

# CHURCH GOVERNMENT

*ACCORDING TO GOD'S STANDARD*

MANUSCRIPT

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*Pete Bumgarner*

# CHURCH GOVERNMENT

*According to God's Standard*

## INTRODUCTION

I was instructed by the Holy Spirit to write this book. The purpose for writing the book is threefold: it is written to instruct people in the government of God so that theocracy can be set in the true churches which God has ordained; it is also written to assist in bringing the Body of Christ, in reality, under the Lordship of Jesus; finally, it is written to aid and assist in understanding authority so that authority will not be feared and resisted, but revered and followed.

I wish to make clear from the outset of this project that I am following God's mandate in writing about His government. I am a Vietnam veteran and a very patriotic man. I am thankful to be an American, and I acknowledge the blessings that God has generously bestowed upon this nation. There is, however, a higher loyalty to which I pledge my allegiance. It is not my intention to seem critical of America, its founding fathers, or its dedication to liberty. It is my intention to expose the fallacies and dangers inherent in any government that does not originate in God and operate according to God's standard, democracy included.

In its preamble, the Constitution of the United States of America states that its purposes include forming a more perfect union, establishing justice, providing for the common defense, and securing the blessings of liberty for generations to come. These purposes are commendable. I believe that some of the men who framed the Constitution were God-fearing men who embraced democracy as the door leading to freedom from tyranny and oppression. (Many church leaders have had the same idea.) These leaders of old wrote and adopted a natural document that successfully bound thirteen independent colonies into the United States. We must realize, however, that natural documents have natural limitations. I believe these men envisioned a perfect nation, under God, led by men of integrity who could judicially interpret and apply the principles of the Constitution, effectively establishing its purposes. These men had no idea that they were creating a government that would eventually be the very force used to undermine America and the church. They stopped short of that "higher loyalty" previously mentioned, leaving man in charge instead of God. (The same is true of the church.) Government "by the people and for the people" is obviously built upon the foundation of people, a varying and unstable foundation. Theocracy, which is government by God and for God, is the only true government, built upon the only unvarying and stable foundation. Theocracy is the only government that invites and allows God to rule man.

The interpretation of the Constitution is changing from year to year through people with vain imaginations and selfish motives. Those responsible for the interpretation of the Constitution include the President, Congress, and the Supreme Court. The system of democracy has allowed citizens of this country to vote into office many false and ungodly leaders. (The same is true of the church.) I believe this system of election has proven itself undependable and, often times, detrimental to the nation. In many instances, the majority does not rule. I do not believe, for example, that the majority of Americans wanted prayer removed from the public schools, yet this action was accomplished through democratic interpretation. We have paid a tremendous price for this minority action. Another example of the minority overruling the majority can be seen in a presidential race. It is possible for a presidential candidate to win the majority vote of the people and lose the election. We pledge our allegiance to the flag representing one nation under God, but is it really "under God"? Democracy's design gives individuals the right to stand in its face denouncing its principles and the God which it is supposedly "under." Many factors contribute to the failure of democracy. Three of these factors are: ignorance and indifference of the general public; deception on the part of those who campaign for political office; and, above all, a predominant lack of the fear of God.



God is the only absolute source of true government. His kingdom or rule is based upon principles far superior to any government man is capable of devising. The motive of my heart is not one of criticism toward this nation or toward the church. My heart's desire is to teach God's government to people of all nations, a government greater than any government in existence. Democracy is not the "door" leading to life and liberty. Jesus said, "I am the door." I submit to you that the only perfect Union for any individual, church, or nation is the Union of God's government. God's government must be established in the local churches throughout the world so that His Kingdom might be established among His people. My prayer for this nation and the churches of this nation is that they might recognize Almighty God as the Supreme Authority and submit to Him so that His will may be done in earth as it is in heaven.

I give full credit to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for the revelation that He has given me concerning church government. I challenge the reader of this book to do as the Bereans of Paul's day did: search the Scriptures and see if the material we are teaching is of God. If this teaching violates scripture, it is not of God and should not be followed. If this teaching does not violate the Scriptures in principles or doctrine, then it must be followed.

May the Spirit of God open the eyes of your understanding so that you may clearly see and understand Church Government according to God's standard.

# CHURCH GOVERNMENT

## Chapter 1

First things first! In order to understand church government effectively, we must understand the meaning of both church and government.

According to *Webster's Dictionary*, the word "church" is defined as follows: 1. an edifice consecrated for public worship, especially one for Christian worship. 2. the collective body of Christians, composed of three great branches, the Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Eastern. 3. a particular body of Christians united under one form of ecclesiastical government, in one creed, and using the same ritual and ceremonies. 4. ecclesiastical, as opposed to secular, government; ecclesiastical authority and influence; as, the union of Church and State. 5. the organized body of Christians in any particular district, city, state, or country; as the church of Ephesus. 6. the worshippers of God before the advent of Christ. These definitions are some used by Mr. Webster to define church. Obviously, when the word "church" is used, one must understand the context in which it is used; otherwise, the proper meaning intended by the user will not be realized.

In this particular study, we will use the word "church" when referring to an edifice

where people gather together to worship the Lord, and we will also look at the word "church" as the Body of Christ.

The Greek word *ekklesia* (ek-klay-see'-ah), which is translated "church" in the King James Version of the Bible, is defined as a calling out. This definition applies to both the local and the universal church. "Calling out" signifies a separation, but the average evangelical has limited the "calling out" to rapture. The Church is "called out" from the world system while it still remains on earth. The Church is to be separate from the world, not intimate with the world. We must realize that the Church is "called out;" therefore, it should not operate under the same government the world acknowledges. The Church is "called out" of the natural kingdom of the world to walk in the spiritual kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, and His Kingdom must rule in and over the Church, both local and universal. The Church has not only been "called out from" the world, but it has also been "called into" the Kingdom of God.

We understand that the Church, whether local or universal, is made up of many people with various backgrounds. Consequently, we must realize the importance of promoting peace and harmony among those who have gathered together. The most effective way to promote peace and harmony is through organization and

communication. The Church must be organized according to God's standard, and it certainly must be organized under the government of God. Before a church is established, while the church is being established, and after the church is established, organization and communication must be emphasized. Neither organization nor communication can stand alone; these two must work together, becoming interdependent. Communication is vital to good organization, yet communication without organization will prove ineffective.

With all this in mind, let's look at the word "government."

*Webster's Dictionary* defines the word "government" as follows: 1. (a) the exercise of authority over an organization, institution, state, district, etc.; control; rule; management; (b) the right, function, or power of governing. 2. (a) a system of ruling, controlling, etc.; (b) an established system of political administration by which a state, district, etc. is governed. 3. all the people who administer or control the affairs of a state, institution, etc.; administration. 4. any territory which is governed. These definitions are used by Mr. Webster to define the word "government." Government, like church, requires a contextual setting in order for its definition to be properly understood. In this particular study, we will look at the word "government" as God's

rule and dominion, and we will also view the word “government” from the local church setting, in which ruling is predominantly administrating.

Very simply stated, church government is the administration of God’s rule, both in the local church as well as in the universal church. Obviously, someone in the church must be responsible for administrating the rule of God. God, not man, is to set that individual in the church, and He will hold that individual responsible for the activity that takes place in the church. The person set by God must give an account to God for the activity that he allows to take place within the church. If people understood the responsibility and accountability of the overseer of a local church, they would not be as critical and judgmental.

The responsibility and accountability of the “set one” can be seen in the second and third chapters of the book of Revelation. In these chapters, we read about seven literal churches that were located in a Roman province in western Asia Minor. John was instructed to write to the overseers (messengers) of each of these seven churches, documenting God’s specific message to each of these individuals.

The Greek word *aggelos* (ang'-el-os) was translated “angel” in the King James Version of the Bible. This translation makes it sound as

though the letters are written to spiritual beings; however, if one would look at the primary definition of the word, he would find that it means messenger (one who brings news). A messenger can be a human or a spiritual being. The context dictates the proper word to use.

The messenger, not angel, of the local church is the one designated by God to be responsible and accountable to Jesus Christ, Who is the Head and Authority of the church, both local and universal. It is the messenger's responsibility to properly convey God's message to the local church. We can be sure that God is not instructing a physical man to write a physical letter to a spiritual being concerning a physical church. In the King James Version of the Bible, the word translated as "angel" in chapters two and three of Revelation is the same word that is translated as "messenger" in Matthew 11:10 and II Corinthians 12:7. The same word is also translated as "messengers" in Luke 7:24 and II Corinthians 8:23. In reality, the messenger of the church is the individual who has the oversight of the church.

In the local church, the government of God is administered by the man whom God sets as the messenger (bishop or overseer) of the church. The God-anointed leadership is responsible for delivering the messages and executing the desires of God according to God's standard.

We must now look at the definition of the word "standard" in order to understand what is meant by *Church Government According to God's Standard*.

*Webster's Dictionary* defines the word "standard" as follows: 1. something established for use as a rule or basis of comparison in measuring or judging capacity, quantity, contents, extent, value, quality, etc. 2. anything recognized as correct by common consent, by approved custom, or by those most competent to decide; a model; a type; a pattern; a criterion. 3. a level or grade of excellence, attainment, etc., regarded as a goal or measure of adequacy. 4. having the quality or qualities of a model, gauge, pattern, or type; serving as a standard; hence, generally recognized as excellent and authoritative. From these definitions, we can conclude that God's "standard" is a model, pattern, or type that is excellent and authoritative. It is a standard that the Church of Jesus must follow. It is the responsibility of the church overseer to implement this standard in the local church.

God's standard consists of His Word and His Spirit. Everything we do must be compared to the Word of God and to the Spirit of God. Consequently, church government should be designed and executed according to the Scriptures. Areas which are not specifically addressed by the Scriptures must be subjected to the Holy Spirit.



If the Spirit of God does not agree with our ideas, opinions, and mode of operation we must abandon them immediately and conform to His standard.

The type government that God has ordained for every local church is theocracy. Theocracy is a government in which God rules man. This form of government should be followed when structuring a church or setting an existing church in order. People should never be given the opportunity to dictate the structure and activity of Jesus' church. It is imperative to follow God's standard.

# GOD'S GOVERNMENT

## Chapter 2

Jesus, in His earthly ministry, spent much time teaching and preaching about God's government. Jesus used the terms "Kingdom of Heaven" or "Kingdom of God" whenever He spoke about the government of God. Contrary to the beliefs of many Christians, the "Kingdom of Heaven" and the "Kingdom of God" are not synonymous with dying and "going home to be with the Lord." The "Kingdom of Heaven" and the "Kingdom of God" are not even synonymous terms, although they are closely related. Whenever the term "Kingdom of Heaven" is used, the emphasis is upon the **origin** of the government, which is heaven. Whenever the term "Kingdom of God" is used, the emphasis is upon the **One** to Whom the government belongs, God. Consequently, the rule or dominion in both the local and universal church belongs to God and comes from heaven. It would be beneficial for us to discover the type and operation of heaven's government. Then, and only then, can we understand and accept the same type of government in the local church. God wants His government, which comes from heaven, to rule in both the local and universal church, as well as in the hearts of men.

Until we understand the way God's kingdom operates in earth, we will not conform to His

standard of government.

According to Luke 17:20-21, the kingdom of God is not seen with the physical eye; it is an internal kingdom. God wants to rule in us so that He can rule through us. God does not rule the church by force; He rules by invitation. God invites us to adhere to His Word and to be led by His Spirit; however, He will not force us to do either.

