

The Church – No. 4

Its Organization

Dub McClish

When one looks closely at the New Testament, a pattern of organization for the church emerges. It is clearly stated that Christ is the “head of the church” (Eph. 1:22). He has made all the legislation for His church that it will ever need and has revealed it through His New Testament, which men dare not tamper with (Gal. 1:8–9; 1 The. 2:13; Jude 3; Rev. 22:18–19). There is no earthly headquarters of the New Testament church. Christ, the head, is in Heaven; so is the headquarters. New Testament congregations were (and are) independent, autonomous entities, responsible to Christ, their Head. While they served Christ free of structural ties between them, their fellowship in the common cause led them to cooperate with each other in preaching the Gospel and helping the helpless (2 Cor. 11:8; 8:1–5).

To keep each congregation faithful to His word, the Lord decreed *bishops* (overseers), *elders* (men of maturity), or *pastors* (shepherds) (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet. 5:1–3). There was always a plurality of men serving as bishops in each church, never one man over one or more churches or several men over more than one church (Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:3). They must meet strict qualifications before their appointment to this work (1 Tim. 3:1–8; Tit. 1:6–9). They are to oversee and shepherd, to watch for and silence those who would harm the church and to “take care of the church of God” (Acts 20:28–31; 1 Tim. 3:5; Tit. 1:9). It is not theirs to make laws, but to enforce the laws Christ has given (Tit. 1:9f).

Serving under the oversight of these spiritual pastors, all other members in the local church functioned. Deacons were special servants who met special qualifications (1 Tim. 3:8–13). Teachers, preachers, and all other workers served under their local bishops for the accomplishment of Christ’s work.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for, and it was published in the “Bible Thoughts” Column for the *Hood County News*, Granbury, Texas, February 13, 1977.]

Attribution: From *thescripturecache.com*; Dub McClish, owner and administrator.