Episcopacy according to the New Testament.-The passages where the Greek word occurs which has been translated either as bishops, or overseers, are so few that they are enumerated: Acts 20:17,28: the Ephesian elders are stated to be bishops (or overseers) to feed the church; Phil 1:1: the salutation of Paul and Timothy to bishops (or overseers) and deacons at Philippi; 1 Tim 3:1-2 and Titus 1:7 give the exhortation to Timothy and Titus as holding the office of a bishop; 1 Peter 2:25, where the apostle referring to Christ says, "unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

IV. The "Didache."-Passing out of the New Testament, we come to the early Christian writing, the so-called Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. Setting aside the question for what class of Christians this document was intended, the clear fact stands out that at the date of its writing the two highest grades in the Christian ministry were still called apostles and prophets. Various dates have been assigned to this document ranging from 80 to 160 AD.

At the end of chapter 10, which deals with the thanksgiving or eucharist, the remark is made, "But permit the prophets to make thanksgiving as much as they desire." Chapters 11 and 13 deal with apostles and prophets. They were to be treated "according to the ordinance of the gospel." An apostle was not to be allowed to stay more than a couple of days at the utmost, and in no case was he to receive any money, else he was to be considered "a false prophet." A prophet could beg on behalf of others, but not for himself; but a prophet could settle among a congregation, and in that case he was to receive the same first-fruits "of money and raiment and of every possession" as the chief priest did under the old dispensation. It is to be noted that in reality the prophets, though placed second in order, were to be treated with the greater respect. If the prophet settles down, he becomes the man of the first rank in that Christian community.

Chapter 15 deals with bishops and deacons, and we are told that if appointed they rendered the ministry of prophets and teachers, but the warning is given, "Despise them not, therefore, for they are your honoured ones, together with the prophets and teachers." This shows that bishops were localized; and that while they could be appointed over a community, they were not considered as of equal rank with the prophets.

V. Clement of Rome.-Clement of Rome in his Epistle to the Corinthians says that the apostles preaching through countries and cities appointed the first-fruits of their labors to be bishops and deacons (chapter 42). It is usually said that Clement meant elders by the term "bishops," but it is much more likely that he meant what he said; that according to the tradition received by him, the apostles appointed bishops, that is, appointed bishops out of the elders-mentioned in the Acts. In chapter 44 Clement warns against the sin of ejecting from the episcopate those who have presented the offerings, and says, "Blessed are those presbyters who have finished their course." The reason why the terms apostles and prophets fell into desuetude was, as regards the first, not so much out of respect to the original apostles, but because the apostles in the sub-apostolic age became apparently only wandering evangelists of little standing; while the prophets lowered their great office by descending to be soothsayers, as the Shepherd of Hermas plainly intimates. With the fall of the apostles and the prophets, there rose into prominence the bishops and deacons.

VI. Bishops and Deacons.-The deacons acted as secretaries and treasurers to the bishops. They were their right-hand men, representing them in all secular matters. As the numbers of Christians

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increased, it was found absolutely necessary for the bishops to delegate some of their spiritual authority to a second order.

VII. Bishops and Presbyters (Priests).-Thus very slowly emerged out of the body of elders the official presbyters or priests. To them the bishop delegated the power to teach, to preach, to baptize, to celebrate the Holy Eucharist; but how slowly is evidenced by the fact that so late as 755 AD the Council of Vern forbade priests to baptize, except by distinct permission of their bishop.

VIII. Ignatian Epistles on the Three Orders.-When we come to the Ignatian epistles written between 110-17 AD, we find a distinct threefold order. We have given us the names of Damas, for bishop, Bassus and Apollonius for presbyters, Zotion for deacon. Throughout these epistles there is no question that the bishop is supreme. Apostles and prophets are not even mentioned. The bishop succeeds to all the powers the apostles and prophets had. On the other hand, as with the Jewish elders, so with the Christian presbyters, they form a council with the bishop. Here we see in clear day what we had all along suspected to be the case in apostolic times: a council of presbyters with a ruler at their head and deacons to attend to money matters.

It is quite immaterial as to whether a bishop had ten or a hundred presbyter-elders under him, whether he was bishop in a small town or in a large city. The question of numbers under him would not affect his authority as has been claimed. The greatness of the city in which he exercised this rule would add dignity to his position, but nothing to his inherent authority.

From this time on it is admitted by all that bishops, priests and deacons have been continuously in existence. Their powers and duties have varied, have been curtailed as one order has encroached on the power of the other, but still there the three orders have been. Gradually the presbyters or priests encroached on the power of the bishop, till now, according to Anglican usage, only the power of ordaining, confirming and consecrating churches is left to them.

IX. Views of Reformers.-At the time of the Reformation there was a great outcry against bishops. This was caused by the fact that under feudalism the bishops had come to be great temporal lords immersed in schemes of political and material aggrandizement, and often actually leading their armies in times of war. Many of the bishops were proud and arrogant, forgetful that their duties as fathers of the children of Christ were to look after those committed to them with fatherly kindness and charity or that as pastors they had to tend the erring sheep with Divine patience and infinite love.