The religious leaders, who were to represent God to the people, refused to accept Jesus' approach to ministry; consequently, they did not recognize the One about whom they taught. They expected the Messiah to set up a physical kingdom, but God had other plans. They wanted God to rule over the Romans, but they did not want Him to rule over them. The church has fallen prey to this way of thinking. Christians want God to rule over the wicked, but they do not want God to rule over them.

I believe a profound truth is revealed in the biblical account of creation that gives great insight into God's form of government. God made two great lights—one to rule the day, the other to rule the night. We know from scientific studies that the sun generates its own light, but the moon does not have that capability. The moon absorbs and reflects the light to which it has been exposed. The sun was designed to rule the day; the

moon was designed to rule the night. In I Thessalonians 5:5, the believers are referred to as children of the day. It appears from creation's revelation that God wants to rule over the believers. The believers, like the moon, do not have the ability to generate light (illumination); therefore, we must expose ourselves to the Son of God and reflect His light. In Matthew 5:14, Jesus identifies the believers as "light of the world." He instructs us not to cover our light. We are to let our light shine before men so that they may see our good works and glorify our Father Who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:15-16) Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, believers should reflect the light (illumination) of Jesus. We are God's witnesses in earth. We must not be ashamed of Jesus; we must proclaim Him where ever we go. At this period of time, God's government is designed to rule over the believers; it is the believer's responsibility to rule over the darkness of the world system. In order for the believer to successfully rule over darkness, he must be under the rule of God. Subjection to God's kingdom gives us the wisdom and understanding needed to conduct ourselves properly in the world.

God's government is a theocratic government. Theocracy is government by God and for God. This government is absolutely the best government to which any person, church, or country could possibly submit or in which any could possibly operate. Theocracy rules from

heaven to earth. This simply means that God tells man what he should do. I don't know why we think this government is so strange and unacceptable. It simply allows the Creator to rule over His creation. Shouldn't God have that right and privilege? Of course!

We Americans tend to think that the only workable and feasible government on earth is democracy, a government by the people and for the people. A government "by the people and for the people" excludes God. While we boast of our democratic rule and try to persuade others to follow it, our democratic rule too often rapes, steals, kills, and destroys. Through democratic rulings in favor of abortion, criminal rights, homosexual rights, and many other minority-controlled interests, the innocent are victimized. Our democratic government often shows partiality to the rich and powerful. We boast of a democratic rule which will allow a presidential candidate to win the popular vote and lose the election. Democracy follows the same pattern as all other governments of men—it allows the minority to rule the majority.

Once again I must emphasize that I prefer the democratic government over all other forms of government created by men, but we must realize that the government of God is far better for our society than any government which men can formulate.

Look at democracy in light of the local church. Where is God in a government “by the people and for the people”? Obviously, He is on the outside hoping someone will allow Him entry. Democracy in the local church is a government that attempts to rule from earth to heaven. Men tell God what He can and cannot do in the very church birthed by Jesus. Instead of the Creator ruling the creature, the creature is trying to rule the Creator. It is time to wake up and give unto God what rightly belongs to Him, the government of the church. It is utterly amazing that finite man would think that he has the capability to rule an infinite God. Yet, regular church members live their lives dictating to God what will be allowed and disallowed in “their” church. Isn’t it pathetic that local churches under democratic rule elect men to protect them from the very God they are supposedly worshipping? Have you ever considered the judgment of these men?

We want God to give to us, but we don’t want God to rule over us. This type of mentality must change! “Administrative boards” and “deacon boards” did not originate in heaven; they were created by men who were afraid to place their trust and confidence in Almighty God. Jesus has called us to represent Him; instead, we want to represent ourselves or our organizations.

God sets in the church one man who is responsible for administering God’s government.

This bishop or messenger of the church must oversee all church activity and keep it in line with God's will and purpose. He is God's messenger to the church, with the responsibility and accountability of executing God's government accurately. He must reveal God's plans and purposes to the church. The vision of the church comes from God. God reveals that vision to the bishop. The bishop must then communicate that vision to the local church, and the local church is responsible for bringing that vision into reality. When this procedure is followed, theocracy is in operation.

I have been using the word "bishop" instead of "pastor" in order to familiarize you with God's governmental structure. Contrary to what many believe, "Pastor" is not an office in the local church; it is a gifted person given to the Body of Christ. "Bishop" is an office rather than a gift. According to I Timothy 3:1, the office of oversight in the local church is that of bishop. The word "bishop" is an interesting word when defined by its Greek definition and origin. The word "bishop" is translated from the Greek word *episkopos*, which is a compound word meaning over (*epi*) and scope (*skopos*). This word was familiar to the Greek sailors in biblical days. The captain of the ship was the one in a physical position over and above the crew; consequently, he could see all the activity below and coordinate it with his commands so that the destination could be reached in the quickest and most effective way. Not only

could he see the crew, but he could also see things the crew could not see; therefore, it was vital that the crew trust his judgment. After all, he was the one who was responsible for carrying out the orders of the ship's owner in the most efficient way.

Like the captain of a ship, the bishop is in a position over and above the congregation. This position does not mean that the bishop is better than those in the congregation. It means that he has been placed by God in a position to oversee all the activity of the church. He must coordinate all the gifts and activities in such a way as to expedite God's mandate for the church most effectively. The bishop of the church must be in constant communication with the Head of the church, Jesus. Otherwise, he will not be able to instruct and guide the church as God desires.

According to the Word of God, the bishop is the resident authority in the local church. The authority of the bishop is delegated to him by the Head of the church, Jesus, not by men. In order to be successful as a man of authority, the bishop must be under authority. We will discuss this authority in more detail in another chapter. Our objective at this point is to show how God's government flows to and in the local church. It flows from Jesus, to the bishop, then to the people.



God's government cannot operate in a local church until Jesus is allowed to be the Head of the church. Once Jesus is recognized and trusted as the Head of the church, He can then be trusted to set the oversight in the church. After all, setting the oversight in the local church is Jesus' responsibility. The bishop of a local church must be appointed by the Holy Spirit, not by men. When men elect or appoint men, problems are inevitable.

I get somewhat amused when I hear of people looking or searching for a "pastor." If the people would allow Jesus to rule the church, they would never have to look for a "pastor" again.

The word "pastor" is placed in quotation marks for the purpose of clarification. According to the Scriptures, "pastor" is not an office. As a matter of fact, the word "pastor" is not even mentioned in the King James Version of the New Testament. The word "pastors" only appears one time in the King James Version of the New Testament, and that passage of scripture is identifying a gift, not a position. Jesus is the only One identified in the King James Version of the New Testament as a "pastor." I cannot find any reference in the Scriptures that teaches or suggests that Jesus had the oversight of a local church. Please don't misunderstand me. I am not overzealous about terminology, but I am concerned about error in the church. This error persists in

the church because of a lack of knowledge of God's Word. It is imperative that we understand God's structure and protocol.

It is vital that we understand church structure from God's perspective. We must not only understand church structure, but also we must follow God's pattern for church structure. The church must do as God told Moses to do concerning the building of the tabernacle: "follow the pattern." The pattern the church must follow is the Word of God. It is imperative for the true churches of God to set their structure according to the Word of God. God's Word must take precedence over the philosophies of men. Always remember that it is the judgment seat of God, not men, before which we must all stand. The verdict rendered at that judgment will be determined by our adherence to the pattern. Regardless of the size of the congregation, the same principle applies. The church must follow the pattern of the Word so that the will of God can be accomplished in the local assembly.

We must realize that the church exists for God, not man. We have become so people-minded that we have forgotten about God. We have become more interested in structuring the church to meet the wishes and demands of the people than we have in structuring the church to meet the standard of God so that God can meet the needs of the people. The church is designed by

God to be an extension of Jesus. The church is actually referred to as the Body of Christ. I realize that the Body of Christ is the universal church, but I also realize that the universal church is made up of local churches. Shouldn't the Body of Jesus do today the same thing that the physical body of Jesus did when He walked on this earth? Jesus was God-minded, not people-minded. Consequently, the people never controlled Jesus; His Father controlled Him. Jesus was the expression of Father God in the earth. The church should be the expression of Jesus in the earth. The church will never express Jesus until it comes under the absolute Lordship of Jesus. When a church submits to the Lordship of Jesus, theocracy will rule in the House of God.

# THEOCRACY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

## Chapter 3

Theocracy is the only form of government that meets the unquestionable approval of Almighty God; therefore, theocracy must be recognized and submitted to by those determined to follow God's will. It is easier to admit and accept theocracy in the universal church than it is to admit and accept theocracy in the local church. Most Christians will readily agree that Jesus should rule over the Body of Christ, but very few of that same group are willing to accept the rule of Jesus in the local church.

Isn't it ironic that we desire God to rule over the enemy, but we refuse to allow Him to rule over His own people? If God indeed is a worthy ruler, we should submit to His government. If anyone is to be ruled by God, certainly it should be His own people. God's rule is designed to help, not hurt us. God's rule is always for our best interest, although it may not seem desirable at the time.

There is an element of theocratic rule in the local assembly that troubles people. The element with which people struggle is the rule of God executed through man. We realize that the

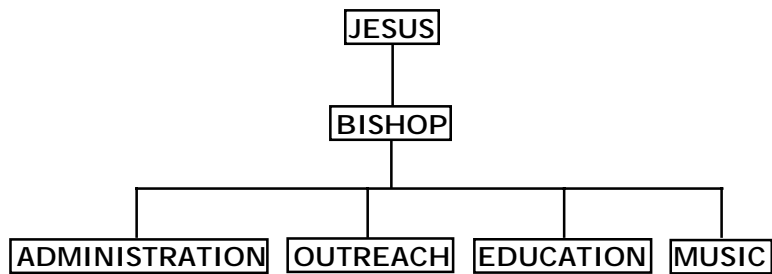
overseer of a local church is a mortal man and that mortal men are not infallible. God, however, is infallible, and He expects us to trust His judgment. God knows the end from the beginning; we don't. God knows why He does what He does. We don't. As a matter of fact, we often get ourselves in trouble because we think we know more than we do.

Let's look briefly at the breakdown of theocratic rule in the local church. Jesus is the Head or Supreme Authority of the local church, or, at least, He should be. Directly under the authority of Jesus is the messenger or bishop of the local church. The bishop is the resident authority of the local church, and he is the overseer of all the ministries and activities involving the church under his authority. Jesus, the Head of the Church, reveals to the bishop, the resident authority of the church, the plans, purposes, and directions necessary to lead the church to the place and ministry God desires for that particular church. The bishop is then responsible for communicating to the church the desires of God concerning that particular church. The bishop is personally responsible for the initiation and execution of those plans. The bishop must also express the disapproval of God whenever the church is violating the Scriptures or going in the wrong direction.

Every ministry and outreach of the local

church must be sanctioned by the bishop of the assembly. All authority in the local church, whether ministry or outreach, is a delegated authority, which can only be granted by the bishop of the assembly. Delegated authority is not an autonomous authority; consequently, it cannot make decisions on matters that have not already been placed within its jurisdiction. Delegated authority does have predetermined boundaries within which it can operate freely.

Theocratic government never relinquishes its authority and power to man. It does delegate authority and power to men according to their position in the church. The following organizational chart should give a clearer understanding of theocratic government in the local church.



Because of limited space, we have only mentioned a few of the departments that may be found in a local church. The number of departments or ministries in a local church is unlimited. The size and ministry of the church will determine

the number of departments and also the types of ministries necessary for that particular church. All departments and ministries must function and operate under the auspices of the church overseer, whether the church is large or small.

Theocratic government requires excellent organization and clear, accurate communication. When these ingredients are missing, theocracy appears as dictatorship. God is not seeking men who will become dictators; He is seeking men who will communicate God's message and methods rather than their own.

