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# CHRISTIAN ARRAY

RESTORING THE RESTORATION  
IN OUR GENERATION

NUMBER 1

NOVEMBER, 1989

## CHURCH GROWTH: SATELLITE SERVICES - AN INVOLVEMENT SUCCESS STORY

In October of 1977, Reece and Mattie Grubbs called Memorial Church of Christ in Houston from a local nursing home. They had been faithful soldiers of the cross all their lives, and they desired to take communion in their final days. Communion was delivered to them at 3:00 P.M. that Sunday.

In past years the good intentions of many Christians had been seen in setting up systems of going to nursing homes to take communion. Programs seen had worked for a while, and faded. These programs characteristically involved recruiting workers for the middle of Sunday afternoon. A desire was to satisfy the needs of the Grubbs (and others) which would not be neglected after a short period.

A new plan was developed to satisfy these needs on a long term basis. It yielded the Satellite Services, which are an extension of the regular worship services of the Memorial congregation. From the first services in November of 1977, services have been held at the Golden Age Nursing Home at 7:00 P.M. with the Grubbs and at 9:00 A.M. at the Spring Branch Healthcare Center (nearby).

The premises on which these services were established were:

1. The services would be held at the regular service times of the congregation:
  - a. This would promote the realness of the services in the minds of the participants, and
  - b. It would mean that the workers would go directly to the nursing home instead of the main congregation. All of the worker's other fellowship activities around the church could be the same. Life disruption would be minimized. This was considered important to prevent burnout for the long term success of the services.
2. The lessons would be short and non-controversial. The shortness was due to the attention span of some of the residents of the homes. The non-controversial was to allow any resident to come and not be offended by any teaching directly against their religious background. Positive scriptural teachings were allowed without giving the negatives of various denominations. (In depth Bible studies are allowed at residents request.)
3. No collection was to be taken from the residents. On occasion, some monies are given directly to a worker. The worker places it in the collection at the main congregation at the next service.
4. The same lesson is used by the speaker at the morning and the evening service.
5. A rotation of workers was established to allow the involvement of several members. (About 20 speakers are presently rotated.)

This truly has been a program in which every

one wins. Some of the benefits have been:

1. Several baptisms have taken place, mostly conquest baptisms (baptisms of residents who were not a member of a family already attending the church of Christ). Due to the ambulatory nature of many of the residents, the baptisms usually take place in swimming pools (with family approval).
2. The work has been greatly appreciated by the residents.
3. The work has been fulfilling for the workers.
4. The work has been an effective training ground for many brothers, including teenagers, young men, and men who are not so young. Several men who would not have considered delivering lessons in a large congregation, have delivered lessons at the satellite services.
5. Several sisters have found fulfillment in the supporting roles in preparing for the services and assisting the residents.

The Sunday evening service has become the home of several Memorial members, who are regular attendees. Strong Christian relationships have been formed which support the residents of the home, and give added purpose for life for these members.

The last twelve years of this program have been an outstanding success, and is a tribute to the dozens of brothers who have conducted the services in song, prayer, and lessons, and to all the brothers and sisters who have attended and supported the services. In addition to these members and the elders which support this work, there is a group which deserves special credit in this evangelistic and support work. These are the members who "paid the price" for this program.

A basic involvement principle is that to have a program succeed, you must have an advocate who will pay the price to see that the job is done. The members who deserve special credit for "paying the price" are Frank K. Eggleston (1977-1982), Steve and Mary Winbiger (1982-1986), and Phil Rippenhagen (1986-1989). These are the advocates or Ministry Coordinators who oversaw the services, arranged for the workers, took care of the details, and filled the gaps. Plans and intentions are fine, but programs are not a success because of a good plan or good intentions. They are a success because a Christian like these fine examples make sure the work is done. These faithful Christians will surely have an extra star in their crown for this work.

