



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

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AN ANSWER TO SOME CHARGES CONCERNING SCRIPTURAL CHURCH CONSTITUTION

PART 1

By Wayne Camp

When I returned from a recent trip to Oklahoma Bro. Bill Lee informed me that he had received a letter from a Brother in Kansas who was speaking for himself and for the church he pastors. In his letter, dated August 10, 2006, the same day he was ordained to the full work of the gospel ministry, he said, “We have not met before, but I am writing to you on behalf of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS.” The Brother made a couple of charges against me and made further charges in

correspondence with me. He assured me in one letter that he was available to answer any questions I had but after two or three exchanges he abruptly called off any further discussion of the matter. He wrote, I am satisfied with what has been transacted and see no further need to communicate on the matter . . . Here endeth the matter.

I do not know this Brother’s age but he has just started pastoring this church and it is (See CHARGES ANSWERED P. 3, L. Column)

GOD’S SOVEREIGN CHOICE

By Bill Lee

How a regenerated individual can read in the Bible about God and fail to see a sovereign God is beyond my understanding. But yet this is either the case, or else there are a relatively few who are truly regenerated. Which is the case I do not know, nor do I care to know.

What I do know is that my God is a sovereign God. He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, What doest Thou, Daniel 4:35. There are multitudes of other Biblical references that affirm the sovereignty of God, but this one is sufficient for any believer.

God’s sovereignty is seen in the Bible from

the very first verse where it is stated; “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”. Surely no reasonable person would deny that creation was a sovereign act of God. For God was under no obligation to create, nor was He bound or controlled by any thing or any one to create in the manner in which He created, or to create what He created. In creation God acted independently and sovereignly, creating what He willed to create, in the manner He willed to create. To deny this is to deny God Himself. The fact is He sovereignly chose to create. He sovereignly chose what He would create. And He sovereignly chose the manner in which He would create. These are

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simply the Biblical facts concerning creation.

But God's sovereignty is not limited to creation. Nor is it limited to or by anything or anyone other than Himself. And if we keep this in our minds as we study concerning the matter of salvation, we will agree with Jonah the prophet who said; "Salvation is of the Lord" For God is the One who sovereignly chose to save, even as He is the One who chose whom He would save. And beyond this, God is the One who sovereignly chose the manner in

which He would save those whom He had chosen to save.

To believe anything else is in reality a denial of the Biblical teaching concerning God. For He is either God or He is not God. There can be no middle ground here. And either salvation is of God, and all of God, or it is none of God. He simply will not share His glory with another.

Bouquets and Brickbats

LOUISIANA: Thanks for printing my request for correspondence in "The Grace Proclamator", August paper. I have already received one reply.

TENNESSEE: Thanks for an especially good GP&P this month (August).

ARKANSAS: We are homesick to see you and Ruth and get caught up on what is going on with both of you. I really enjoyed reading in the last GP&P about Ruth's teaching of the children in Thailand.

OKLAHOMA: I am sending you my new address. I enjoy the paper very much.

TENNESSEE: I personally wanted to thank you for the editorial you wrote in the GP&P (September). It was a blessing to me. I am especially thankful it came from someone who is a pre-mil and not scared to print your heartfelt convictions. I get so tired of hearing the critical preachers calling men of God heretics because they do not believe the way they do on eschatology.

There is so much that many of do not know, and I speak for myself. I have a lot to learn. Thanks again for the editorial. Trust all is well with you I know you are getting ready to go back to Thailand. I wish I were going in a way.

TEXAS: I truly enjoy The Grace Proclamator And Promulgator. It is the one paper that I receive that I always make sure to read. Keep up the good work for the Lord.

apparently his first pastorate. I first want to list the charges and other matters that I want to deal with and answer in this letter.

In articles of this type I do not normally mention the name of a brother or the name of the church that he pastors. But, due to the following statements this Brother made, I felt it in order to do so. He wrote, My name is Nathaniel R. Hille. We have not met before, but I am writing to you on behalf of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS. They did call me as their pastor of June 4, 2006 and I felt led of the Lord to accept the call. I have been here in Caldwell for two weeks. I was ordained to the full gospel ministry on August 10, 2006.