Theocratic government in a local assembly is a government that allows God to choose a particular man through whom He may rule. God's rule through man never gives man lordship over anyone, but it does give him authority to govern the people in the local church to which he is assigned.

The ruling of the bishop in a local church is no different from that of a plant superintendent; he must oversee the overall operation and accomplish the desires of the owner. Obviously, Jesus is the owner of the church.

An overseer must not only report **for** his authority, but also he must report **to** his authority; therefore, it is imperative that he carry out the mandates of his authority.

When theocracy rules in the local church, the church will follow the course Jesus has charted for it. The course for the local church is revealed to the bishop who, in turn, takes action to get the church on course and to keep it on course. The procedures necessary to accomplish this task are organization and communication.

The church must be organized in the manner most conducive to fulfilling the will of God. Communicating the actions and procedures for getting on course is vital to the unity, harmony, and cooperation of the assembly. When God speaks to the bishop concerning the church structure and requests certain changes, the bishop should meet with those affected by the changes and communicate the will and purpose of God. This procedure will not make everyone happy, but it will eliminate many potential problems.

It is vital that the church know its purpose or vision. Where there is no vision, or purpose, people are undisciplined. If the vision of the local church has not been revealed unto the people, the assembly will not be capable of uniting and fulfilling its ministry. Communicating the vision is the responsibility of the bishop.

It is vital that the leadership of the local assembly keep the church informed of its position and destination. This is simply good administration.



Good administration must not only manage well, but it must also communicate well.

Good management will identify problem areas and seek the counsel of God for the solution to these problems. Seeking the counsel and wisdom of God must never be misconstrued as passive or as waiting for God to do the job He has called man to do. Management must be trained to act rather than react. One who is trained to act will seldom find himself in a position that requires reaction. God is not looking for reactors; He is looking for those who will act according to His will.

The following method is, in my opinion, the most efficient way to handle church related problems: first, identify the problem; next, go to God for the solution to the problem; finally, carry out God's instructions at His appointed time. This procedure ensures theocracy in the truest sense of the word. When man seeks the counsel of God and carries out the instructions of God, theocracy is in operation.

# ORGANIZATION IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

## Chapter 4

In order for the local church to be successful in its ministry and vision, it must be properly organized. The organization that we are speaking of is not an organization that keeps God out; it is an organization that allows Jesus to have absolute control of the local church. Churches often organize in such a way that God cannot have input into the very church He birthed. Organization must be centered around the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit cannot do whatever He desires to do in the period of time He chooses, the church needs to reorganize. Everything must be done decently and in order, both in the sanctuary and in the church office. The Holy Spirit should never be quenched in either place. God must be allowed to express Himself in every aspect of the church. If God cannot express Himself in the local church, the church has become a "Godless" church.

Most churches have structured and organized according to the world's system. Churches who follow this practice have failed to read, study, and adhere to God's Word concerning church structure; consequently, they have not set their structure according to the Word. Jesus

wants all of His churches organized and structured according to His Word so that His kingdom may be established in the church. We must realize that the kingdom of God is an internal kingdom which must rule inside the church before it can successfully rule outside the church. Remember. The church consists of children of the day. God has designed that Jesus rule over the children of the day, who, in turn, carry that illumination into the world.

The current organizational system used by many churches is patterned after the educational system, which is a kingdom of the world. This system is not only a kingdom of the world, but it is also a perverted system that takes pride in opposing godliness and morality; yet, most churches incorporate this system into their structure. Sunday schools, youth groups, and various other groups in the local church follow the pattern of the educational system, creating classes or activities according to age. This method of structuring classes or groups is not found in the Scriptures. This structural method also presents the task of finding enough teachers to fill the created positions. God never intended for the church to "find" teachers. According to the Word of God, Jesus gave "some teachers" to the church, and God set them in the church. When men "find" teachers to fill positions, they are usurping the authority of God, and they are also presuming to disregard or to add to those teachers

whom God has set in the church. Failures in this type system are inevitable. This unscriptural method brings division to the Body rather than allowing God to unite the Body around His anointed teaching gifts. Also, men are allowed to choose "their own teachers" to fill positions rather than allowing God to set "anointed teachers" within the Body. Another fallacy of "man-appointed teachers" is that literature, opinions, and theories of men are substituted for the anointed message of God. Consequently, people are being taught by incompetent and, often times, unspiritual people. The danger of this method relates back to the "law of Genesis." Everything produces after its own kind. Consequently, ignorance will produce ignorance. Lack of commitment will produce lack of commitment. It is little wonder that we have produced a generation with little commitment to God and gross ignorance concerning the Word and Spirit of God.

Thank God there is a solution to this problem. It is very simple. Do it God's way. Follow the pattern!

God's method of organization is not based upon age, sex, or demand. God's method is very simple: structure the church around the available gifts within the church. Never set a structure and then try to locate personnel to fill the needed positions. Locate the gifts and set the church

structure accordingly. The number of Sunday school classes should not be determined by the various ages; the number of classes must be determined by the number of gifts. Organizing classes without gifts is little more than glorified baby-sitting. Because the anointing is absent when men's methods are given priority over God's ways, entertainment and projects are substituted for anointed teaching. Such activities can never take the place of God's anointing. They are as fruitless as the tree that Jesus cursed in the gospels. They are as deceptive as healthy-looking leaves, but Jesus is looking for fruit. It is time for the church to realize the awesomeness of its assignment. We are commanded in Matthew 28:19 to make disciples. Disciples can only come as a result of competent teachers instructing pupils in the ways and principles of Jesus. We are not to disciple people after an organization or denomination; we are to encourage and instruct people to follow Jesus. Following Jesus includes more than calling oneself a Christian. A true disciple of Jesus will adhere to His instructions and do his best to imitate His actions.

I realize that this method is contrary to the traditional teaching of the church, but I exhort you to search the Scriptures to see if you can find the present-day methods of the average church. Search as you may, you will never find Jesus shunning children or forbidding them to come to Him. On the contrary, He rebuked those who

tried to restrain the children from coming to Him.

Our children need to be subjected to the Spirit of God. It is vital that our children personally come into contact with the Holy Spirit. As a matter of fact, the entire church needs to become aware of the all-wise, all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present God. We must not view children and adolescents as second-rate church citizens. They are just as important to the Lord as the adults; therefore, they must be subjected to the presence of the Lord.

We are not teaching against organized classes; we are emphasizing the importance of the anointing of God upon the teachers who stand before the classes. If a church has only three anointed teachers, there should be only three classes. Do not organize classes just for the sake of organization or desire. This mentality will produce religious people instead of disciples of Jesus. In my experiences in ministry, I have seen very few anointed youth services. I have seen hype, charism, and much entertainment, but very little Holy Spirit inspired activity. Many are being deceived into thinking that emotionalism is the inspiration of God. Emotions can be inspired by things other than the Lord. Never mistake emotionalism for spiritualism.

Another area in the local church that needs much attention is the music department. Why

form a choir if you do not have qualified singers? That is foolish! I believe the "make a joyful noise" syndrome has been grossly abused. Many who use that excuse are certainly not making a joyful noise to God or to men. A choir or ensemble first needs a qualified music leader. Skill alone does not make one a qualified music leader. Leaders, musicians, and singers are gifts given to the Body which are to be subordinate to and cooperative with the oversight of the church. A leader in any capacity within the church must have a heart to the Lord, which will, in turn, produce a cooperative spirit with the other leaders in the church. Music is not to dominate a service, the Holy Spirit is to be the determining factor of a service.

The point we are trying to make applies to all areas of ministry, both inside and outside of the church. Again we emphasize, do not organize beyond the available gifts within the church, and be certain that those gifts are subordinate to the head of the church. Never, under any circumstance, initiate something just for the sake of including people. Also, never begin an activity or ministry just because someone suggests it. Seek the counsel of God! Expand in God's way and in His time. Jesus said that He would build His church. Let Him say when and how He wants it built.

Good administration is vital to the welfare

and growth of the local church. Although a church is not a business, per se, it should certainly put forth as much effort as a business in both planning and implementing the plans. Incorporating the church and setting up a good accounting system for the church will produce credibility in the administration of the church. A church must be governed by a constitution and bylaws that satisfies both God and the government. An acceptable accounting system must also be set up so that integrity in finances will always be apparent, both to those within the local church and to the auditors who represent the state and federal governments.

Staff and employees must be placed in position by God; otherwise, problems are inevitable. As God structures the staff and employment of the church, be certain that each person has been properly trained in the procedures and government of the church before being allowed to function in his/her respective position. The Lord may prompt the overseer to place a particular individual in a particular position; however, he expects the oversight to properly train the individual to function in that position.

Organization must be planned, then implemented. Once an organizational structure has been developed, it should immediately be implemented. Don't try to become too big too fast!



A house is no stronger than its foundation. Proceed with organizing as soon as you have developed the organizational structure for the church, but proceed with caution. Deliberate and efficient organization is far better than fast and haphazard organization. This word is directed to the bishops of the local churches; after all, organization of the local church is the responsibility of the bishop.

Overseers, take the oversight! Stop allowing people the privilege of running God's church! God will hold every overseer of every church accountable for the activity that goes on in the local church for which he is responsible. Let Jesus arise and take full control of His church. You will be amazed at what He can do with the local church when the church submits itself to the kingdom of God.

# CHURCH LEADERSHIP

## Chapter 5

In this chapter we will look at some words commonly used in Christian circles. We will define these terms as the Scriptures teach and place them in their proper scriptural setting.

### BISHOP

Let's begin by taking an in-depth look at the word "bishop."

The word "bishop" is used four times in the King James Version of the Bible. The word "bishops" is used one time in the King James Version of the Bible. *Episkope* (ep-is-kop-ay') is the Greek word which has been translated as "bishop" in I Timothy 3:1 in the King James Version of the Bible. This word actually refers to the office or position of oversight. The office or position of oversight may be desired, but there are certain criteria that must be met before one is eligible for the office. Consequently, bishop is not a gift; this position of authority must be earned. The bishop may be gifted, but the office of bishop must be earned. A gift is given, but a position should be earned. Contrary to the beliefs of some, bishop is not one of the five-fold ministry gifts. Bishop is an office which God has set in the church to oversee its overall operation. Although bishop is

not a gift, and even though the office of bishop may be desired, the Holy Spirit is to set the individual whom God desires in the office of bishop, if I correctly understand Acts 20:28. This method is also consistent with the teaching in I Corinthians 12:18.

The man who desires the office of bishop is actually desiring a work rather than a position. It is vital that the men who are in oversight positions be workers and not glory seekers. Overseeing God's flock requires a great amount of time and effort. The tasks of a bishop are seldom realized by the flock; consequently, much of his work will be unnoticed by the people.

In reality, the leader of every local church is a bishop rather than a pastor. We will discuss this truth in more depth later.

A bishop has a unique task with an awesome responsibility. The bishop must oversee God's heritage as he watches over the souls of men. Whenever there are signs of danger in the church, the bishop must warn the church of the impending danger. He must act as a porter guarding the door to God's fold, thereby protecting the congregation for which he is responsible from the activity of the enemy. He must also be alert to the Spirit of God and allow Him access to the congregation at all times. This task is not as easy as it may sound. There are many good

things which are not God; therefore, the emphasis must be placed upon God, not good. Good people and good things must not take preeminence over God. The timing of God and the will of God are both vital to the life and welfare of the local church.

Not everything that occurs in the name of the Lord is initiated by the Lord; therefore, it is the responsibility of the bishop to close the door to this type activity. Not everyone who says he has a message from the Lord has heard the Lord; consequently, the bishop must be sensitive to the Spirit and prevent these erroneous messages from being presented to the congregation. Because of his responsibility and accountability, the bishop must carry out his duties in the fear of the Lord, not fearing the people.