In the twelve years since the start of these services, Reece and Mattie Grubbs have passed on to the next life. A few other friends have also. On behalf of the workers, it is hoped that these services have been as much benefit to the residents as they have been an inspiration and fulfillment to the workers.

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## THE CHURCH AT EPHEBUS

Conclusion: It is a scriptural principle that individual congregations can become displeasing to Christ, even when they are satisfied with themselves.

"I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and you have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen and repent and do the deeds you did at first, or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place - unless you repent." Rev. 2:2-5 NASV

The church at Ephesus had fallen. Consider the positives that are said about this church which had fallen some 60 years after the church was established:

- \* Have deeds, toil, and perseverance
- \* Cannot endure evil men
- \* Put false apostles to the test
- \* Have endured, have not grown weary

Second consider some of the things they are not criticized for, which some of the other churches were criticized for:

- \* No mention of accepting false teachings
- \* No mention of immorality

Based upon these commendations, what was the status of the congregation? They had fallen. They needed to repent. Unless they repented, their "lampstand" would be removed. The language may be a little vague, but the message is clear. Unless they "repent and do the deeds you did at first", a judgment was about to come on that church.

Those are facts, taken directly from the scriptures. Surely, everyone agrees up to this point.

What you conclude from these facts is a matter of your judgment. It is my conclusion that these verses should strike fear into the hearts of most congregations today. The church at Ephesus is probably exemplary of a large number of our congregations today. Almost all congregations have experienced at least one period of enthusiastic activity in their past. The enthusiastic activity is usually associated with a period of growth, although not necessarily. Most are neither enthusiastic nor growing today. Most probably feel justified in their present situation anyhow.

The clear teaching of Revelation 2 regarding the church of Ephesus and Revelation 3 regarding the church at Laodicea is that settling back from a period of enthusiastic activity to a lukewarm situation is not acceptable.

Just what is a lukewarm congregation? Unfortunately, there is no clear measure of this. Whatever the measure is, the congregation at Ephesus did not measure up. If your congregation is not growing, do you have any

reason for considering that it is not in the same condition as the church at Ephesus? What do you do that the church at Ephesus did not do? Likely the churches at Ephesus and Laodicea did not feel they were lukewarm. Is a congregation not lukewarm because they say they are not lukewarm?

The toiling, persevering, and not enduring evil men did not suffice at Ephesus. It will therefore not suffice today. Today we have toiled, persevered, and not endured; and are losing the restoration. We seem to have left the restoration plea back somewhere. This is the reason for the "Restoring the restoration in our generation" motto at the beginning of this newsletter. This is a common theme and objective to most of what will follow. It is time to get serious. We have played politics and bureaucracy enough.

It is time to be known again as the church which knows the Bible, and is enthusiastically evangelistic. Can anyone disagree with that?

What will it take to reestablish Bible knowledge? What will it take to reestablish enthusiastic evangelism? Let me assure you of this, it will not be a fresh coat of paint on what you did last year. We are going to have to get serious.

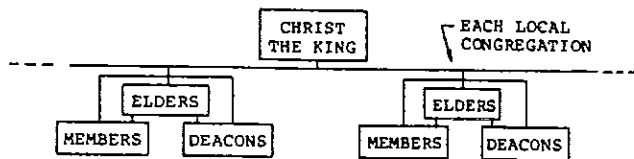
This newsletter issue is attempting to establish that something needs to be done. Following issues will address some of the things which can be done.

If the reader thinks that these conclusions are scripturally correct or are not reflective of the condition of the church in 1989, the writer requests responses as to why they are not.

## CHURCH ORGANIZATION

**CONCLUSION:** The New Testament provides a specific organizational pattern to be repeated at each location when the seed is replanted to form another congregation. It is under the control of local elders. The office of deacon is instituted to tend to the physical affairs of the congregation. The offices of elder and deacon are given specific qualifications.

### ORGANIZATION CHART:



**TYPE OF ORGANIZATION: AN ABSOLUTE MONARCHY:** Christ is the King, head of the church (Matt. 2:2, I Tim. 6:15, Eph. 5:23). This requires submission to the will of the King irrespective of your personal preferences or your "better judgment".