1. In his letter to Bro. Lee he wrote concerning my belief on church organization: "I have heard that he does not believe that a "mother" church is of necessity to start another church, but rather he believes in 'Spontaneous Generation' of churches."

The following charges were made in correspondence with me.

2. We cannot in good conscious support one who does not believe the truth regarding scriptural church organization as the Holy Spirit has taught us in the Scriptures.
3. You do not believe that an unbaptized person can constitute a church, but you do not believe in a link-by-link decension as we (I and the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS) do believe.
4. As I understood your article that you wrote in July, you do not believe in one church organizing another church into a mission and then that mission into a church.
5. In his last letter to me this Brother wrote: In fact, you still haven't answered my question as to what you believe about the organization of a church.
6. In the same paragraph he contradicted himself when he wrote: Your beliefs on the matter have been declared. I do not agree

because I cannot find it in the Bible.

7. In this same paragraph he wrote, I am satisfied with what has been transacted and see no further need to communicate on the matter . . . Here endeth the matter.
8. Concerning the article in the July issue of The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator he wrote, 1) It was an article on the scriptural church organization and yet you wrote for some 8 pages and did not once quote a single scripture.
9. The Brother further wrote: We believe that one church organizes another and the scriptures, which is our final and only rule of authority, do bear this out.
10. I was a little amazed at the following presumption of the Brother when he said, But the fact remains I could not find one scripture in your article that you cited to support your belief because you did not quote one scripture. And even if you had, it would have been taken out of context.
11. He then accused me of being shady in the article in the July paper. The second reason I was disturb at your article is because you started with "Historical" things that man has done. If the Bible is our Sole rule of faith in practice, why did you not start with it? It seemed quite shady to say the least to me. If a man wants to know what I believe, I do not turn to commentaries, but to the Word of God!
12. The Brother further wrote, You do not believe that an unbaptized person can constitute a church, but you do not believe in a link-by-link decension as we (I and the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS) do believe. As I understood your article that you wrote in July, you do not believe in one church organizing another church into a mission and then that mission into a church.

I will now take those charges and insinuations set forth by this brother in the order

that I have listed them and answer them in this issue and the next.

"I am writing to you in regards to some disturbing news I have heard regarding Bro. Camp's belief on scriptural church organization. I have heard that he does not believe that a "mother" church is of necessity to start another church, but rather he believes in 'Spontaneous Generation' of churches."

Notice that the Brother claims to have heard the disturbing news that I believe in "'Spontaneous Generation' of churches." I reminded him of Paul's admonition: 1 Timothy 5:19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Then I wrote, "I would like to know the names of two or three witnesses who have heard me or read where I declared that I believed in 'Spontaneous Generation' of churches. You used quotation marks to indicate that you have heard that I used that term—'Spontaneous Generation'—to describe how I believe churches come into being."

It turns out that he had misrepresented what he had heard. When I asked for the names of the two or three witnesses who told him that I believed in "spontaneous generation" of churches, he backtracked immediately and admitted that he had never heard anyone say that I believed in "Spontaneous Generation." I do not understand what he sought to gain by misrepresenting the truth by saying he had heard that "disturbing news" when, in all honesty he had not heard it. I wonder how many people he has told that I believe in "spontaneous generation" of churches.

It is true that I do not believe that a mother church, as he uses the term, is essential to start a Scriptural church. And I challenge this brother to prove with certifiable evidence that every church in the lineage of his church had a mother church. Secondly, I challenge him to show from Scripture where any church was ever referred to as the mother church of another church. If, as he and his church affirm, the Scriptures teach the necessity of a "mother church" then he needs to give Scripture where this "mother church" necessity is mandated in Scripture. Just one Scripture will do.

I will suggest that no one try to use Galatians 4:26 But Jerusalem which is above is free,

which is the mother of us all. Paul is not discussing the church at Jerusalem here. He is not saying the church at Jerusalem is the mother of all scriptural churches.