The bishop must also be aware of any problems that arise in the assembly, and he must approach those problems and handle them in a scriptural manner. Obviously, the bishop must be a man of the Word and one who communicates with God in prayer. Problems do not solve themselves; they must be resolved. Problems are solved through confrontation; however, all confrontations must be with humility and compassion, striving to correct and salvage, and avoiding arguments that lead to destruction.

I Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9 list certain

qualifications that an individual must meet before he is even eligible for the office of bishop. Even the wife of a prospective bishop must meet certain criteria; otherwise, her husband will not qualify for the office of bishop. There are many men overseeing churches who do not meet these qualifications; therefore, they are violating the Scriptures by remaining in the position of oversight.

If I understand the Scriptures correctly, the bishop must be one who has been raised up in the local church. He will be one who knows and shares the God-given vision of the church. We have grossly violated this principle to our own detriment. We would not think of accepting a résumé for the position of deacon, especially a résumé from another state. Yet, we accept this practice as normal procedure for filling the office of bishop. Isn't it time to do things God's way? According to Acts 20:28, The Holy Spirit should set the oversight, not the deacons or congregation. The deacons and congregation should be sensitive to the Spirit and recognize God's choice, but it is not their prerogative to usurp God's authority.

Every bishop must be an elder, but every elder is not a bishop. In this context, elder refers to spiritual maturity rather than age or position. One who is not spiritually mature should not be placed in any position of leadership.

The bishop of the local assembly is responsible for the execution of God's plans and purposes. The bishop is the resident authority ordained by God to direct the local assembly. He is actually the messenger of God to the local church. He is responsible for instructing and leading the local church in the ways of the Lord. The bishop must convey to the local assembly the current will of God. He can only accomplish this task by maintaining constant communication with the Head of the Church, Jesus.

According to the Scriptures, the bishop of the local church is governed by God, not man. I encourage you to read the second and third chapters of the book of Revelation and give special attention to whom God is holding responsible for the activity which is taking place in each particular church.

Revelation 2:1 says, "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write..."

Revelation 2:8 says, "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write..."

Revelation 2:12 says, "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write..."

Revelation 2:18 says, "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write..."

Revelation 3:1 says, "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write..."

Revelation 3:7 says, "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write..."

Revelation 3:14 says, "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write..."

Notice that each of these seven letters is written to the angel (messenger/overseer) of the church, not the church. These messengers are responsible and accountable for the activity occurring in their local assemblies.

Also, read Revelation 1:9-20 and give special attention to the interpretation of the seven golden candlesticks and the seven golden stars.

"The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."  
(Revelation 1:20)

Notice the location of the seven stars. You will find that the seven golden candlesticks are the seven churches, and Jesus is in the midst of the seven churches observing all the activity of the churches. You will also find that the seven stars are the messengers or overseers of the seven

churches. These messengers or overseers are held in the right hand of Jesus, which suggests their accountability to Him and their protection in Him. Their location further indicates the fact that God has delivered them from the people. They are accountable to the Head of the church, not the people.

One who has been given responsibility is accountable to the one who gave the responsibility. Those who have been placed by God as the bishops or overseers of local churches will someday stand before the Righteous Judge and give an account of their stewardship. Judgment of the overseer is not the prerogative of the people. God reserves that judgment for Himself.

God forbid that we be guilty of interfering with the work of the Lord. We must recognize God's ways and God's men and submit to both. It is not our place to judge God's servants; "to their own Master they will stand or fall." May I, at this point, interject this bit of information? The tenure of a bishop is to be determined by God, not man. Scriptural examples of this procedure can be seen with Moses, Aaron, Saul, David, Elijah, and others. The people do not have the right to determine when the man God sets is to be removed or replaced; that decision belongs to Lord.

This section addressing "bishop" is founded upon scriptural fact concerning the leader of the



local church. I trust that you will search the Scriptures so that you, too, may see the will and purpose of God concerning church leadership and may, by all means, obey the Word of God. We will conclude this segment by emphasizing the fact that the leader of any and every local church is, in fact, the bishop or overseer rather than pastor. We must always remember that "bishop" is an office and "pastor" is a gift. Never confuse the two! One can actually oversee a church and not be gifted as pastor.

Remember! Bishop refers to an office of oversight and authority.

#### PASTOR

Ironically, the word "pastor" is not mentioned in the New Testament (King James Version). As a matter of fact, the word "pastor" is used only one time in the entire Bible (King James Version). The word "pastors" is mentioned only one time in the New Testament (King James Version). The word "pastors" is used only eight times in the entire Bible (King James Version). We must remember that the church, as we know it today, did not exist under the Old Covenant, and that the spiritual leaders of that day were called priests and prophets, not pastors. The pastors referred to in the Old Testament appear to be the leaders of the nation, who were also called kings. The Greek word *poimen* (poy-

mane'), which is translated as "pastors" in Ephesians 4:11 (King James Version), literally means shepherd, and it is translated as such the other seventeen times it is used in the New Testament (King James Version). Isaiah 44:28 (King James Version) identifies King Cyrus as a shepherd of the Lord. Isn't it interesting that we have taken the word "pastor" and made it to mean something that God never intended?

Pastor is a gifted person given to the Body of Christ. It is not an office, nor is it to be used as a glorified title. Pastor is one of the five-fold ministry gifts given for the maturing and equipping of the saints. A true pastor is a gifted man who has the attributes of a shepherd. He may indeed oversee a local church, but his gift is not limited to a local setting. Not all overseers are pastors, nor are all pastors overseers. This should be a liberating fact to those who may have fallen into sin or to those who have made mistakes which have disqualified them from being an overseer. We must remember that the gifts and call of God are irrevocable. Gifts are not removed because of mistakes or sin, but an individual may very well be removed from a position because of misconduct. Divorce and remarriage will often hinder one from receiving ministerial credentials, yet the Word of God never addresses this area in regard to a gift. It is time for the church leaders to recognize and utilize the gifts which God has placed in our

midst. I understand that certain positions, such as bishop, have certain criteria, but I also understand that gifts are not earned; they are freely given. Consequently, one cannot qualify for pastor; it is a gift freely given.

God's structure of government in the local church has never changed, but men have changed the governmental structure of the church to satisfy their own desires. The Spirit of God is moving in the true churches which God has ordained, and He is once again bringing the church under the government and structure that God ordained from its very beginning. The distinction between gifts and positions must be seen in order for the gifts and positions to fulfill God's will and purpose. Although the pastor gift may fill the office of bishop, we must understand that the resident authority of the local church is not the pastor gift. The resident authority of the local church is the bishop. Remember! Bishop is an office of authority. Pastor is a gifted person given to the Body of Christ.

#### ELDER

Another fallacy seen in many local churches is elder as position or office. Elder, by definition, is one who is senior or older; however, an elder in the local church is not necessarily one who is old in age, but one who is experienced and knowledgeable in the ways of God and the Word of God.

An elder is one who influences and leads people by example and character. Although "elder" is not a distinct office in the church, every position of leadership should be filled by an elder. All deacons and bishops should be elders, but not all elders are bishops and deacons. In Titus 1:5, Paul instructed Titus to ordain elders in every city. He did not say ordain men to be elders; he said ordain elders. According to Titus 1:7, the elders were to be ordained as bishops. Peter and John both identified themselves as elders, but I do not see either of them serving as deacon or overseeing a local church. I do realize that the Bible uses the word "elder" several times when referring to the oversight of the church, but I also understand that spiritual maturity is being referred to rather than position or office. Elder is the status of an individual. When one is referred to as an elder, his spiritual status is being recognized as mature and knowledgeable. Elder is what one is as a result of experience and spiritual maturity.

## DEACON

Deacon may very well be the most misunderstood word in the local church. A deacon, by definition, is a servant. Although many local churches have a structured office of deacon or a board of deacons, scripturally these offices or boards do not exist. I Timothy 3:10 and I Timothy 3:13 (King James Version) use the phrase "office of a deacon," but if one would take the time to look up the definition of that phrase, he would

find that those four words are actually translated from the Greek word *diakoneo* (dee-ak-on-eh'-o), which means "to be an attendant." It carries the connotation of hosting or acting as a waiter. By definition and practical application, a deacon is one who serves others. In reality, deacon is a position of service rather than an office of authority or oversight. A deacon serves under the office of oversight; therefore, he must be subordinate to the bishop.

Another interesting thing about deacons is the fact that they did not exist when the church was first formed. The first suggestion of deacons, in relation to a position, is found in the sixth chapter of Acts. Deacons were selected because a benevolence need arose. Certain widows were neglected in the daily distribution of food. Consequently, the apostles suggested that seven men, who would faithfully administer proper benevolence to these widows, be selected. These seven men had to meet the stipulated requirements of the apostles. They had to be men of honest report who were full of the Holy Spirit and full of wisdom. The phrase "honest report" is translated from the Greek word *martureo* (mar-too-reh'-o), which means "to be witness." The message conveyed in this phrase is that these men had to be respected in the community. Their personal witness among the people had to be good. I cannot find any scriptural evidence that deacons served in any other capacity than

that of benevolence. The phrase "this business," as recorded in Acts 6:3, refers to the administration of benevolence. The word business was translated from the Greek word *chreia* (khri'-ah), which means "employment." By implication it may mean "occasion, demand, requirement, or destitution." The context defines the business to which they are referring; it was distributing food to the neglected widows.

I am aware that both Philip and Stephen were deacons who excelled in other ministries, but neither of these men are scripturally recognized as holding positions of authority. We do see I Timothy 3:13 fulfilled in their behalf, especially with Philip. Both men proved themselves worthy of advancement.

In the modern-day church, it has become common practice for the deacons to become so involved in the authoritative affairs of the local church that they fail to do the very thing that they were ordained to do, which is serving or administering benevolence. There seem to be very few authentic deacons functioning in the position of deacon in the local churches. Deacons were not ordained by God to protect the congregation from the overseer of the church, nor were they chosen to select the overseer of the church. Deacons were ordained to aid and assist the oversight so that the ministry of the gospel could go forth undistracted. When and how

deacons arose to such great prominence in the local church is unknown to me. These positional violations must be recognized and rectified. Deacons should never be allowed to run the church, or act as a liaison between the congregation and oversight. Representation of rebellion is never acceptable. Deacons should operate under the auspices of the oversight assisting him in ministry as he communicates the need.

Scripturally, an individual must qualify for the position of deacon. I Timothy 3:8-13 gives the qualifications that each prospective deacon must meet. I believe that Acts 6:3 must also be incorporated in the qualifications of deacon. The deacon's wife must also meet certain qualifications; otherwise, her husband will be disqualified from the position of deacon.

Like bishop, deacon is more than a title; a deacon is an individual who renders service in the name of the Lord. Consequently, he must be a man of God indeed. A deacon can be a tremendous asset to the church when he functions according to the Scriptures; conversely, he can be a problem for the church if he violates the Scriptures.

The term "board of deacons" is not mentioned in the Bible, neither is it suggested. The seven were not chosen to meet and discuss business; they were chosen to administer benevolence

to the widows of the church. Acting independent of the oversight is never acceptable.

I cannot find any passage in the Scriptures that suggests authority or oversight in the local church being given to the deacons. Their realm of authority was limited to benevolence. They certainly were not given any spiritual oversight over the congregation or bishop. Under no circumstance should deacons be allowed to rule over the church or the bishop of the church. Scripturally, no deacon has this prerogative.

No wonder churches are having so many problems. They are violating the Scriptures by their structure.

Remember! Deacon is a position of service; it is not an office of authority or oversight.