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## LOCAL AUTONOMY OF INDIVIDUAL CONGREGATIONS, REPORTING TO CHRIST:

The biblical organization of the churches is to be under elders at the local congregations (Titus 1:5). There is no example in the Bible of a higher earthly office in the church than the elders, other than the first century apostles. There is no example or instruction that being an elder gave anyone any authority over more than a single congregation.

Whereas we each have direct access to Christ thru prayer, we are physically subject to the leadership of the elders in our local congregation.

## POSSIBLE REASONS FOR LOCAL AUTONOMY:

- It provided sufficient organization.
- If a congregation apostasies, it will not take other congregations with it.
- The seed is free to be discovered and planted at any location at any time without asking a human organization for permission.
- If an organization becomes stagnate, some of the members are free to move to another location and start a sister congregation.

## HISTORY OF ORGANIZATIONAL APOSTASY:

- Ruling bishop A.D. 125-150
- First official pope A.D. 606
- Celibacy A.D. 1015
- Pope infallible A.D. 1870

## ELDERS:

- Various titles were given to elders: elders, pastors, bishops, shepherds, and overseers (Acts 20:17, Acts 20:28, Eph. 4:11, I Peter 5:1-3). These refer to the same office.
- Appointed by evangelist (Titus 1:6)
- Can be paid (I Timothy 5:17-18)

## ROLE AND AUTHORITY OF ELDERS

- \* Congregational financial responsibility (Acts 11:27-30)
- \* Send out missionaries (Acts 15:22)
- \* Send letters of recommendation (Acts 15:23)
- \* Represent the church to others (Acts 20:17)
- \* Shepherd the flock (Acts 20:28)
- \* Have charge over the flock (I Thes 5:12)
- \* Labor (I Thes. 5:12)
- \* Oversee (I Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:7, I Peter 5:2)
- \* Manage church (I Tim. 3:4-5)
- \* Have rule over the church (Heb. 13:17, I Tim. 5:17)
- \* Exhort (I Tim. 5:9)
- \* Refute (I Tim. 5:9)
- \* Pray for members (James 5:14)
- \* Feed the flock (I Peter 5:2)
- \* Public rebuke for continuing sinners is instructed in I Tim. 5:20. The responsibility for this would naturally fall under the supervision of the overseers or rulers.

This list clearly illustrates a comprehensive authority of the elders over the local congregation. There is inherently implied a resultant responsibility for the results (See also James 3:1).

## E. QUALIFICATIONS OF AN ELDER (I Tim. 3:1-7 & Titus 1:5-9)

- \* Above reproach
- \* Prudent
- \* Respectable
- \* Able to teach
- \* Not pugnacious
- \* Sensible
- \* Devout
- \* Not a new convert
- \* The husband of one wife
- \* Free from the love of money
- \* Holding fast the faithful word
- \* Must manage his own household well
- \* Keep his children under control with all dignity
- \* Have a good reputation with those outside the church
- \* Have believing children
- \* Not accused of dissipation or rebellion
- \* Temperate
- \* Uncontentious
- \* Hospitable
- \* Not addicted to wine
- \* Gentle
- \* Just
- \* Self controlled
- \* Not quick tempered

## DEACONS:

- Selected by members (Acts 6:3)
  - Duties: In charge of tasks (Acts 6:3)
- ## C. QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS
- \* Dignity
  - \* Not double tongued
  - \* Have been tested
  - \* Beyond Reproach
  - \* Not addicted to much wine
  - \* Not fond of sordid gain
  - \* Husbands of one wife
  - \* Good managers of their households
  - \* Good managers of their children
  - \* Holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience

## MEMBERS:

- Qualifications: Belief, repentance, confession, baptism, and continued submission to Biblical instructions.
- Added to the church by the Lord when he/she is saved (Acts 2:47).
- Identifies himself or herself with the local congregation such that he/she and the eldership can fulfill the obligations give to lead and obey (Heb. 13:17, Acts 9:26).
- A member is under the rule of the local elders (Heb. 13:17, I Peter 5:5).