Next, the brother says, We cannot in good conscious support one who does not believe the truth regarding scriptural church organization as the Holy Spirit has taught us in the Scriptures.

The brother complained that I used no Scripture in the article in the July issue. In our correspondence he often mentioned the importance of using the scriptures to back up what we say and rebuked me for my lack of Scriptures in the July article.

In his letter he charged that I am "one who does not believe the truth regarding scriptural church organization as the Holy Spirit has taught us in the Scriptures." But, he gave NOT A SINGLE SCRIPTURE showing what the "the Holy Spirit has taught us in the Scriptures." It would seem to me that if he believes in backing up what he believes with Scripture that he would surely have shown the Scriptures where the Holy Spirit has taught us exactly how to organize churches.

After he had falsely accused me of believing in "Spontaneous Generation", he backed off when I defined "Spontaneous Church Organization" and agreed that I did not teach that. But he wrote, "You do not believe that an unbaptized person can constitute a church, but you do not believe in a link-by-link decension as we (I and the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS) do believe."

I again ask the Brother to prove his link-by-link succession from now back to Christ. I use the word "succession" because after looking in three dictionaries, one of which was a Webster's Unabridged, and in two Dictionaries of Synonyms I could not find the word "decension". I then searched the Internet and found this definition: "The act of going downward; descent; falling or sinking; declension; degradation." According to the dictionary on the Internet the word is archaic. The Brother's reference to the "link-by-link decension as we (I and the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell,

KS) do believe" is very interesting and somewhat alarming. According to this statement the Brother and the SGBC of Caldwell, KS, do believe that the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ in a link-by-link descension have gone downward since the first church was organized by Jesus Christ. They have fallen and have sunk into a state of declension and degradation.

I confess! I freely confess that I certainly do not believe the Lord's churches have gone downward, sinking into a state of declension and degradation since they were organized. I beg to be excused from espousing such nonsensical error. It denies the Lord's promise to his churches. Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The Brother's argument for the link-by-link descension further contradicts the argument he made in one of his letters when he declared "like begets like". According to his link-by-link descension of churches each church was degraded. Each church sunk lower than the one before it. According to this Brother, he and his church believe in a steady decline in the churches. They believe in a constant, "link-by-link" downgrading of the churches. That is disturbing news to me. It indicates that the churches have fallen into deeper and deeper apostasy.

The Brother further wrote, As I understood your article that you wrote in July, you do not believe in one church organizing another church into a mission and then that mission into a church.

He is so right. I do not believe in **"organizing another church into a mission and then that mission into a church."** Why, under God's heaven, would a church want to organize another church into a mission? And then, turn around and organize that mission back into a church? In writing for himself and the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Caldwell, KS, the Brother indicates that they believe in organizing another church into a mission and then organizing that mission into a church. He accused me of error in not believing in that. Read his entire statement again. **"As I understood your article that you wrote in July,**

you do not believe in one church organizing another church into a mission and then that mission into a church."

According to this they believe in the following:

1. Organizing another church into a mission.
2. Organizing that former church that has been organized into a mission back into a church.

In one of his letters the Brother wrote, If a man wants to know what I believe, I do not turn to commentaries, but to the Word of God! In another letter he said, Your beliefs on the matter have been declared. I do not agree because I cannot find it in the Bible.

I would ask the Dear Brother two questions.

1. Where in all of God's inspired word do you find Scriptural authority for one church organizing another church into a mission?
2. Where in all of God's inspired word do you find Scriptural authority for organizing and operating a mission?

Since the Brother declares that he always starts with the Bible, I am sure no one will find my two questions unreasonable. I am sure many of our readers will be eagerly anticipating this brother telling us where he finds the Scripture that teaches that a church should organize another church into a mission.