## SUMMARY

I think it would be beneficial at this time to review the four words commonly used in the local church circles.

**Bishop** is an overseer acting as God's messenger to the local church to which he has been assigned. Bishop is an office that must be earned; it is not a gift that is given. It is extremely important that the Holy Spirit set the bishops in the local churches rather than allowing



men to elect them. Acts 20:28 teaches this principle.

**Pastor** is a gifted person given to the Body of Christ for the purpose of maturing and equipping the saints. Pastor is neither an office nor a position. Pastor is what one is by virtue of gift.

**Elder** is the spiritual status of an individual. Elder is not an office or position. Everyone in a leadership position must be an elder, but every elder does not necessarily hold a leadership position.

**Deacon** is neither an office nor gift; it is a position of service. Not all servants occupy the position of deacon, but every deacon must be a servant. The scriptural authority of a deacon is limited to administering benevolence. Deacons do not have the right or privilege of ruling or overseeing a church.

Neither bishop, pastor, elder, nor deacon is a certified title; these words merely identify an individual by office, gift, status, or position. Bishop refers to office; pastor refers to gift; elder refers to spiritual status; and deacon refers to position.

Church leadership, according to the Scriptures, is very basic and very simple. The bishop

is to oversee all activities of the local church, and he must convey God's message to that church. Elders are spiritually mature people who lead by example, regardless of their position. Deacons are to administer benevolence and leave the oversight of the church to the bishop. Deacons should never attempt to govern the church, nor should they ever attempt to usurp the authority of the bishop. Pastor is a gifted person rather than an office or position; consequently, pastor is not included in the organizational structure of the local church.

Apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher are all gifted people given to the Body of Christ. The church should welcome and utilize these gifts. It is the bishop's responsibility to subject the local church to these equipping ministry gifts. Contrary to what some believe, all of these gifts are still in operation today. According to Ephesians 4:11-13, the purpose of the five-fold ministry is to completely furnish or equip the saints to do the work of the ministry, which will edify (structure and strengthen) the Body of Christ. The longevity of the five-fold ministry is until we all become unified in the faith, have a full recognition of the Son of God, and mature to the standard set by Jesus the Christ.

There are many capacities of leadership in the local church. We have looked only at the main structure of the local church. Anyone who is

responsible for a group or an organization is, obviously, a leader. These leaders function in a delegated authority, which we will discuss later.

God is very much concerned about church structure, and He wants qualified personnel filling the various leadership positions in the church. I find it interesting that the Scriptures require the bishops, deacons, and their wives to meet certain criteria, yet I see no mention of qualifications for the men or their wives who operate in the five-fold ministry. Two things can be learned from this observation. First, gifts cannot be earned. Consequently, qualifications are not placed upon gifts. Second, God wants leadership in the local church that is above reproach so that the structure of the church is sound. Sound leadership sets forth an excellent example for the congregation to follow.

# AUTHORITY

## Chapter 6

Before we take a close look at authority, we must first distinguish between authority as our inheritance and authority as an appointment. Every born-again believer has been given authority over the devil. This authority is part of our inheritance in Jesus. Just as healing, salvation, the Holy Spirit, and prosperity are our rightful inheritance, so is authority over the devil. But, we must not confuse authority over the devil with the God-ordained authority in the local church. The God-ordained authority in a local church cannot be inherited; it comes by divine appointment. Spiritual authority to lead and direct the saints is appointed by God and God alone. The authority which we will be discussing in this book is God-ordained authority in the local church.

Although authority is not always welcome in the local church, it is mandatory. Without God-ordained authority, the will and purpose of God could never be accomplished. God-ordained authority is certainly in the best interest of both the local church and the individual believer. Let's look at authority from a biblical perspective. We will begin by defining authority through literal definition. Then, we will look at authority through principle, as the Word of God teaches.

*Webster's Dictionary* defines authority as follows: the power or right to act or command; dominion; jurisdiction; a person vested with power to act or command; one deserving of credit, to whom appeal or reference can be made.

*Exousia* is the predominant Greek word which is translated as "authority" in the New Testament (King James Version). This word means privilege in relation to the freedom to exercise one's mental or physical powers.

From these definitions, we can easily see that authority refers to rule and power. It is vital that we recognize God-ordained authority as an authority that carries out the mandates of God. The church must realize that authority is not set in the church to threaten those who seek to do the will of God. The authority of the church is set there for the purpose of suppressing and disallowing activity contrary to the will of God; consequently, God-ordained authority is an asset to every local church.

There are two types of authority that operate inside the local church: direct authority and indirect authority. It is imperative that we understand these authorities. Both of these authorities are legitimate, but they differ somewhat in operation. Direct authority is an authority that has the power to set precedence. Delegated authority is a representative authority, which is

responsible for carrying out the desires of direct authority. Let's look at these two authorities in the church so that we can see their function and operation.

Although the bishop of the local church represents Jesus Christ to the church, he must be recognized as the resident authority in the church, which is a direct authority. From heaven's perspective, the bishop is a delegated authority; from the people's perspective, the bishop is a direct authority. The bishop is responsible for carrying out God's plans and purposes for the local church; consequently, the bishop must set precedence for the local church. Generally speaking, people do not recognize the overseer of the local church as God's ordained authority. People seem to have great difficulty in accepting men as representatives of God; therefore, they fail to receive instruction and correction from God. Yet, God has not given up, nor has He relinquished His control of the local church. In reality, God is slowly, but surely, gaining control of the churches which He ordained. God's direct authority in the local church is once again being established. His authority will operate through the man He sets as overseer.

The thought of the bishop having authority and power in the local church frightens many people. They feel threatened and view the position of bishop as a dictatorship. May I once again

remind you that God-ordained authority does not threaten those who desire the will and purpose of God to be accomplished. Dictators originate from men; bishops, in the true sense of the word, originate from God. God-ordained bishops represent the rule of God in the local church. One who is threatened by the rule of God has a spiritual problem. His heart is not right toward God. One who does not want to submit to Jesus, Who is the Head of the Church, is seeking to fulfill his own agenda.

We have already established the fact that bishop is a direct authority who is accountable to Jesus for his actions. We also understand that the bishop has the oversight of all activities and ministries in the local church. There is no way for one man to take care of everything in the local church; consequently, he must recognize qualified people in the church and delegate certain areas of responsibility to them. This procedure is the foundation of delegated authority. It is imperative that a delegated authority understand his responsibilities. He must also know where his authority starts and ends. Every delegated authority must operate in predetermined parameters. If these guidelines are not followed, confusion and problems will occur. The one who delegates authority must trust the one to whom authority has been delegated. Once authority has been delegated, the individual must be allowed to do his task without feeling that he is under constant surveillance. One who cannot be trusted should

not be placed in a position of authority. The direct authority should convey to the delegated authority his desires or expectations in detail. Never make the delegated authority guess or attempt to interpret vague instructions. Communicate clearly and explicitly!

Once the communication of responsibility and authority has been conveyed, the delegated authority must be allowed to think for himself. It is not necessary for the delegated authority to give a detailed description of his actions, neither should he be expected to do so. However, it is vital for the delegated authority to give a summary of his actions. "Headlines" must be received from every delegated authority, but details are irrelevant as long as the tasks are being efficiently completed. Following this procedure will allow the direct authority to focus his attention upon the management of the overall operation. Effective management is dependent upon good communication among the authorities.

Every leader in the local church is, to some degree, a delegated authority. It is apparent that some will have more authority than others. It is important for each of these leaders to know his responsibilities and his realm of authority. Never allow an overlap in authority. An overlap will give two people authority in the same area, which inevitably leads to trouble. Be certain that every staff member and employee has a written



description of his responsibilities and realm of authority. This statement follows a biblical principle found in the writings of Moses.

Exodus 18:13-26 and Numbers 11:14-26 illustrate the biblical principle for delegated authority. Chapters 3 and 4 of Numbers illustrate the biblical principle for giving a written job description to the delegated authorities. There are many valuable lessons the church can learn from the history of the Israelites. These lessons contain principles that are hidden for the church. Church leaders must read and study the Old Testament, discovering these principles and conveying them for the benefit of the church. There are many similarities between the local church and the tabernacle. There are also many similarities between the congregation of the local church and the Israelites.

Exodus 18:13-26 gives an excellent example of direct and delegated authority. You will find in this passage of scripture that Moses had more to do than one man could handle. His father-in-law, Jethro, observed the situation and gave counsel unto Moses. Jethro observed that this method of leadership was exhausting both Moses and the people. His recommendation was very simple: delegate authority. Jethro did not encourage Moses to disobey God. He actually encouraged Moses to present his counsel to God, and then follow God's instructions. Jethro advised Moses

to teach the people the Word of God, then appoint qualified men to leadership positions. These men would have the responsibility of taking care of the smaller concerns of the people. The concerns too difficult for these men were to be referred to Moses. Moses followed the counsel of his father-in-law and appointed leaders over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. One can easily see the variation of responsibility and authority between the leaders of thousands and tens. The thousands were directly responsible to Moses; the hundreds were directly responsible to the thousands; the fifties were directly responsible to the hundreds; and the tens were directly responsible to the fifties. Moses had the oversight of all these authorities, but using a chain of command made his job much easier. Both Moses and the people benefited from this organization of authority.

The task of those men appointed by Moses was to solve problems by teaching people the Word of God. All authorities should carry out their duties according to this principle. At no time were any of these leaders given the right or privilege to judge according to their own standards. It was mandatory that they use God's standard, which is His Word. Those who did not know the Word of God concerning certain situations referred their subject to a higher authority. Evidently, this system worked well for Moses. I have not found in the Scriptures any record of complaint or failure in regard to this

system of management. I believe this system of management would be just as effective in the local church as it was for Moses. God's system is always successful! This system does not give any leader the right to act independently of the oversight; the delegated authority is actually representing and carry out the desires of the oversight.

Now let's take a brief look at the delegation and job description of the tribe of Levi, who was responsible for the worship and maintenance of the tabernacle. Levi had three sons, Kohath, Merari, and Gershon. Each of the families of these three men was responsible for certain areas of the tabernacle. The family of the Kohathites was responsible for transporting the holy things of the tabernacle. The family of the Merarites was responsible for the framework of the tabernacle. The family of the Gershonites was responsible for the coverings of the tabernacle. Each of these three families was given explicit instructions concerning its responsibilities. Their job description also set the parameters of their authority. For instance, the Kohathites' authority was limited to the transportation of the holy things. The Merarites' authority was limited to the structure or physical framework of the tabernacle. The Gershonites' authority was limited to the coverings of the tabernacle. Out of the family of the Kohathites, God selected Moses as the overseer of the nation

and Aaron as the overseer of the tabernacle. Aaron and his family were responsible for the total tabernacle, but delegated authority assisted them in fulfilling their task. Neither of these families had the right or privilege of doing any duty other than that which was assigned to them. Violation of responsibility or authority could have cost any one of these his life. We will further discuss this matter later.

The only direct authority in the local church is the bishop. There should be many delegated authorities in the local church. The direct authority in the local church is responsible for directing the church according to the will and purpose of God. The delegated authority in the local church is responsible for directing his area of authority according to the will and purpose of his immediate authority. When all authorities fulfill their assignments according to the instructions given them by their respective authority, the will and purpose of God will be accomplished in the local church.

Positions of authority must not be questioned and challenged, but it is permissible and advisable to ask the authority questions. The only one authorized to bring the authority into question is the one who delegated the authority. Jesus is the only One who has the right to bring the bishop into question and require accountability. This questioning may be done directly, or

God may choose to speak to an individual to address the matter. Notice that I said **God** may speak to an individual, but that person had better be sure God spoke before he attempts to correct a servant of the Lord.

