

“Why Do Ye These Things?”— No. 4

Why Organize As We Do?

Acts 14:15

Introduction:

- A. A valid question for apostles to ask.
 - 1. People tried to worship them as gods: Why? By what authority?
 - 2. People needed to think on this question?
- B. A good question for anyone to ask. (cf. 1 Pet. 3:15).
 - 1. Have asked: *Why do **Anything** in religion?*
 - 2. Have asked: *Why worship God as we do?*
 - 3. Have asked: *Why work in religion as we do?*
 - 4. Are asking: *Why organize in religion as we do?*
- C. This lesson considers 2 aspects of the organization of the church.

Discussion:

I. The Bible Use Of The Word “Church”.

- A. The Church: A collective noun.
 - 1. A called out assembly. (cf. Acts 19)
 - 2. Like: covey, flock, herd, etc.
- B. The Church: That universal host or assembly of the saved. (Mt. 16:18; Acts 2:47; Heb. 12:23).
 - 1. Simply all Christians under Christ.
 - 2. Unorganized.
 - 3. Now work or function as unit.
- C. The Church: A local unit or organization — assembled or not. (Phil. 1:1; 4:15; Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 1:1; Rev. 1:11; Acts 20:17; 3 John 9,10).
- D. The Church: A physical assembly of local organization. (1 Cor. 11:18; 14:34).

II. The Bible Pattern Of Church Organization.

- A. N.T. churches can exist without formal organization. (cf. Acts 14:23)
 - 1. A temporary arrangement—with temporary expedients to act as unit.
 - 2. Has something lacking. (Titus 1:5).
 - 3. Has no oversight nor rule.
- B. N.T. churches were overseen by elders, served by deacons (Phil. 1:1).
 - 1. Local (1 Pet. 5:1-2).
 - 2. Plurality (Acts 14:23; 20:17).
 - 3. No oversight higher than local church.
- C. N.T. churches were self-governing under Christ. (1 Cor. 16:1-3)
- D. N.T. churches cooperated in certain way — concurrently, not jointly.
 - 1. Churches sent to needy churches. (Acts 11:27-30; 1 Cor. 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 8 & 9).
 - 2. Churches sent directly to gospel preachers. (Phil. 4; 2 Cor. 11:8).
- E. N.T. churches worked within framework of local church (Acts 6).
 - 1. Not through man-made organization.
 - 2. Not substitute board for elders.

Conclusion:

- A. Disregard for local organization led to major apostasies of past.
- B. Disregard for local organization has opened flood-gate of apostasy today.
- C. Disregard for divine authority in this area has led to it in other areas.