## EVANGELIST:

- Called an evangelist with a ministry (II Tim. 4:1-5)
- Can be paid (I Cor. 9:7-14, II Cor. 11:8)
- Duties (II Tim. 4:2-5)
  - \* Preach
  - \* Exhort
  - \* Be ready
  - \* Reprove
  - \* Fulfill your ministry
  - \* Appoint elders (Titus 1:5)
  - \* Do the work of an evangelist
- Qualifications: None specified, several implied such as being a member, be mature enough to reprove someone, be knowledgeable enough to teach, etc.

## MEANS FOR SUPPORT OF CHURCH:

Contribution on the first day of the week, as you have been prospered (I Cor. 16:1-2), bountifully, as purposed, not grudgingly, cheerfully (II Cor. 9:6-7)

No other means of support are scripturally authorized.

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## PURPOSES

As there are a number of church related publications available, it is in order to explain the reasons for starting another one. The primary reason is that the church is not doing well today, and the writer of this newsletter does not think that the available publications sufficiently address the problems. Beyond that, specific goals are:

- \* Provide information in a collectable form.
- \* State both sides of issues, we are not prepared for personal evangelism when we are not prepared to respond to the viewpoints of potential converts.
- \* To provide a strict constructionist viewpoint, neither being liberal (taking from the requirements of the scriptures) or conservative (adding to the requirements of the scriptures).
- \* Communicate creationist issues on a scriptural and win-able basis.
- \* Present in depth studies of church growth issues.
- \* Act as a bulletin board for area wide activities.

We solicit your prayers, assistance, and comments in striving to achieve these goals.

## RESPONSIBILITY :

This issue is written solely by the publisher, who is solely responsible for its content. We welcome future contributions to the Christian Array, subject to the following conditions:

1. It must be scriptural. Articles of rebuttal are encouraged, as long as they are scripturally based.
2. It must not be long and wordy. If you have something to say, say it concisely.

We do not pretend to have all of the answers. Our position is more that something needs to be done, and we cannot continue to wait until we have all of the answers. We want to apologize in advance for anything said which is not in complete accordance with the spirit and letter of the Bible. We solicit your timely comments on any error that we can make it right as soon as possible.

## CHRISTIAN ARRAY

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ADDRESS CORRECTIONS REQUESTED

Information within this news letter may be freely copied by anyone at any time.

## EVENTS CALENDAR :

The Christian Array is mailed to every congregation in the greater Houston area. It will be used to maintain and distribute an area wide calendar of events. Any information to be included can be mailed, called or faxed to the addresses mentioned below.

### AREA WIDE CONGREGATIONAL EVENTS

March 10, 1990: "One Day On Crete - How To Build The Church God's Way", Dr. Carrol Osburn from ACU, First Colony

Sept. 21-23, 1990: Creation Evolution Seminar, Memorial, 464-0271

### AREA WIDE YOUTH EVENTS: TBA

### AREA WIDE SINGLES EVENTS: TBA

## CHILDREN'S HOMES

Sunny Glen Children's Home has a present need for houseparents and vacancies for children in their basic care program. If you can be of assistance, contact Fred Ellis, Superintendent, P.O. Box 1373, San Benito, TX 78586, (512) 399-5356.

## SUBMISSIONS

We solicit your assistance in preparing quality information for distribution to your brothers and sisters in Christ. All types of articles are desired, with a special need for involvement success histories and analysis.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS :

The basic publication costs of the Christian Array have been provided. If you received a copy of this issue, you are on the permanent free mailing list. If you desire, we will remove your name. The paid subscription to this newsletter is \$3.00/year. If anyone desires to receive this newsletter at no cost for any reason, simply request a free subscription.