Those under the authority of the bishop are responsible to the bishop, and they must be accountable to him. Those under delegated authority are responsible to the authority directly over them, and they must be accountable to that authority. If these guidelines were followed, very few problems would arise within the local church.

It is imperative that this order of authority be organized and understood; otherwise, our efforts will be futile. We must be certain that each of us knows "the authority" over us and the authority which has been given unto us. In order for our authority to be effective, we must be under authority. Not only are we to understand authority, but we must also respect authority. Right, wrong, or indifferent, authority is still authority. If "the authority" is in error, his authority must deal with the error.

We must not interfere with positions of authority, nor should we ever attempt to usurp authority. Authority must be submitted to and followed unless it attempts to lead one away from God. God's authority always supersedes man's authority.

Authority is ordained by God, and it must give an account to God. Therefore, we should submit to “the authority” as though we were submitting to God. Korah failed in this area, and it cost him his life.

In chapter sixteen of the book of Numbers, we find that Korah was a Kohathite who had the privilege of carrying the holy things of the tabernacle. Korah was not content doing the job God had ordained him to do. He challenged the authority of Moses and Aaron to his own detriment. You should read the full account of Korah’s rebellion against God’s ordained authority. Look at what he did in relation to God-ordained authority and what God did because of his rebellion. Korah influenced others to join him in the rebellion, hoping he could overthrow the authority appointed by God. Korah’s rebellion resulted in the judgment of God falling upon him and also upon those who followed his counsel. Both Korah and his followers were destroyed.

Those in the local church who are discontent with God’s ordained authority should read this passage of scripture and realize the consequence of rebelling against God’s appointed authority. God’s judgment may not be as immediate and dramatic as it was with Korah, but you can be certain that God will judge those who rebel against His authority.

Attempting to usurp God's ordained authority is not only foolish, but it is also very dangerous.

Let's allow God to be God and authority to be authority, and let's be true servants of the Lord who are diligent in the work of the Lord.

The sooner we learn that authority is a good thing ordained by God, the better off we will be. One who resents or rebels against God-ordained authority has an agenda opposed to the will of God and is in rebellion against God.

Organization and communication are vital among authorities. We will discuss this area in the next chapter.

# ORGANIZATION AND COMMUNICATION

## Chapter 7

Organization and communication are vital to the local church. These two elements must be implemented in the local church in order for the church to fulfill its ministry successfully. Neither organization nor communication will stand alone. They must become interdependent. Organization and communication are not unscriptural, nor do they hinder the move of the Spirit when they are properly implemented. Organization and communication are healthy ingredients for every church and ministry. God is very organized, and He communicates very well. He expects His people to follow His pattern, imitating His organization and communication in their personal lives and ministries, as well as in the life and ministry of the local church.

### ORGANIZATION

According to *Webster's Dictionary*, "organize" is defined as follows: to provide with an organic structure; to systematize; to arrange; establish; institute; bring into being.



Organization is setting a predetermined structure and abiding by it.

I do not know anyone who is more organized than God. Creation is one of the most systematic events man will ever see or experience. God knew what He wanted, and He followed a predetermined procedure to bring His desire into existence in a very orderly fashion. God does everything decently and in order, and He expects His children to do the same. In the beginning, God brought something into existence that never before existed, then He set in order the thing that He created. God spoke to what He had created and told it how He wanted it to be. He communicated with His creation. I believe that we can glean spiritual principles from the account of creation—one of these principles being setting order to the things we bring into existence.

When God delivered the Israelites from Egypt, He did not deliver them in a haphazard manner. He knew where He wanted them to go, and He also knew the best route for them to take. He appointed the leader of the new nation while the children of Israel were still in captivity. God also provided Israel with a government which contained much more than ten commandments. The constitution of the nation of Israel was formulated by God and delivered by the hand of Moses. It is quite apparent that God believes in good planning and excellent preparation. God

determined what He wanted before He spoke to others about His plan, then He communicated His plan to those whom He had chosen. Shouldn't we follow His example? The oversight should get God's plan for the church, then he must communicate that plan to those who play a role in making the plan come into fruition.

If you were to study the biblical history of Israel, you would find that everything God commanded the Israelites to do had already been planned and set in order. Consequently, Israel did not leave Egypt in a state of panic. They left Egypt in an orderly fashion. God led them in a direction that was undesirable to the flesh, but it proved to be the avenue of defeat for Israel's enemy, Egypt. Overseers must follow this pattern. They should have an organized plan for taking the church where the Lord wants it to go. We must learn to abandon natural thinking and listen to the what the Spirit is saying.

Organizational structure is often undesirable to the flesh, but it is an excellent tool for keeping the enemy out of the camp. It is also an excellent tool for defeating the enemy and driving him out of the church.

Organizational structure assists in setting and attaining goals. It is evident that one person cannot effectively handle every detail of a large organization. It is, therefore, imperative that

one organize in such a manner that the delegates representing the head of the organization can effectively carry out the intents and desires of the organization in the most efficient way. One must not wait for the organization to get big before planning and organizing. Begin with organization and always remain organized. One who sets a good organizational structure will allow plenty of room for growth and diversity.

The nation of Israel provides an excellent example of organization for the purpose of attaining goals. The Promised Land was possessed in a very orderly fashion. Israel did not go into the Promised Land and overwhelm the enemy. They took the land a city at a time. Every city was defeated in the same manner. Their plans had to be specific, not general. The nation of Israel was divided into twelve tribes. Each tribe had a distinctive role to play in possessing the land. Each tribe had a leader who was subordinate to Moses. Each tribal leader represented his tribe to Moses. The tribes united together for a common cause, which was the possession of the Promised Land. They set up camp and broke camp in rank. They went to battle in a pre-determined way. Their methods of movement, encampment, and warfare were predetermined by God. The organization of Israel proved to be detrimental to the enemy. The disorganization of Israel proved to be detrimental to Israel. The church should learn from Israel's example.

We can further see the organization of God through the ministry of Jesus. A study of the gospels will reveal valuable information concerning organization. Jesus began His ministry by selecting twelve men whom He personally trained. These men did little more than serve Him at the beginning, but later they became valuable delegates for Jesus. Jesus used these twelve men when He fed the multitudes. He first commanded His disciples to seat the multitudes in companies on the ground. After the multitudes were organized, they were fed in an orderly manner by the disciples. When Jesus sent the twelve out to preach the kingdom of God, He sent them out with a clear vision of what they were to do. He also made their destination very clear. Jesus was and still is very systematic, but we must not interpret systematic as boring or predictable. God is a God of organization, but He is also a God of infinite variety and diversity.

It was possible for all of the prophecies concerning the Messiah to be given because of the organization of God. God laid out the entire redemption plan for mankind long before it was needed. Even the future plans of God have already been recorded in His Word. If God is so intent on organization, shouldn't the sons of God follow their Father's example?

The Church of Jesus Christ must organize itself according to the teachings and principles of

the Scripture!

What do we mean when we say organize the local church? Some would argue that it is organized. The organization that we are speaking of is organization according to the Word of God rather than organization according to the will of men. If men organize in any way other than that which the Scriptures teach, they will actually hinder the work of the Lord. The church must go where God wants it to go, not where men want it to go.

There are many factors involved in organizing a local church. Both God and the government have to be satisfied with the structural setup of a local church. A church must operate according to the Scriptures and, at the same time, it must also meet the stipulated requirements of the Internal Revenue Service. The church has to be certified, both with the state and federal governments. This facet of organization requires directors and a constitution and bylaws which will govern the operation of the church. This structure must be prayerfully considered. I am convinced that fewer problems would arise in the local church if we would allow God to direct us in the selection of directors and also in the formulation of the government. Remember that it is God's responsibility to set the oversight, not man's.

The structure of the church will determine

how far the church can feasibly go in fulfilling the will and purpose of God. The structure of the church must be theocratic in nature. This statement means that God must control all ministries, outreaches, and activities of the local church. All leaders must be appointed by God rather than elected by men. The only possible way that this appointment can take place is through prayer and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. God's method of selection is not determined by a majority vote; yet, according to the state and federal governments, the majority vote of the Board of Directors rules. Therefore, it is necessary for the majority of the Board of Directors to be in agreement with God in order for God's will to be accomplished. It is absolutely imperative that the Board of Directors be made up of men who love God more than anything in the world. They must be men who are not intimidated by the thoughts and actions of others. They must be men who are motivated by the Spirit of God, and cannot be influenced by money, prestige, or power.

Once the physical structure of the organization has been set, the integral structure must be organized and established. We will attempt to detail this area for the sake of understanding.

According to the state of North Carolina, a non-profit organization must maintain a Board of Directors. These directors are responsible to

the state and federal governments for the operation of the organization. The majority of these directors should not be blood-related. Out of these directors, a President, a Secretary and Treasurer, and Trustees are appointed. The Board of Directors has the option of appointing other officers if it so desires. The Board of Directors is the basic structure of the organization, naturally speaking.

In addition to the basic structure of the organization, an organizational chart of the local church must be formulated. I believe many problems can be stopped before they start through the utilization of an organizational chart. (The organizational chart on page thirty may be used as a guideline.) This chart should not only stipulate the authority and chain of command for the church as a whole, but it should also stipulate the authority and chain of command for each department of the local church.

There is another facet of organization which is the absolute heartbeat of the church. God's government and the spiritual structure of the local church are the most critical parts of church structure. God's government sets Jesus as the Head of the Church. Jesus is not only the Head of the Universal Church, but He is also the Head of every local church which exists for God.

Directly under and accountable to Jesus is

the bishop of the local church, who has the responsibility of overseeing all the activity of the local church. This office is generally referred to as "Pastor." The bishop of the church is responsible for executing the will of God in the local church. The bishop is also responsible for properly organizing the structure of the church. He is the highest authority in the local church, and his accountability is to Jesus, not to men. (He is accountable to local, state, and federal agencies.) He must observe and evaluate the needs of the church in light of the vision of the church, and he must then meet those needs, relying upon the Holy Spirit for guidance and direction.

The bishop is responsible for placing the right people in the right positions so that the church structure will be strong and effective. The bishop is God's instrument for setting the gifts of the local church in their proper positions. Not only is he responsible for setting the gifts, but also he must organize and manage the gifts in such a way as to allow them to flow together and operate to full capacity. As the direct authority, he must delegate the proper authority to its respective position. It is imperative that each leader know and understand his position and authority in the local church. I personally believe that the most effective way for each one to have this knowledge is through a written job description that sets the parameters of tasks and authority. Following this procedure can eliminate much



confusion and misunderstanding.

Chapter four of Numbers provides a very good illustration of this method. The tabernacle, which relates to the local church, was moved and maintained in a systematic way. Violation of this method could have resulted in the death of the violator. Levi had three sons, Gershon, Merari, and Kohath. The families of these three men were responsible for the setting up, maintenance, and movement of the tabernacle. Each family was assigned a specific task. Moses, Aaron, and the sons of Aaron were members of the Kohath family, but a special anointing rested upon them and set them apart from the rest of the Levites. Only the family of Aaron qualified for the "High Priest" and priests positions. Aaron and his sons were the only ones allowed to see the holy things of the tabernacle. Although they were allowed to see and cover the holy things, they had to follow a certain procedure given to Moses by God. This procedure is found in Numbers 4:1-15. Violating this protocol could cost them their lives.

The Kohathites were responsible for carrying the holy things, but they, too, had to follow a certain procedure. Numbers 3:31 and Numbers 4:15-20 give a job description for the Kohathites. There are other documentations in the Scriptures that give even more detail concerning the duties of the Kohathites.

