

## **THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH**

Phil. 1:1

### Introduction:

- A. Organization of church concerns every member. (Either Bishop, deacon or saint)
  - 1. Many members seems to think otherwise.
    - a. Only concern themselves with more public matters: worship, classes, etc.
    - b. Think organization should only concern a select few.
  - 2. Many members ignorant of organization.
    - a. Do not know if or how the church is organized.
    - b. Do not know that organization not left to human judgement.
- B. Organization of church determined by Scriptures as much as worship, etc.
  - 1. N.T. shows churches existed in two stages of organization.
    - a. Partially organized: Meet together and functioned as a unit without rule or oversight - a temporary condition until completely organized.
    - b. Completely organized: Meet together and function under oversight or rule of duly qualified and appointed.
- C. Organization of church can be understood if understand three basic principles:

### Discussion:

#### **I. The Only Level Of Church Organization In The New Testament Was Local.**

- A. "Church" (called out assembly) used in two basic senses in N.T.
  - 1. Universally: Of all Disciples - saved. (Matt. 16:18; Heb. 12:23; Gal. 1:13).
  - 2. Locally: Of Disciples meeting at a given location (1 Cor. 1:1; 4:17; Gal. 1:2).
    - a. Allowed or rejected those who sought to join it. (Acts 9:26).
    - b. Retained or expelled its members. (cf. 1 Cor. 5)
    - c. Came together "in the church" or "as the church". (1 Cor. 11:18)
- B. Christians organized into local churches- churches not organized into anything.
  - 1. Elders appointed in every church. (Acts 14:23; Tit. 1:5)  
Note: To get City-wide organization from Tit. 1 - would have to prove more than one church for little cities (villages) of Crete.
  - 2. Elders mentioned in specific local churches. (Acts 20:17; Phil. 1:1).

#### **II. The Only Rule In Church Organization In The New Testament Is Local Elderships.**

- A. The rule or oversight of elders was local. (1 Pet. 5:1-5)
  - 1. No district elders (Bishops) over local elders. - came later in church history.
  - 2. No Elderships over several local churches.
    - a. If elders oversee work of other churches they cease to be local elders.
    - b. If elders turn church into "sponsoring church" cease to be local.
- B. The only rule or oversight (other than the Lord) in local church its eldership.
  - 1. Should not allow any other rule or oversight from without.
    - a. Another church may support preacher who does it service. (2 Cor. 11:8)
    - b. Another church may help it meets its benevolent needs. (Acts 11:27ff)
    - c. But, another church cannot oversee or supervise its affairs.
  - 2. Should not allow unscriptural rule or oversight from within.
    - a. Not committee, preacher, "leader", majority or minority rule.
    - b. Not even business meeting rule.  
Business meeting is an expedient means to exchange ideas in order to come to some kind of agreement as to how we can work together to get things done that the church needs to do in the absence of any oversight -- it is not a ruling body. The only scriptural ruling body is an eldership.
    - c. Without elders there is NO rule or oversight.

#### **III. The Only Organization For Church Work Is The Local Church**

- A. Local churches in addition to meeting for worship had did other works.
  - 1. They did Evangelistic work to world and church. (Phil. 4:15; 2 Cor. 11:8)
  - 2. They did Benevolent work to saints. (Acts 6; Acts 11:27-30; 2 Cor. 8,9)
  - 3. They did Disciplinary work to own. (I Cor. 5).
- B. Local churches did not turn this work over to other organizations.
  - 1. To do so, is to say that church not sufficient to do its work.
  - 2. To do so, is to act without divine authority.

### Conclusion:

- A. Just as wrong to be unscriptural in organization as to be in worship.
- B. Just as wrong to pervert scriptural organization as to pervert "1st principles".