The bulk of the adherents to the Reformed religion, looking upon the bishops as they were and as their fathers had known them, recoiled from retaining the office, although their principal men, like Calvin, deplored the loss of bishops, and hoped that bishops of the primitive order would some day be restored. The present modern Anglican bishop seems to sum up in his person and office the requirements laid down by Calvin.

Conclusion: Thus the claim put forth by the Anglicans in the preface to the Ordinal may be considered as sound: "It is evident unto all men, diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church-Bishops, Priests, and Deacons."

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LITERATURE. --Teaching of the Twelve Apostles; Clement of Rome; Shepherd of Hermas; Ignatian epistles; Muratorian Fragment; Works of John Lightfoot; Duchesne, Origines du Culte Chretien; Pellicia, Polity of the Christian Church; Bishop MacLean, Ancient Church Orders; Cheetham, Hist of the Christian Church during the First Six Centuries.; Salmon, Introduction to New Testament; Elwin, The Minister of Baptism; Cruttwell, Literary History of Early Christianity; Potter, Church Government; Lowndes, Vindication of Anglican Orders; E. Hatch, The Organization of the Early Christian Churches; C. Gore, The Church and the Ministry; Thompson, Historic Episcopate (Presbyterian); Baird, Huguenots.

ARTHUR LOWNDES

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CONGREGATIONAL VIEW

As a spiritual and social democracy, Congregationalism finds no warrant or precedent in the New Testament for the episcopal conception of the words "bishop," "presbyter," and "elder." It interprets *epi-skopos*, literally as overseer-not an ecclesiastical dignitary but a spiritual minister.

1. The New Testament Church a Spiritual Democracy: It finds the Romanist view of Peter's primacy, founded alone on Matt 16:18, contradicted by the entire trend of Christ's teaching, as e.g. when referring to the Gentiles exercising lordship and authority Christ says, "Not so shall it be among you" (Matt 20:26 ff). He set the precedent of official greatness when He said "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," and that "whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister (servant)." Paul's testimony confirms this in suggesting no primacy among the apostles and prophets, but making "Christ himself the chief corner stone" (Eph 2:20). The organization and history of the early Christian church establish this view of its simplicity and democracy. In Acts 1:20 the Revised Version (British and American) corrects the rendering "bishopric" (given by the King James translators, who were officers in the Episcopal church) to "office," thus, relieving the verse of possible ecclesiastical pretensions.

The church formed on the day of Pentecost was the spontaneous coming together of the original 120 disciples and the 3,000 Christian converts, for fellowship, worship and work, under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Its only creed was belief in the risen Christ and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit; its only condition of membership, repentance and baptism.

2. Election of Officers by Popular Vote: The apostles naturally took leadership but, abrogating all authority, committed to the church as a whole the choice of its officers and the conduct of its temporal and spiritual affairs. Judas' place in the apostolate was not filled by succession or episcopal appointment (Acts 1:23-26). The seven deacons were elected by popular vote (Acts 6:1-6). One of the seven-Philip-preached and, without protest, administered the rite of baptism (Acts 8:12-13).

The churches in the apostolic era were independent and self-governing, and the absence of anything like a centralized ecclesiastical authority is seen by the fact that the council at Jerusalem, called to consider whether the church at Antioch should receive the uncircumcised into membership, was a delegated body, composed in part of lay members, and having only advisory power (Acts 15:1-29).

3. The Epistles not Official Documents: The apostolic letters, forming so large a part of the New Testament, are not official documents but letters of loving pastoral instruction and counsel. The terms bishops, elders, pastors and teachers are used synonymously and interchangeably, thus limiting the officers of the early church to two orders: pastors and deacons. See also CHURCH GOVERNMENT; DIDACHE.

4. Restoration of Primitive Ideals: Under the spiritual tyrannies of the Church of England, during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, "bloody" Mary and 'Queen Elizabeth, the Dissenting bodies, chiefly the Congregationalists, returned to the simplicity and spiritual freedom of the primitive church. The issue was forced by two arbitrary acts of Parliament under Elizabeth: the Act of Supremacy and the Act of Uniformity. Emancipation from the intellectual and religious tyranny of these acts was won at the cost of many martyrdoms. These struggles and persecutions wrought into the successors of Robert Browne, the father of modern Congregationalism, a deep-seated and permanent resentment against all forms of autocratic power in church and state. They challenged, at the cost of life, both the Divine Right of kings, and of bishops. They believed that in Christ Jesus all believers are literally and inalienably made "kings and priests unto God" (Rev

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1:6 the King James Version), actual spiritual sovereigns, independent of all human dictation and control in matters of belief and worship. The Pilgrims expatriated themselves to secure this spiritual liberty; and to their inherent antagonism to inherited and self-perpetuated power, whether civil or ecclesiastical, must be credited the religious freedom and civil democracy of America.

LITERATURE. --For further study see Henry M. Dexter, Congregationalism, chapter ii; Dunning's Congregationalists in America, chapters i, ii; Rainy, The Ancient Catholic Church.
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