The family of the Gershonites was responsible for the tabernacle coverings, curtains, and other accessories pertaining to the tabernacle of the congregation. The job description for the Gershonites is given in Numbers 4:24-26. They, too, had to follow proper protocol.

The families of Merari were responsible for the structure of the tabernacle. Their job description is given in Numbers 4:35-37. The framework was to be assembled in a predetermined way. No member of the tribe of Levi had the option of doing his own thing. The setup, breakdown, and movement of the tabernacle had to be done according to God's instructions by the people who were assigned to the specific duties.

At this point, allow me to make an observation. There was a tabernacle (outer court) for the general public which was accessible to the congregation of Israel, but the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies were off-limits to the congregation. I believe that there is a valuable lesson to be learned here. There are certain areas of service in the local church into which the congregation is forbidden to go. Only the men chosen by God should fill these positions and offices. Those who choose to violate these areas will sooner or later suffer the consequences of their actions. King Uzzah should serve as an example to anyone contemplating violating God's protocol. (II Chronicles 26:16-21)

Although these descriptions are very basic in this setting, they convey two spiritual principles that should always be followed. These principles are organization and communication. It is imperative that the local church be organized, both physically and spiritually. The physical and spiritual structure of the church must be sound and complete.

Organization and communication must be seen as working partners. Organization alone is insufficient. Organization must be communicated, otherwise it will prove ineffective. The Scriptures, in practice, emphasize the importance of both organization and communication.

Another illustration of organization and communication is found in the book of Exodus. In Exodus 25:9, we find that God showed the pattern of the tabernacle to Moses. Moses was given a very vivid view of exactly what God wanted, and God commanded him to follow the pattern explicitly. The revelation of the tabernacle and all that pertained to it was given to the God-appointed leader rather than the congregation or the craftsmen. Moses then had the task of conveying God's desire to the workers involved in the building of the tabernacle. It was not the workers' prerogative to argue with the pattern. Their responsibility was to follow the instructions of God which were conveyed by Moses, God's appointed leader.

We must realize that God's principles do not change. He still reveals His will and purpose to the overseer, who is responsible for conveying the will and purpose of God to the congregation, or those involved in fulfilling the purpose. Neither the congregation or an appointed board has the right or privilege to change the will and purpose of God for the local church. They do have the opportunity to become involved in the work of the Lord under God's ordained leadership.

We must do the Lord's work, but we must be certain that we do not deviate from the pattern! The pattern that the local church must follow is the Word of God. We must place more emphasis upon the Word of God than we do upon the methods and procedures of denominations or traditions. We must also be sensitive to the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is our Teacher and Guide. He will instruct us and lead us in the way the Lord wants us to go.

We must always realize that God chooses specific people for specific tasks. We must agree with God's choice and submit ourselves to the God-ordained positions and authority. King Uzziah violated this principle and attempted to carry out the duties of the priests. You will find in II Chronicles 26:16-21 God's disapproval of Uzziah's actions and God's judgment upon Uzziah for failing to follow the organization and structure of God.

There is much to be said concerning organization and structure. I encourage you to read Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy and take special notice of the organization and orderliness in which the nation of Israel functioned. The encampment and movement of the people had to follow God's organizational layout. This principle applies to the local church as well. The church must also camp and move according to the plans and methods of God. We must camp where the Spirit leads, and we must move when the Spirit leads. Too many churches have settled down upon a particular move of God, refusing to go forward to the next move of God. We must organize ourselves around the Word of God, but we must also realize that God's Spirit has a vital role to play in the ministry and activity of the local church.

### COMMUNICATION

*Webster's Dictionary* defines "communication" as follows: the act of imparting, conferring, or delivering, from one to another; intercourse by words, letters, or messages; interchange of thoughts or opinions, by conference or other means.

Good communication eliminates poor guessing. We must not expect people to read our minds; after all, we cannot read the minds of others. When communication is scarce, problems

are plentiful. Consequently, the way to eliminate problems is to practice good communication. We must always remember that it is not what we say that counts; it is the interpretation of what we say that is so important. Effective communication is an exchange. It involves a transmitter and a receiver. The receiver's role is listening and interpreting. The responsibility of the transmitter is to make certain that the receiver has a clear understanding of what was said as well as an understanding of what was meant by what was said. We must never assume that people understand everything we say. Assumption has mothered many problems.

Communicate! Communicate! Communicate!

Working with staff in a local church can sometimes be frustrating for both you and the staff member, especially if neither is certain of the other's intent. Too often we become so busy or preoccupied with other involvements that we fail to clearly state our intentions. It is a good practice to have the person with whom you are communicating to repeat to you what you have requested or conveyed. As this exchange occurs, listen to what the person is saying rather than to what you have said. By following this procedure, you can eliminate problems before they arise.

Job descriptions aid and assist in com-

munication where duties and authority are concerned. One who does not know his responsibilities cannot be expected to fulfill them. It isn't fair to expect someone to fill his position adequately if he hasn't been properly informed concerning his position. One who knows his duties and understands his authority is without excuse if either of those areas is violated. In such cases, necessary corrective action can be taken with a clear conscience. Allowing a person to usurp authority or to neglect duties will create more problems in the church or ministry; therefore, the person must be confronted and the problem rectified.

It seems that we are living in a day when people want to do the least amount of work for the greatest amount of pay or recognition. Consequently, people often comment, "that is not my job." Good communication can challenge this statement and place the responsibility where it belongs. In the case of paid staff, a job description that details their duties and authority parameters must be presented to the staff members. After reading their job descriptions, each staff member should be required to sign a form that states that he has read, understands, and agrees with the job description as it is written. It is imperative that each staff member know who his authority is and over whom or what he has authority. This information will prevent people from making decisions or exercising authority in areas outside

their jurisdiction.

One who understands his duties and authority is more apt to get along with other authorities in the church. I believe this fact applies to every appointed office and to every hired employee. Be certain that no one's responsibility exceeds his authority. Responsibility and authority must always remain balanced. Good communication will assist in this area.

It is vital that the bishop of the church constantly keep the vision of the local church before the people. If you want people to go in the direction that you are going, you must tell them where you are going. Where you are going and the direction you are going must be conveyed to those who are to follow. All leaders should practice this principle. Never expect people to do things just because you tell them to, even if you are the "boss." Actually, the bishop must communicate more to the leaders and staff concerning vision than to the congregation. Hence, it is vital that each leader and staff member carry and convey that vision. If the bishop of the local church effectively conveys the vision of the church to the leaders and staff of the church, and if the leaders and staff of the church effectively convey the vision of the church to those for whom they are responsible, the church will have the fewest amount of problems, thereby attaining its goals more quickly.



I believe we can summarize this area of communication with seven brief points. First, each position must have a job description which gives a clear understanding of both task and authority. Each person must know and understand the authority which has been delegated to him, and he must also know and respect the authority directly over him. Each authority must know where and when his authority starts and ends. Second, a visible pattern of the structure needs to be charted. Set up a detailed organization chart and give a copy of the chart to everyone who is directly affected by it. Third, an effective communication system must be established. Communicate well, communicate on a regular basis, and communicate when the need arises. Fourth, the prevention of error is essential. Never assume! Be certain that people know what you expect, and emphasize to them the necessity of keeping you informed. It is not necessary that the leader know every detail, but it is vital that he know the headlines of all areas under his authority. Fifth, an orderly layout of responsibilities must be maintained. Positions and authorities are like stairsteps—one leads to another. Do not overlap positions and authorities. Overlapping positions and authorities will result in confusion and discontentment. Avoid these things! Sixth, a plan of action and mobilization is required. Know where you are and where you are going. Then, communicate the necessary information to those who are to assist you in getting there. The better

the communication, the better the cooperation. The better the cooperation, the easier and quicker it is to attain goals. Finally, it is imperative that positions of authority receive communication from the head down. Never assume that people know or understand delegated authority—teach them! Be certain that both the staff and employees understand the chain of command. The organization chart should serve as an excellent tool for conveying this message. Also, be certain that the chain of command is followed. It is the responsibility of the authorities to refer questions and problems to the proper positions. Delegated authority must be respected by both superior authorities and subordinates. A superior authority should never violate delegated authority. If an individual feels he must talk to a higher authority, his immediate authority must know his intent. Never violate the confidence of delegated authority. I believe in an open-door policy. We must be accessible to all people, but, by the same token, we must respect positions and delegated authority. Always refer the individual with the question or problem to the proper authority. If you want people to respect your authority, you must also respect their authority. This procedure will foster a mutual respect among those in the organization. Communication is vital, but we must not forget the importance of procedure. Following the proper procedure in communication is vital to organization and structure.

## OVERVIEW

There are many types of government in the local churches, but there are very few that follow God's standard. A church that is organized with a democratic government is operating contrary to the Word of God. God has never used people to determine His will. A church that is controlled by the people will always be a "people church." A church that is controlled by the people will never be a church that follows God. The church may preach and teach about God, and the people may worship God by their own standard, but they will never follow the leading of the Spirit, nor will they submit to the Word of God concerning church government. A church that is structured with more than one "head" is also violating the Scriptures. God's government has only one "Head." The Scriptures make this fact very clear. Throughout the history of the nation of Israel, God used only one person at a time to lead the nation. According to the second and third chapters of Revelation, God uses only one person at a time to lead the church. Moses and Joshua did not share joint leadership responsibilities; Joshua succeeded Moses. Saul and David did not share the throne; David succeeded Saul. This principle has never changed. Anything with more than one head is a freak. God is certainly not interested in occupying a freak church. There are also those who view the church as a place of equality. They do not see the need for a

specified leader. This train of thought actually produces confusion, which, in effect, is the very opposite of organization. Salvation is equal for all men, but church government requires a chain of command. This chain of command is made up of various gifts and abilities. In Christ we have the same rights and privileges, but in the church, we must submit to God's ordained authority. You can be certain that God will not ordain a church to follow the path of its own choosing. Every church ordained by God is ordained for a purpose. Proper organization is mandatory if the church is to fulfill its purpose. God's structure of organization for the local church is one God, one bishop, one vision, many leaders working together, and a cooperative congregation.

# VISION AND GOVERNMENT

## Chapter 8

Every local church should be structured around its God-given vision and gifts. Stereotyping churches is futile and frustrating. Each God-ordained church has been established for a purpose. God knows what He wants the church to do before He brings the church into existence. Many times the Spirit of God has moved upon men to begin churches. Unfortunately, zeal has often caused these men to begin before getting all the details. Preconceived ideas and formats must not be substituted for the Spirit of God. Men who allow the Spirit of God to lead them in building churches should also allow the Spirit of God to direct them in the structure of those churches. Every church is unique in its own right. Although all churches should be pressing toward the same mark, the tasks of the churches will vary as they go toward the mark. Sensitivity to the Spirit is vital in the structure and operation of the local church.

It is the responsibility of the bishop of the local church to convey the vision of the church to those who wish to become a part of the local assembly. This communication can be accomplished through a Sunday school class or some other class designed to teach the government and vision of the local church to the people. Vision

and government must be taught, otherwise problems are sure to arise in these areas.

