

THE FLORAL HEIGHTS INFORMER

www.floralheightschurchofchrist.org

11 April 2010
VOLUME 10; ISSUE 15

**Floral Heights
Church of Christ
1814 Buchanan
Wichita Falls, Texas
76309
(940) 322 - 1650**

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Our Elders:

Mike Chancellor
(322 – 6374)

Tom Witherspoon
(923-6479)

Deacons:

Joe Cronin

Jim Hall

David Witherspoon

Preacher:

John C. Robertson

The False Teacher

**A study of Peter's use of the word "False Teacher"
(2 Peter 2:1)
Continued from Last Two Weeks (Part 3)**

The Effects of False Teaching:

The apostle Peter tells us that one of the effects of false teaching is that "*the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of*" (2 Peter 2:2). The truth hurts many. People don't like it when someone calls out the name of a false teacher. People are troubled when someone tells them they are in sin. These people are bothered by an eldership that tries to do all things by the authority of Jesus Christ. They speak evil of the truth because it convicts and condemns their teachings and actions. Their attitude spreads like a gangrene to other members of the body of Christ (2 Timothy 17). Other members of the church will begin to have problems with the eldership. Members will form factious clicks within the church (1 Timothy 6:3-5). The function of 2 Timothy 2 is to illustrate the trouble that false teachers bring to the table. When trouble occurs in the church is not because people are trying to follow God's authorized words its because someone is not doing that. We need to point the finger in the right direction when identifying the trouble people in the church (see Galatians 4:17; 5:10).

Furthermore, false teachers offer a false sense of security (Genesis 3:4; Jeremiah 8:11-13; 2 Peter 2:19). Such lies "hinder, trouble, and unsettle" the people of God (Galatians 5:7:12). Truly said teachers "*zealously seeking you in no good way*" (Galatians 4:17). Peter concludes his second epistle by saying, "*Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness*" (2 Peter 3:17).

The apostle also Peter points out another effect of false teaching and erring doctrines at 2 Peter 2:2-3. False teachers make merchandise of many Christians. The ESV and NASV Bibles uses the word "exploit" rather than merchandise. To "exploit" someone is to "make use of selfishly or unethically... the utilization of another person for selfish purposes" (American Heritage Dictionary pp. 478). They make merchandise of you by causing not only you but also themselves to feel good about the error they are representing (see also 2 Timothy 3:5-7).

Local News:

Welcome to all our visitors:

We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please do come back at your every opportunity!

Announcements:

Jean Hall's mom **Corlis Horsley** slipped on ice and broke her arm. Remember her in your prayers.

Leann Summers' Dad, **Charles Bessleman** had knee replacement surgery and had a tuff time at first but is now doing ok at home.

Women's Bible Study:

Kasey Robertson will be teaching a six week series of lessons on the "Worthy Woman." The classes do not have a starting date as of yet but it will be soon.

Continue to pray for our shut-ins:

Stella Davidson
696-1030 (Home)

Calvin York
692-0489 (Home)

Ila Belle Windham
(at home but request no calls at this time).

Many who hold to erring doctrines revolving around the marriage, divorce, and remarriage controversy do so because they have loved ones in marriages that violate the standard of truth. Others hold to these doctrines because they don't want to be "put out of the synagogue" (on the outs with popular brethren or exposed as different) (see John 12:42-43; 15:20ff; Gal. 6:12-13).

Today, false teachers are hard at work for the same merchandising reasons. Just look around you. How many different denominational bodies do you see just in your city? How many different churches of Christ are there? It is estimated that there are currently "more than 10,000 separate religions being practiced in the world today. Within Christianity alone, there are said to be more than 30,000 different denominations" (World Religions - Annual Editions pp. iv).

While the thousands of different religious bodies are teaching a multitude of doctrines the Bible tells us that there is only one God, one faith, and one church (Ephesians 4:1ff). Surely anyone who is honest with themselves must see that there is something not right with this current religious picture. The apostle Paul wrote, "*Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment*" (1 Corinthians 1:10). Again, Paul writes, "*Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus: that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Romans 15:5-6). Paul commands the Philippian brethren saying, "*stand fast in one spirit, with one soul, striving for the faith of the gospel*" (Philippians 1:27).

