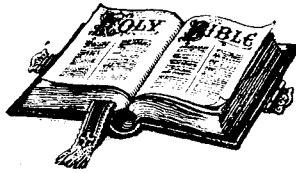


THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

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THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD'S CHURCH

The Bible teaches that each one of God's churches should be under the oversight of elders (Acts 14:23), also called presbyters (1 Tim. 4:14), pastors (Eph. 4:11), overseers (Acts 20:28), and bishops (Phil. 1:1). The qualifications for elders are given in 1 Tim. 3:1-7, and Titus 1:5-9, and may be summarized by stating that they must be men rich in the Christian graces, apt to teach, the husband of one wife with well behaved faithful children, "for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?" (1 Tim. 3:5). The elders are not to lord it over God's heritage (1 Peter 5:3), but are to teach, guard, discipline, and rule in the spirit of love and patience. (See 1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Tim. 5:17).

Each church is to be under the oversight of a plurality of elders. (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). The modern idea of one man being "in charge of churches" is foreign to God's word. The elders are to have oversight of one church only with no jurisdiction over any other church. Each church is free and independent under Christ to carry out its own work or to cooperate with another church if it so desires. (Of course, only cooperation as authorized in the Scriptures is allowed—**Editor**). One church does not interfere with any other church, and is free from interference by others.

God's word does not authorize any super

organization of churches, or the appointment of any superior church officer above the elders. When the term "chief Shepherd" is used (1 Peter 5:4) it refers to Christ, not to any elder who had been placed over the elders. Church super organizations are not only unscriptural but they always tend to assume more and more power, soon becoming dictatorial while they drain the treasuries of the local churches.

Since the days of the apostles, God has given no authority for any group of church officials to convene and legislate for the church as a whole, or for any group of churches. God has already given us His law which must not be changed or modified in any way.

God's plan provides for efficient leaders in each church with each church being completely independent. If a world catastrophe should destroy every church except one, that one would exist in its completeness, able to carry out all of its functions.

That God's plan is efficient is demonstrated by the rapid spread of the gospel during the first two centuries before men had decided to "improve" God's church organization. Also by the rapid spread of the church during the last century after the God-given plan for the church had been restored.

———**Christian Leader**, August 16, 1955

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Editorial . . .

AN EARTHLY HEADQUARTERS?

Most religious denominations seem to take great delight in the fact that they have a centralized, earthly headquarters for their church. They choose the locations they like and the officers they want and they make laws to govern their people according to their wisdom. The "headquarters" of an organization is "the center of operations and of authority," according to WEBSTER.

Many people have the idea that "God's Word teachers that the church (i.e., the body of Christ) should have an earthly headquarters. They seem unable to understand how the body of Christ could function properly without such an earthly headquarters. Does the Word of God teach that the church of Jesus Christ should have (or even may have) an earthly headquarters? Is this idea OF FAITH? Can it be advocated BY FAITH? It can not be OF FAITH nor can it be advocated BY FAITH unless it is taught in God's Word since "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17). Let us consider the following facts:

1. There is NO DIVINE AUTHORITY for the existence of any human religious denomination. It necessarily follows that their "headquarters" could not be DIVINELY AUTHORIZED. NOTE: In this

study, we will not consider the question of "an earthly headquarters" for the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. There is NO DIVINE AUTHORITY for the church of the Lord to have "an earthly headquarters." There is no universal centralized agency authorized in the Scriptures through which God's people are to function in carrying out the work God assigned to the church as a collectivity. Organizationally, there is nothing larger or smaller or other than a local church — the congregation through which God's people are to function in organized capacity to carry out the work of the church. (See Acts 20:17,28; Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Col. 3:17; 2 John 9).

3. JESUS CHRIST HAS ALL AUTHORITY AND RULE BOTH IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH. After His resurrection from the dead, Jesus said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matthew 28:18). Paul said: "...Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Ephesians 1:21-23). Also see 1 Cor. 15:23-28. WE ARE COMPLETE IN CHRIST. (See Col. 2:10).

4. JESUS CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus referred to the church as "my church." In speaking of Jesus, Paul said: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." (Col. 1:18). Also see Col. 1:23; 2:19; Eph. 1:21-23; 4:15). NOTE: Surely the "headquarters" should be located where the "head" dwells.

5. JESUS CHRIST HAS "GONE INTO HEAVEN, AND IS ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD: angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." (1 Pet. 3:22). NOTE: Since the "head" is in heaven, if there is a "headquarters," it must be in heaven!

6. PAUL said: "For our CITIZENSHIP is in HEAVEN; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Phil. 3:20 ASV).

7. Since JESUS CHRIST HAS ALL AUTHORITY AND RULE, and is the HEAD of the church, and His throne is in heaven, there can be no center of authority

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SOWING AND REAPING

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that also shall he reap." (Gal. 6:7).

The conditions in the world today show that this statement is true at all times and in all places and in every phase of life.

Those who sow wheat expect to reap wheat and those who plant gourd seed expect to reap nothing than gourds. They expect more than they plant but never something different and never a different kind, not something better.

