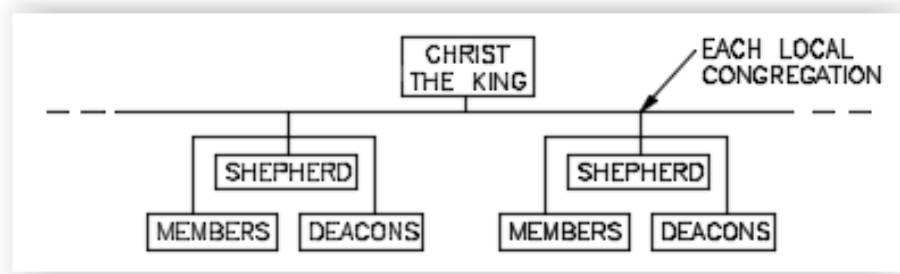


SUMMARY: The New Testament provides a specific organizational pattern to be repeated at each location providing for the seed to be planted anew at each location. It is under the control of local elders. The office of deacon is instituted to tend to the physical affairs of the congregation. The offices of elder and deacon are given specific qualifications.

1. 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".

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. (Review Acts 15:1-35 for a Jerusalem meeting of Apostles which will be given as a reason for organizations.) Whereas we each have direct access to Christ thru prayer, we are physically subject to the leadership of the elders in our local congregation.

2. POSSIBLE REASONS FOR LOCAL AUTONOMY:

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

3. HISTORY OF ORGANIZATIONAL APOSTASY:

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

4. ELDERS:

A. 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.

B. Appointed by evangelist (Titus 1:6)

C. Can be paid (I Timothy 5:17-18)

D. **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, and there a resultant responsibility for the results.

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

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| * Above reproach | * The husband of one wife |
| * Temperate | * Prudent |
| * Respectable | * Hospitable |
| * Able to teach | * Not addicted to wine |
| * Not pugnacious | * Gentle |
| * Uncontentious | * Free from the love of money |
| * Sensible | * Just |
| * Devout | * Self controlled |
| * Not a new convert | * Not quick tempered |
| * 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 | |

5. DEACONS:

- A. Selected by members (Acts 6:3)
- B. Duties: In charge of tasks (Acts 6:2-3)
- C. QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS (I Timothy 3:8-13)
 - * Dignity
 - * Not double tongued
 - * Not addicted to much wine
 - * Not fond of sordid gain
 - * Have been tested
 - * Beyond Reproach
 - * 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

6. MEMBERS:

- A. Qualifications: Belief, repentance, confession, baptism, and continued submission to Biblical instructions (see lesson 3.1 "Plan of Salvation").
- B. A member is added to the church by the Lord when he/she is saved (Acts 2:47).
- C. A member identifies himself with the local congregation such that he/she and the eldership can fulfill the obligations given to lead and obey (Heb. 13:17, Acts 9:26).
- D. Members of the local congregation are under the rule of the local elders (Heb. 13:17, I Peter 5:5).

7. EVANGELIST:

- A. Called an evangelist with a ministry (II Tim. 4:1-5)
- B. Can be paid (I Cor.9:7-14, II Cor. 11:8)
- C. 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
- D. They have beautiful feet: (Romans 10:15)
- E. Qualifications: None specified, several implied such as being a member, be mature enough to reprove someone, be knowledgeable enough to teach, etc.

8. 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.

