

# Church Government

1 Peter 5:1-4

## Introduction:

- A. The universal church is not an organized functioning unit.
  - 1. No government except each Christian under Christ.
  - 2. No work that needs overseeing.
- B. The Local church is an organized functioning unit.
  - 1. Needs coordination and oversight.
  - 2. Needs direction and leadership.
- C. The scriptures assign certain *attributes* to local church government.

## Discussion:

- I. It Is by *Divine Decree*, Rather than *Human Discretion*. (V. 1, Cf. Acts 20:28).**
  - A. Bible pattern rather than pattern set by kingdoms of this world.
  - B. Bible teaching rather than trial and error of human experience.
- II. It Is *Congregational*, Rather than *Diocesan*. ("among you" v. 2)**
  - A. Local men called elders, bishops, etc. (cf. Tit. 1:5,7).
  - B. Local rather than national, county, city, etc. wide.
- III. It Is by a *Plurality of Men*, Rather than *One Man*. (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17)**
  - A. No "*the* pastor" of a church.
  - B. No bishop over several churches.
  - C. No woman or women over any church.
- IV. It Is by *Superintendents*, Rather than *Lords*. (v. 3)**
  - A. Neither democratic nor dictatorial - neither voting nor lording.
  - B. Lords come in different forms:
    - 1. Elders who abuse their office.
    - 2. Members who assume oversight.
    - 3. Members who impose their will by grumbling, threatening and/or pouting.
  - C. Elders are shepherds leading a flock - not giving orders from afar.
    - 1. This is done by Catholic type organization.
    - 2. This is done by diocesan, conference type organization.
- V. It Is *Administrative*, Rather than *Legislative*. (v. 4).**
  - A. Cannot make laws, only carries them out.
    - 1. Must make judgment decisions in execution of divine law.
    - 2. Must not make laws for God, nor seek to change divine law.
  - B. Christ, as king, has all authority.
- VI. It Is by *Qualification and Appointment*, Rather than by *Politics*. (Tit. 1; 1 Tim. 3).**
  - A. If not qualified, no appointment no matter how popular one may be.
  - B. If not qualified, man-made rather than Holy Spirit-made leaders. (Cf. Acts 20:26).
  - C. If plurality not qualified, no need for an eldership.
    - 1. Should not simply appoint those "nearest" or "best we have".
    - 2. Should not consider no eldership a permanent arrangement
    - 3. Should not consider such a church second-class.
  - D. If qualified men, church must appoint an eldership to please God.
    - 1. Cannot allow some frivolous objection to keep church from appointing good elders.
    - 2. Cannot allow some "man made" rule to rob church of eldership.

## Conclusion:

- A. The Abuse of church government causes many other errors - history shows.
- B. The Neglect of church government creates a vacuum - often filled with error.
- C. The Right use of church government make church effective force for truth.