Plant sin and reap remorse and if the planting continues we must reap in eternity and for all eternity what we sowed in time.

The planting that has been going on in this world — in this nation — for some time is bearing fruit every day. We have been planting the idea of money-getting, the idea of a "big time" and we are reaping a nation of money grabbers, pleasure mad, dollar chasers.

If it were not for the killings, robberies, suicides, divorces and remarriages recorded in the daily papers and broadcast by Radio and TV, the pages and screens would be too tame for the average person. Makers of "booze" and cigarettes pay for much of the time and space to advertise their products. On the screen our boys and girls are taught how to steal, rob and shoot to kill; little boys in the home, at play in the yard and/or the street are allowed to own guns and learn by practice, how to wear, "draw" and shoot to kill, then we are amazed and wonder why so many crimes by the youth of our land. Have we forgotten, "we reap what we sow?"

Crime hangs over our nation, war is staring us in the face, both no doubt being the fruit of what we have sown — the nation is just reaping what it has allowed to be sown. Thieves could not prosper in their trade if they did not find sympathy among the citizenry of the nation. Bars and "package houses" would soon go out of business if none would buy their merchandise. The thief who steals and the man who helps him by concealing the stolen goods are both considered criminals and those who buy the whiskey are just as guilty of sin as those who make it and sell it.

The nation — the world — is reaping a crop of alcoholics as the ultimate fruit of "drams." To sow "dram drinkers" is to reap drunkards. The drunkard is not the man who does the most harm to others. The drunkard is apt to disgust men and turn

them from "tipping" while the gentleman, social drinker can take his "dram" and never get too much, but he is setting an example which may be followed by a drunkard's grave.

If we sow to the flesh we shall reap of the flesh. Any man who drinks even a "dram" or a can of beer knows that he is **not** sowing to the Spirit. Men drink and then add sin to contempt by lying about it. They know that it is wrong when they do.

And we all know that we are sowing either to the Spirit or to the flesh; we can not do both at the same time, and Paul plainly states that if it is to the flesh we shall reap corruption. Our nation as a whole is sowing to the flesh. To stop that sowing we must start with individuals. Individuals reap what they sow just as nations reap what they sow. We may not be able to completely control the nation, but we can control ourselves individually and that is where the good or the evil begins; that is where the sowing is done. -- The above article was written by **U. R. Forrest** and appeared in **THE WAY OF TRUTH**, May, 1961.

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DO YOU EVER WONDER WHY?

4. Why do we teach that both faith and baptism are essential to salvation?

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..." (Mark 16:16).

"Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38).

Do you know of any passages in the Bible that teach to the contrary?

5. Why do we use vocal music in the worship of God?

It is specified in Acts 16:25; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16 and in numerous passages that regulate worship in the New Testament church. We have found never a one for the use of instrumental music in New Testament church worship. Do you know of any?

These questions and answers are presented in a sincere and respectful desire to bring our true position and reasons therefore to your mind. We shall appreciate

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DO YOU EVER WONDER WHY?

1. Why do members of the church of Christ wear the name Christian?

"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11:26).

"If a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name." (1 Peter 4:16).

Members of the churches of Christ often wonder why people wear other names in religion. Do you have a reason?

2. Why do the churches of Christ teach that there is only one church?

"And gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body." (Eph. 1:22-23).

There is "one body..." (Eph. 4:4). "But one body." (1 Cor. 12:20).

Do you know of any reasons why people should believe that there can be several different religious bodies acceptable to God?

3. Where is our authority that all the saved are in the church?

"And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved." (Acts 2:47).

"Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the Saviour of the body." (Eph. 5:23).

Have you ever found one indication in the Bible that a responsible person living in the present day and age can be saved outside of the New Testament church?

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AN EARTHLY HEADQUARTERS?

on earth. Therefore, **the church cannot have "an earthly headquarters."** The authority by which the church operates is in **heaven.** **Human** churches are governed by **human laws** that are made by **human authority** that originates in "**an earthly** (i.e., **human**) **headquarters.**"

8. If you believe that God's Word teaches that the church should have an earthly headquarters, please send us the Scripture that shows **where** it should be located, **what officers** it should have, **what qualifications** the officers should have, **what name** it should wear, **how** it should be maintained and **what laws** or **regulations** it should pass?

NO, the idea that "God's Word teaches that the church should have an earthly headquarters" IS NOT OF FAITH AND CAN NOT BE ADVOCATED BY FAITH!

(CRS)

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DO YOU EVER WONDER WHY?

a corresponding "reason for the hope" from those who hold views divergent with us in the matters.

-Taken from JUST A MOMENT, 1/5/55

WE ARE STILL WAITING FOR WORD FROM THE HOBBS STREET ELDERS CONCERNING THE HILL-SUTTON DEBATE.

Sentence Sermons

He who gives only when asked has waited too long.

Some people preach by the bushel and practice by the pint.

If you want to keep your head up, you have to have backbone.

Sometimes how well you sleep may depend on how little you lie.

The road to ruin is always "easy" to take; it will be more difficult to travel.

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