Every individual should have a vision or goal that he is striving to attain. There are many gifts and abilities which have been given unto people, but these gifts and abilities vary. Thus, it is vital that each member of the Body of Christ function in his proper position in the Church. Functioning in the proper position in the Body of Christ will not allow everyone to attend the same local church. Every individual should allow God to set him in the church of God's choosing. He will place us in a setting that will allow our gifts and abilities to be utilized in His time and in His way. As stated earlier, each individual and each church has a vision unique to that individual or church. It is imperative that the right individuals unite with the right churches in order for both to fulfill their purpose in this life. One must never go into a local church and attempt to change its God-given vision. That is why it is so important for the bishops and deacons to serve in the local assembly in which they were developed. These men share the vision of the church, and they are certainly in a better position to fulfill the vision of the church than an outsider. Every vision of the individuals in the local church must coincide with the God-given vision of the local church. We can say it this way: visions must operate within "the vision." Whenever this unity is impossible, a change must be made. However, the vision of

the church must not be changed. The individual must find the proper church in which he can successfully carry out his vision. The bishop of the local church must rely upon the Holy Spirit to direct him in placing the gifts and abilities in their proper setting. Consequently, he must seek the counsel of God, then he must listen to the counsel of God. Often times, God's counsel is contrary to the desires of men. We must remember that God looks upon the hearts of people; men look at the exterior. What may look good on the outside may prove to be fatal in the future. The bishop is responsible for evaluating the church, coordinating the gifts and abilities inside the church, and leading the church in the proper direction so that the vision of the church can be fulfilled. The bishop is the acting liaison to bring vision and government together in the local church. The government of the church must be conducive to fulfilling the vision of the church. This responsibility rests upon the shoulders of the bishop.

# CONCLUSION

## Chapter 9

The life of Abraham, who is called the father of our faith, is an excellent reference for the local church to observe. There are many valuable lessons the church can learn from the life of Abraham. One of these lessons can be found in Galatians 4:21-31. An event involving two of Abraham's sons serves as an analogy of the modern-day church. Ishmael and Isaac were used by God to teach a spiritual truth. Ishmael was born after the flesh. Sarah had a plan and Abraham cooperated with it. Isaac was born as a result of God's promise. God promised this seed to Abraham and Sarah. Ishmael's mother was a slave; consequently, Ishmael is related to bondage. Isaac's mother was a free woman; consequently, Isaac relates to freedom. The church has two types of sons, carnal and spiritual. The carnal sons are those who follow the desires of the flesh; as a result, they are governed by religious tradition. They are performance oriented. The spiritual sons are those who follow the Spirit of God; consequently, they are governed by the Kingdom of God. They are faith oriented. God required Abraham to make a decision concerning his two sons. God is also requiring the local churches to make decisions concerning their sons. Abraham chose to follow the instructions of God, which was to separate the will of flesh from



the will of God; therefore, Abraham cast out Ishmael and his mother, Hagar. Each local church must make a decision also. The local churches must choose between the sons of the flesh and the sons of the Spirit. Those churches that choose the sons of the flesh will never experience the true power of God because they will follow the will of the flesh. They will have a form of godliness, but the power of God will be absent. The promises of God will be taught, but not experienced. They will call God their Father, but they will not be heirs of God's inheritance. The churches that choose to follow the Spirit of God will fulfill the will of God, and they will become powerful for God. They will also be the recipients of the promises of Abraham. We must not forget that Ishmael produced a nation, and twelve princes issued forth from his seed, but he was not heir to Abraham's inheritance. The carnal church will also produce many sons, some of whom will be great in the eyes of men. We must not be deceived by the patrons of a church or the size of a church. We must rely upon the Spirit of God to open our spiritual eyes so that we may properly discern and join ourselves to the sons of promise. We must join ourselves to the "Bride Church" so that we may legally be joined to the Groom, Jesus. The "Bride," like Isaac, is born of promise, and She is the legal heir of the promises of Abraham.

We must never mistake the provision of

God for the approval of God. Because of disobedience, the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years. During Israel's forty-year wilderness journey, God supernaturally provided for them, although He did not approve of their actions which sent them to the wilderness. God's mercy and grace must never be viewed as God's approval. The purpose of God's goodness is to lead the violator of God's will to repentance. Israel did repent and finally entered into the Promised Land, but not before all those who had rejected the will of God died.

I am convinced that Jesus is divinely visiting every local church, and that He is giving each church the opportunity to conform to His image. Those who refuse to submit to Him will miss their hour of visitation, and they will suffer spiritually as a result of not accepting the government of God. Churches, be alert! You do not know which hour the Lord may come, neither are you certain of the vehicle in which He will arrive. The very ones who should have recognized Jesus did not recognize Him because they had a preconceived idea of how He would arrive. We have placed so much attention upon rapture and "getting out of here" that we have failed to allow Jesus to take up residence in the local church. I believe Jesus is coming **to** the Church before He comes **for** the Church. If we cannot submit to the kingdom of God in the church, why should we think we will submit to the kingdom of God in

heaven? We must forget religious tradition and follow after the Spirit of God and the Word of God.

Another point of interest found in the Old Testament is that of the Tabernacle of Moses and the temple of Solomon. Neither of these places was occupied by the Spirit of God until the structure was set and the facility was recognized as God's. Once the building was complete and all things were set in order, God appeared in His power and glory. (Exodus, chapter 40 and II Chronicles, chapter 5 reveal this truth.) I believe that the power and glory of God in the local church is contingent upon the local church setting its structure and government in order, according to the Word of God. Just as sure as the furniture and accessories had to be set in a particular place in the tabernacle, so must each member in the local church be set in his proper place. I believe that once this structure is complete, the power and glory of God will occupy the local churches which have given themselves and their facilities to God.

We must allow the Spirit of God to lead us and guide us through the Word of God so that our lives can be purged from religious tradition. May we learn and follow the ways of God and abandon the religious traditions that are contrary to the Word of God. May the churches with whom we identify become churches of God rather than

churches of men. May Jesus Christ become the Head of “your” local church. May the bishop of “your” local church be recognized as God’s resident authority in the church, and may the congregation submit to God’s ordained authority.

To the best of my ability, I have attempted to convey to you the type government God desires in the local churches. I have no “axe to grind” nor “crow to pick” with anyone. My heart’s desire is to see the churches of God submit to the government of God so that the kingdom of God can be established in the local churches. God’s government is theocratic in operation and eternal in nature. Every other government and kingdom will, sooner or later, fall. We have already seen the “invincible” communistic government crumble. We have seen the famed Berlin Wall bow its knee. These failures of government should remind us of the prophecies recorded in God’s Word. Every knee must bow to the name of Jesus, and every government must submit to the kingdom of God.

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. THY KINGDOM come, Thy will be done IN EARTH as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the KINGDOM, and the POWER, and the GLORY, forever, amen. (Matthew 6:9-13 King James Version)

This book gives a general overview of Church Government According to God's Standard. It is not enough to read this book and agree with it, then lay it aside. The government of God must not only be learned; it must also be practiced. The church must not only teach the will of God; it must also implement the will of God. I encourage you to submit to the kingdom of God. Begin immediately! Allow God's government to control your life, home, and church, as much as is within your power.

Come, Kingdom of God, in our lives. Come, Kingdom of God, in our homes! Come, Kingdom of God, in our churches! Come, Kingdom of God, in our nation! May this be the beginning of the establishment of God's government in the local churches throughout the world!

# EPILOG

## Chapter Ten

In this book, we have used the word “bishop” extensively. Because of the trend in our society today, it is important that we define more fully the oversight of the local church. The resident authority in the local church to whom we have referred as bishop is in reality the Senior Minister of the church. Because many of our churches refer to the Senior Minister as the “Pastor,” it is imperative to understand that regardless the title, the bishop (overseer) of the church is the one who is responsible and accountable to God for the overall operation of the church. To eliminate confusion and misunderstanding, I generally refer to the overseer of the local church as the Senior Minister.

Because the word “bishop” has gained so much popularity within the Christian churches in the last several years, I am concerned that some will misunderstand the role of bishop from God’s perspective. The biblical references to bishop all relate to the oversight of the local church. There is no higher authority in the local church than the Senior Minister. All gifts and guests must honor the Senior Minister as the resident authority and submit to his leadership.

I understand that bishop is a word that can

apply to many settings, including some that are secular in nature. The modern day interpretation of the word "bishop" has dramatically affected local church leadership. Let's look at the definition of the word "bishop" as we understand it today. It is one who is an ordained or consecrated member of the clergy assigned to or entrusted with a particular area of oversight. These bishops are given the authority to ordain people into the ministry and to ordain qualified clergy as bishops. Many evangelical organizations have incorporated bishop as a position in their hierarchical government. Some even teach that bishops are successors of the twelve apostles of Jesus. This teaching is erroneous and should be avoided.

Many of the people who are recognized as bishops are more dramatic than spiritual. Their positions have been given to them by men, not God. Some are self-appointed; they have a self-proclaimed title yoked with drama and charisma, but lack in understanding the biblical concept of bishop. Please do not fall prey to this mentality. Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build are laboring in vain. Be sensitive to the Spirit. Seek the Lord, not position. Fulfill His ministry; do not try to build your own.

Please understand that the word bishop is used only three times in the King James Version of the Bible. One time the word was translated from the Greek word *episkope* (ep-is-kop-ay'),

which refers to superintendence. This Greek word was also translated "visitation" in Luke 19:44 and I Peter 2:12, and bishoprick in Acts 1:20. The other two times the word bishop is used it was translated from the Greek word *episkopos* (ep-is'-kop-os), which refers to a superintendent. This Greek word was also translated as overseers in Acts 20:28, and bishops in Philippians 1:1. None of these references refer to bishop in the way the word is commonly used today.

From God's perspective, bishop is more than robes, rings, positions, and power. God sees a bishop as one who is responsible for leading a local body of believers in the way and to the place God wants them to go. A true bishop will not lord over God's people; he will serve them in the manner the Lord has ordained. A true bishop will not seek respect; he will earn respect by the way he fulfills his ministry. He will not seek to be served; he will serve, thereby setting an example for those under his leadership.

In reality, true bishops are those whom the Holy Spirit has set over a particular group of people to assist them in fulfilling the will and purpose of God for their lives. He is responsible for the activity that occurs in the church, and he is accountable to the Head of the church, Jesus. One who desires to be placed in this office must have a mind to work. Bishops are ordained by God to be servants of the Lord placed in a leader-



ship capacity that serves people under the auspices of the Lord for the purpose of assisting them in fulfilling their ministries. Although bishops are not included in the five-fold ministry, they are gifted people who preside over their respective congregations as God's representative. In Romans 12:8, we learn that there is a gift that gives one the supernatural ability to rule. The word "ruleth" was translated from the Greek word *proistemi* (pro-is'-tay-mee), which means "to stand before." "Standing before" refers to presiding over. The bishop (Senior Minister) presides over the church to which he has been assigned. This gift of ruling gives him the ability to lead supernaturally.

Another area in the local church that is generally handled improperly is the administration. Many, if not most, churches allow their administration to be run by the deacons. As we have previously established, deacons are to serve in the area of benevolence, not the administrative functions of the church.

In I Corinthians 12:28, we see a gift that is named, yet often overlooked when setting church structure. It is the gift of "government." The word governments was translated from the Greek word *kubernesis* (koo-ber'-nay-sis), which means "pilotage." The word actually refers to directorship. This gifted person has the ability to direct or administer the business aspects of the

church under the auspices of the Senior Minister. This gift should be recognized and utilized in the local church. One who operates with the administrative gift can be a tremendous asset to the church. This gifted person can coordinate and direct the various business functions of the church in the most efficient way. When the business areas of the church go awry, it creates undue pressure on the oversight. A gifted administrator can eliminate this problem.

Setting a church in order is not the most desirable task in the world, yet it is vital to the welfare of every local church. The God-ordained oversight of each local church is responsible for teaching the local assembly God's form of government, then establishing God's government in the church. Each gift that is set in the church must be placed with prayerful consideration to be certain that the right people are placed in the right positions. When the members of the local body come together in their proper place, the body will function at maximum potential.

Why settle for less than the best? Let's structure according to God's standard and enjoy the benefits that come with doing things God's way.