Bro. Bill Lee wrote the Brother the following letter on or before September 1. As of today, September 13, Bro. Lee has not received one word of response from the brother. Bro. Lee wrote:

Dear Bro. Hille,

I know that you and Bro. Wayne Camp have corresponded on the matter of church organization. But as pastor of Central Baptist Church where Bro. Camp is a member and serves as a missionary, I thought that I needed to write to you also.

You have impugned not only the beliefs of Bro. Camp, but also that of me and our church. You have made some very bold statements that I do not think you have really studied or thought out. You have made it plain that you do not believe as we do concerning church organization, even stating that what we believe is unscriptural. You

have set forth what you believe concerning church organization. You even state that your beliefs and those of the Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS, are the same. It is strange to me that they did not have a problem supporting Bro. Camp until you became their pastor. But this is not about support for Bro. Camp, it is about what you have stated in your emails.

You have written in your emails concerning "the truth regarding scriptural church organization as the Holy Spirit has taught us in the Scriptures".

You have written "we believe that one church organizes another and the scriptures, which is our final and only rule of authority do bear this out".

You have written "as I understand your article that you wrote in July, you do not believe in one church organizing another church into a mission and then that mission into a church. We do..."

You have written "that mission must have authority granted to it by another true New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ".

And I could list several other things, but these are sufficient.

I challenge you to give Scripture, by this I mean book, chapter, and verse, to substantiate that any of the above things that you have written are "the truth regarding scriptural church organization as the Holy Spirit has taught us in the Scriptures".

Surely if you are going to make the allegations that you have made, and if you are going to say what you believe is taught by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, you can tell me book, chapter, and verse. After what you have stated as to what you and the church in Caldwell believe, is it too much for someone to ask for Scripture, book, chapter and verse?

After all you have plainly stated that the Holy Spirit has taught us these things in the Scripture. My question to you is WHERE? Please tell me WHERE?

I frankly would be satisfied if you could just

tell me where, book chapter and verse, the Holy Spirit has said anything at all about a mission. Surely you must know where I can find this in the Scripture, for after all you have stated that this is taught by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. You have stated that "one church organizes another church into a mission and then that mission into a church". If you are going to make such statements as this, surely you can tell me where to find such a procedure in the Scripture. You did say these things were taught by the Holy Spirit in the Scripture! WHERE???

I do not doubt that you think these things are taught in the Scriptures. But have you ever tried to find them there for your self or have you simply taken someone else's word that these things are taught in the Scripture? Do you really believe the things you do concerning church organization because you have read these things in the Scriptures or because these things are what someone else has taught you?

If your answer is that you have read them in the Scriptures, surely you will not mind telling me where you found these, book, chapter and verse. If you cannot give me Scripture, book, chapter and verse, for what you believe, I simply excuse your brashness as that of a novice.

Bill Lee

Pastor, Central Baptist Church

As I pointed out earlier, after 13 days, the brother has not responded to Bro. Lee's letter. Perhaps he is still hunting for the scriptures for which Bro. Lee asked. Of course, by the tone of his letters, one would think that he knew right where the Scriptures for his position—book, chapter, and verse—were located.

I sure would like to have the Scripture for "one church organizing another church into a mission."

Now, what about establishing a mission and operating it for months or years before it is organized into a separate church? The first problem is that no such practice is ever clearly or even hazily set forth in Scripture. The second is that it has the church that is sponsoring the mission meeting in more than one place while

the Bible teaches clearly that a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ meets in one place.

The Brother accused me of error for not believing in a church setting up a mission. I ask this question, "Is A Church Truly Local When It Has Congregations Meeting In Two, Three, or Several Different Locations?" Consider the definition of "local."

According to my unabridged Webster's the word local means, "pertaining to, characteristic of, or restricted to a particular place or particular places. Pertaining to a town or a small district rather than the entire state or country." When we say a church is local in nature that necessarily infers that it meets in one particular local place when it comes together. There was the church of God in Corinth, the church in Rome, the church in Ephesus, the church in Pergamos, the church in Thyatira, etc. If one is speaking of churches in the plural that meet in several particular places, he may speak of the seven churches of Asia each of which met in a particular location (Rev. 1-3), or the churches of Macedonia (II Cor. 8:1), or "the churches . . . throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria," (Acts 9:31). One might also speak of the churches of Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:41), or "the churches of Galatia (1 Corinthians 16:1).

