



**Forest Hill
Church of Christ**

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Barry M. Grider, Pulpit
Matthew Martin, Associate
Douglas Alvarenga, Hispanic

VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A.M.
Morning Worship.....10:30 A.M.
Evening Worship..... 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

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Words of the Master (Memphis
Time Warner Cable ch17)

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**HOW CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE ALIKE
ON HOW THE CHURCH SHOULD BE ORGANIZED?
(PART THREE)**

BARRY M. GRIDER

Paul spoke of the unity of the body in the following passages:

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members of another (Rom. 12: 4,5).

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made drink into one spirit. For the body is not one member but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet one body (1 Cor. 12:12-20).

What does unity of the body have to do with the organization of the church. If the church is properly organized each member will fulfill his obligations and responsibilities. The physical body is a complex organism with many members. Yet even the most remote member works for the good of the whole body. So it must be in the body of Christ. If every member will take instructions from the head, which is Christ (Eph.1:20-22), indeed it will be so! Now while each congregation of the Lord's church is autonomous or self governing, there is cooperation between congregations.

One way the work of the Lord is carried forth is through congregational cooperation in worthwhile endeavors. Still, the work is being done through the church, under local elderships, and not through para-church organizations, separate from the church itself, which are sometimes called upon do the work of the church. The Lord's church trying to accomplish its purpose through separate entities is an unscriptural concept and not according to the divine pattern in the New Testament.

The organization of the church of Christ is very simple. Most everything about serving God is simple. He has made it so. Why then so many different religious groups today that are organized differently from the New Testament pattern?

PATTERN ABANDONMENT

While speaking to the Ephesian elders, Paul spoke of an apostasy that was to occur shortly thereafter:

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears (Acts 20:29-31).

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Just as Paul stated, an apostasy did take place in the early church. The traditions of men took precedence over traditions divine (2 Thess. 2:15). This apostasy abandoned the New Testament pattern concerning the plan of salvation, worship, and the organization of the Lord's church. While each congregation was to have its own elders, eventually a representative from one church would meet with representatives from other congregations. In time, a leader would emerge from among those groups and the formation of what we know today as a diocese began. Thus we have the religious hierarchy that is prevalent in so many denominational bodies today.

The church is not an organization that elects delegates to national conventions to set policy for the church. Nor did our Lord designate a vicar to represent him on earth in the form of the Roman papacy. Such is an abandonment of the New Testament pattern for the organization of the church. While the Protestant Reformation did call attention to abuses in Romanism, it tried to reform a corrupt organization that had no scriptural right to exist in the first place. Our plea as churches of Christ is to call men back to the simplicity of the Bible.

CONCLUSION

Recently, in our city of Memphis, the Germantown Baptist Church underwent a serious division over its organization. The "pastor" and others desired the selection of a new board of elders who, along with the "pastor," would make decisions regarding church policy. This would be different from their typical congregational led approach. The problem is that neither are scriptural approaches to church organization.

Many in the religious world became very disturbed over the appointment of V. Eugene Robinson who was elevated to the role of bishop of New Hampshire. Robinson is a practicing homosexual and many were appalled that one guilty of a deviant lifestyle would be placed in such a position of spiritual leadership. However, one should not be surprised. Denominationalism exists for the purpose of deviating from the truth. If all would abide in truth, there would be no denominationalism, and, hence, no abandonment of the pattern for the organization of the New Testament church.

If our nation were overtaken by aggressors and they abandoned our constitution, and these aggressors continued their domination of our country for 200 or 2000 years, could we ever regain our present system of government? Absolutely! Just return to the constitution and once more we would have a pattern to put in place a democratically elected republican form of government. When men return to the Bible, once again a pattern can be found to determine the organization of the church, and by so doing God will be pleased and He will approve what is done.

FAREWELL TO DEAR FRIENDS

During the past few months we've been happy to welcome several additional families into our church family at Forest Hill. At the same time, several families relocated to other places.