We hear more and more today the phrase, "Attend the church of your choice." What that means is go where you feel comfortable. If you feel more comfortable believing that you have been saved and there is nothing that can cause you to fall from grace then go to many of the Baptists churches. If you have a loved one that has died yet never obeyed the gospel then join with the Mormons and you can be baptized for that lost loved one. If you really love this earth and could never fathom it dissolving in fervent heat then join with the Jehovah's Witnesses who believe that the earth's existence will never end and God's people will always dwell here. If you are sensual you might want to join ranks with the Muslims who teach that a man can have as many as four wives and that when you die you shall have all your sensual desires fulfilled. If your not satisfied with God's standard of truth and want something divine that you can put your eyes on and actually feel then join with the Catholics. World religious statistics reveal millions upon millions of people who have been exploited by these groups. Worst yet are the millions that have been exploited by unfaithful churches of Christ.

John C. Robertson

Continued Next Week

Church Autonomy

Bible Basics Continued

Introduction:

Autonomy is defined as "the condition or quality of being self-governing" (AHD 143). The Lord's universal church is depicted in the scriptures as being divided up in various localities and autonomous from each other. One must be careful not to confuse autonomy with the identity of the universal church. All Christians are a part of the universal church by proxy of truth (see John 17:16ff). The unity of saints that exist on a universal stage exists due to the universal truth. No matter who may try to change truth or hide truth in any given location the universal standard of truth remains (see II Tim. 2:9, 13, 19; 3:9).

I. Identifying Church Autonomy:

- A. The Lord's church is organized on a local basis only (Phil. 1:1).
- B. Church's autonomy is depicted in the following verses (Acts 14:23; 20:28; I Pet. 5:1-2).
- C. The local church has organization and authorized work to accomplish.
- D. No eldership or individual has the authority to tell another locally organized church what to do regarding **judgments** made in their organization and work.
- E. The question of interest is, "Can an individual or church from one locality identify another individual or church as being in error?"

II. The Lord never intended for the Local Autonomous church to be Isolationist:

- A. Peter commanded all brethren to "love the brotherhood" (I Pet. 2:17).
- B. Paul commended the brethren of Ephesus and Colossi for loving "all the saints" (Eph. 1:15; Col. 1:4).
- C. Paul often prayed for brethren the world over (II Cor. 11:28; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 1:3-4; Col. 1:3).
- D. Individual Christian the world over communicated with each other due to their care and concern (Rom. 1:8; 16:19; I Cor. 16:19-20; II Cor. 1:1-2; 7:13-14; II Jn. 1, 4).

III. Examples of Churches and individuals communicating with each Other:

- A. The Jerusalem conference (Acts 15)
- B. Paul pointed up the errors of the Corinthian church (I Cor. 5:3 comp. to II Cor. 2:5-8).
- C. Churches of Bible times were in direct contact with each other (II Cor. 8:18-19).

III. What would Constitute a Violation of one church's Autonomy?

- A. An eldership or individual of one church demanding that another church send certain amounts of aid to needy saints in a foreign field.
- B. Who to have as a located preacher and how much to pay the preacher.
- C. Who to have as elders and deacons.
- D. How much to spend on Bible class material.
- E. When to open doors of building for worship service (times on Sunday).
- F. How much the church spends on widows indeed (qualified widows).

IV. What would not be considered a Violation of church Autonomy?

- A. One must first understand that the individual Christian is not only a part of a local church but also the universal church of Christ (see Matt. 16:13-20; Acts 2:41). The word of God makes a clear distinction between the church and individual (see Matt. 18:15-17; I Tim. 5:16) as well as the church universal and the local church (see Acts 14:23; 20:28; I Pet. 5:1-2).
- B. Communication between members of separate local churches (Rom. 1:8; 16:16, 19; I Cor. 16:19-20; II Cor. 1:1-2; 7:13-14; II Jn. 1, 4).
- C. Judgments as to whether another local church was sound in the faith (II Cor. 7:4; 8:24).
- D. Preachers preaching truth in any congregation (Acts 15).
- E. Exposing errors of anyone anywhere (I Cor. 5:3; II Cor. 2:5-8).
- F. Churches working together to relieve needy saints (II Cor. 8:18-19).

Conclusion:

The people of God are bound by law to do nothing more or less than what truth reveals. A study of church autonomy must take into consideration **the universality of truth** and the responsibilities of individual Christians in relationship to that truth. Financial decisions and judgments belong to the local church. Matters of truth and error are to be universally guarded (see I Tim. 1:3; 6:20-21).