One can also speak of local churches without designating the specific location in which they worship. Paul wrote of all the churches of the Gentiles. (Romans 16:4) Each and every one of those churches, you can be assured, had a local place to which they could be referred. Paul commanded, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law" (1 Corinthians 14:34). Paul referred to "all churches of the saints" (1 Corinthians 14:33). Again, note the inference that these are local churches. The very fact that he uses the plural indicates he is referring to specific, local churches, specific local assemblies meeting in specific localities, each meeting in its own specific locality.

The inspired Holy Scriptures give several evidences that these local churches came

together, each one in its specific location. As one Old Landmarker, J. R. Graves, wrote, "The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place." Of course, we must determine if his contention is born out by the Scriptures. Note a few examples of churches that met in a specific locality.

1. "The church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts 8:1).
2. "The church which was in Jerusalem" (Acts 11:22).
3. "The church that was in Antioch" (Acts 13:1).
4. "The church at Cenchrea" (Rom. 16:1).
5. "The church that is in their house" (Rom. 16:5).
6. "The church of God which is at Corinth" (I Cor. 1:2).
7. "The church which is in his house" (Col. 4:15).
8. "The church of the Laodiceans" (Col. 4:16).
9. "The church of the Thessalonians" (I Thess. 1:1).
10. "The church of the Thessalonians" (II Thess. 1:1).
11. "The church in thy house" (Phile. 2).
12. "The church of Ephesus" (Rev. 2:1).
13. "The church in Smyrna" (Rev. 2:8).
14. "The church at Pergamos" (Rev. 2:12).
15. "The church in Thyatira" (Rev. 2:18).
16. "The church in Sardis" (Rev. 3:1).
17. "The church in Philadelphia" (Rev. 3:7).
18. "The church of the Laodiceans" (Rev. 3:14).

Someone could be tempted to argue that this does not say they met in one place even though these Scriptural statements ought to clearly demonstrate that they did.

On the first Pentecost after the crucifixion of Christ the church at Jerusalem was together in one place. Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

The whole church at Jerusalem sent messengers to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas correcting some errors that had been introduced by some legalists from Judea. Acts 15:22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed

Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren. It is obvious from the context of this verse and the actions that were taken that the whole church at Jerusalem assembled in Jerusalem for this meeting.

A church where Paul was when he wrote his epistle to the Romans met in one place and sent salutary greetings to the church at Rome. Romans 16:23 Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

In a discussion of the spiritual gifts, Paul wrote of the whole church at Corinth coming together in one place. 1 Corinthians 14:23 If therefore the whole church be come together into one place . . . ? In discussing the Lord's Supper Paul also spoke of the church at Corinth coming together in one place. 1 Corinthians 11:18-20 For first of all, when ye come together in the church . . . 20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.

In this vein Eld. Milburn Cockrell wrote, "In order to have a church, baptized saints must come together in one place at the same time." If Bro. Cockrell was right in this declaration, a church cannot assemble in two or more places and be a true local, visible assembly.

According to Paul, a church must be gathered together to exercise church discipline. 1 Corinthians 5:4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. A church that meets in Caldwell, KS, and has a mission that meets somewhere in Mexico and another mission that meets in some place in Africa could never exercise discipline because they could, in all practicality, never be gathered together in one place.

It is obvious to even a casual reader that the many that were saved and added to the church on the day of Pentecost along with those who were already members of the church in Jerusalem regularly gathered in one place for worship, fellowship and service. Acts 2:41-47 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand

souls . . . 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common . . . And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Of course, if they had had some missions in other locations this gathering together as is described here would have been impossible.