Melinda Thompson, and her husband, Tommy, moved to Nashville in June, where Tommy began a new job. This was especially difficult for me because of the loss of Melinda as one of our secretaries. Indeed, all who know Melinda love and appreciate her so much.

John and Cassi Dees, along with their three children, moved to Nashville in July. John was transferred by his company, Eli Lilly Pharmaceuticals. While only members at Forest Hill for three years, the Dees were a great asset to our work and quickly became dear friends to many of us. We extend appreciation to John for his service as a deacon and, also, as a song leader.

This past week, Betty Medley, after 18 years as a faithful member of Forest Hill, returned to her home in Manchester, Tennessee. We expected this since Betty's husband, Roy, passed away a few years ago, and with her children having relocated to other places. Still, we will miss Betty, who was always dedicated to the work and always a genuine pleasure to know.

To these families, we wish them well and God's richest blessings! Please come to see us when you can!

Barry

WELCOME STEPHANIE!

Stephanie Ammons was recently named to the secretarial staff of Forest Hill. I am sure that most of our members know her, and as a result, are blessed. The elders could not have chosen anyone who loves the congregation any more than Stephanie. In addition to this, she is well qualified and well suited to work in the church office.

Stephanie has been a part of this congregation all her life. She was baptized at the Knight Arnold building in 1992. Her grandfather, D.H. Kirby, served as an elder of this congregation for 40 years. Stephanie is an active soul winner and dedicated servant of the Lord. We are looking forward to working with Stephanie in this new capacity for many years to come.

Barry

"WORDS FROM THE MASTER"

Forest Hill Church of Christ
Wednesdays: 5:00-5:30 P.M.
Time Warner Cable - Channel 17

WHOSE LAW AM I BREAKING? (part 2)

Matthew Martin

When Peter stood before the Gentile Cornelius, he told him it was unlawful for him to associate with a Gentile. In actuality, the Law of Moses gave no such command. It was the traditions and man-made laws of the Jews that forbade Peter from being there.

It's funny (and sad) how there are those today who would try to "pull a Pharisee" and make laws where God did not. Even going so far as to accuse others of violating God's Law when in reality all that is being broken is a man-made tradition. Consider a few examples:

"CHRISTMAS" SONGS?

"Joy to the world, the Lord has come!" What great and exhorting words are these! And yet some would say it is wrong to sing a song that proudly proclaims the birth of our Savior. They would claim these are Christmas songs, and as such would have no place being sung in an assembly of Christians.

While it should be understood by all that Christmas is a secular holiday, and that Christ was not really born on the 25th of December, one should not take that understanding so far as to condemn the singing about the birth at all. After all, we regularly sing about the parables of Christ ("The Ninety and Nine"), the death of Christ ("What a Savior") and the burial and resurrection of Christ ("Up, From the Grave He Arose"). Why can we not sing about his birth, too?

For one to say it is wrong to sing "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" or "Joy to the World" on December 25 (or May 25, for that matter) is binding a law that God did not create. Of course, singing such songs on Christmas day may not be expedient, but not necessarily wrong.

HOLIDAYS = HOLY DAYS = BAD

I once heard of a person who said it was wrong for a Christian to participate in any kind of holiday activity (whether it be Christmas or Thanksgiving or St. Patrick's Day), because Holiday means "holy day" and the only holy day is Sunday.

Well that person is right and wrong. The word "Holiday" is an amalgamation of the words "holy day," but that does not mean that by going to a Christmas party you think Christmas is more important than Sunday.

Recall what the word "holy" means: separate, or set apart. A "holiday" is merely a day that is set apart from all the others. It is an "out of the ordinary" day.

Birthday's are a good example of a holiday. Once a year people celebrate the day they were born. It is a special day, set apart from the other 364 days in the year. It is a holiday — a separate day.

To be continued...

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