When Paul and Barnabas returned from their missionary journey they gathered the church at Antioch together to tell them of the things the Lord had done with them on the journey. Acts 14:27-28 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. 28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

Notice, Dear Reader, that they had been gone a long time and had traveled far and had started churches in a number of cities and had led those churches in calling pastors in every city in which they had started a church and Antioch did not vote on organizing any of those churches. They had simply sent these men forth to do the work to which God had called them. Acts 13:2-4 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. 4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. Though they established several churches on their trip there is not a single reference to their starting a mission. And, no missions were left in those various cities and countries to which they had carried the gospel. The church at Antioch was a local church that regularly assembled in the city of Antioch and when the missionaries returned they gathered that local church together to tell them what the Lord had done with them.

Paul calls on the congregation at Corinth to do some things that would be impossible if the membership of that church had been meeting in two or more places—the so-called "mother" church at Corinth, a "mission" meeting in Rome, and another "mission" meeting in Laodicea. Paul admonished the church as follows: 1

Corinthians 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by 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 perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. Dear Reader, just the fact that, in this scenario, the church of Corinth was meeting in three different cities in three different countries, there was division. Any church that operates a mission composed of its members who meet in a separate location is divided and is not local. In the scenario suggested above the church at Corinth would be an International Visible church, not a local visible church.

I remind the reader again of Bro. Milburn Cockrell's declaration. "**In order to have a church, baptized saints must come together in one place at the same time.**" Bro. Cockrell further wrote, "Twenty times the word church is used in the singular number, and it points to a church which meets in a certain place." Note that Bro. Cockrell did not say that the singular of the word church points to a church which meets in several places. Rather he pointedly declares the it points to a church which meets in a certain place.

Again Bro. Cockrell wrote, In 23 other passages the word church is located in a certain place in the immediate context. These verses are as follows:

"The Lord added to the (Jerusalem) church" (Acts 2:47).

"Fear came upon all the (Jerusalem) church" (Acts 8:3).

"As for Saul, he made havock of the (Jerusalem) church" (Acts 8:3).

"His hands vex certain of the (Jerusalem) church (Acts 12:1).

"But prayer was made without ceasing of the (Jerusalem) church" (Acts 12:5).

"And being brought on their way by the (Antioch) church" (Acts 15:3).

"They were received by the (Jerusalem) church" (Acts 15:4).

"He. . .saluted the (Jerusalem) church" (Acts 18:22).

"Called the elders of the (Ephesian) church" (Acts 20:17).

"The church that is in their house" (Rom. 16:5). The name of this church is uncertain, but it was local for it met in a house.

"Least esteemed in the (Corinthian) church" (I Cor. 6:4).

"Despise ye the church of God" (I Cor. 11:22). Paul called the Corinthian church by this title in I Corinthians 1:1.

"He that prophesieth edifieth the (Corinthian) church" (I Cor. 14:4).

"The (Corinthian) church may receive edifying" (I Cor. 14:5).

"The edifying of the (Corinthian) church" (I Cor. 14:12).

"In the (Corinthian) church I had rather speak" (I Cor. 14:19).

"Let him keep silence in the (Corinthian) church" (I Cor. 14:28).

"For women to speak in the (Corinthian) church" (I Cor. 14:35).

"Let not the (Ephesian) church be charged" (I Tim. 5:16).

"In the midst of the (Jerusalem) church will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb. 2:12).

"Thy charity before the (Ephesian) church" (III John 6).

"I wrote unto the (Ephesian) church" (III John 9).

"Casteth them out of the (Ephesian) church" (III John 10).

According to Bro. Cockrell, the context of each and every one of the verses cited and the church involved indicated a church that met in one particular location. Not one time did he ever indicate that a church could be a true, local church if it met in two, three or several locations.

I am reminded of the church at Antioch that sent out Paul and Barnabas. Acts 11:25-26 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called

Christians first in Antioch. For a whole year Paul and Barnabas assembled themselves with the church. Where did they assemble with the church? They assembled with the church at Antioch for this was a local church that met in one particular location.

Bro. Cockrell wrote again, "Those who do not gather with the congregation are not a part of it. Having your name on a church roll does not make you a church member! You must assemble with the congregation to truly be a part of it in the New Testament sense." According to Bro. Cockrell those who have their name on a church roll at a church with whom they never assemble are not a part of that church. Those members of a "mission" that assembles in a far off place and do not gather with the church where their name is on the roll are not members of that church according to Bro. Milburn. He said, "You must assemble with the congregation to truly be a part of it in the New Testament sense."

Mr. Landmarker himself, Dr. J. R. Graves wrote, "The ecclesia of the New Testament could, and was required to assemble in one place."

Eld. Curtis Pugh said in his book, Three Witnesses for the Baptists, "New Testament usage, secular usage and the Septuagint usage of the word "ecclesia" indicate it was only and always used of an organized, congregating body of people in a given locality."

Notice again Paul's rebuke of the church at Corinth concerning their conduct at the Lord's Table. 1 Corinthians 11:17-20 Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. 19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. 20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. It is obvious that this church at Corinth, even with their faults, adhered to the Scriptural principle that a church, to be a true church, must come together in one

place for their worship and service.

Eld. Tom Ross, in his book, Teachings on the Local Church made several excellent statements concerning the fact that a true church must meet in one place. He wrote, "Paul recognized each congregation of baptized believers existing in a specific place as a body of Christ."

Again Bro. Ross wisely observed, Eighteen times the word church is employed in the singular, referring to a congregation in a specific location. (Ibid., P. 33).

Paul used the human body to illustrate the church body. 1 Corinthians 12:24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. Notice that he declares that God hath tempered the body together. The Holy Spirit repeatedly has his writers to show the unity, the local nature, the togetherness of true churches. A church that meets in two or three different places is not a divinely tempered together body. Such a "church" is a humanly severed apart and divided body.

Since, as the Holy Spirit taught us in the Scriptures, a church is local and each church meets together in its one locality, there is no way a church can operate a mission that meets in another city, another country, on another continent, and that church still be local in nature. I have shown what the Holy Spirit taught us in the Scriptures about a church assembling in one place. I have given several places—book, chapter and verse—where the Holy Spirit taught us this in the Scriptures. I ask the Brother from Kansas to show us book, chapter, and verse that says a mother church must organize another church into a mission and then organize that mission into a church. WAITING!

(To be continued, God willing).

A STUMBLING BLOCK AND FOOLISHNESS

By Bill Lee

Paul wrote in I Corinthians 1:22-24; "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek

after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." I am going to paraphrase these words of Paul in this manner: "The Jews demand miracles and the Greeks go in search of wisdom while we are proclaiming a Christ who has been crucified. A crucified Christ is a stumblingblock to the Jews and an absurdity to the Greeks; but to those who have received 'the call, a crucified Christ is both the power and wisdom of God". In this article I will use the word "cross" as a synonym for the finished work of Jesus Christ at Calvary. This is the meaning of the word in much of Paul's writing.

The cross represents salvation and redemption, separate and apart from any works of the law. The law is a taskmaster, and service to the law is no more than a yoke of slavery, Galatians 5:1. Therefore the cross can be nothing but a stumblingblock to those who desire salvation by their own works or obedience. To those who refuse salvation by grace, the cross will forever remain a stumblingblock. What an irony that some will stumble over the cross as they fall into hell!

The Greeks, in their prideful pursuit of worldly wisdom, would never degrade themselves or their supposed intelligence, as to believe that a Hebrew, of such lowly personage, dying in such a shameful manner, could possibly be who Paul claimed Him to be, the Son of God—The Saviour of sinners. The very concept of such a Saviour is utter foolishness unto them.

The fact is that a person can be very religious while seeing nothing attractive in the cross. Others, possessing the greatest intelligence among men; men who excel in the wisdom of this world, find Christianity to be a repulsive concept that is only believed by the ignorant and unlearned. In these two we get a view of human depravity among both Jews and Gentiles. But to those, and only those, who have received "the call", a crucified Saviour is all-satisfying unto them.

So the Jews keep demanding miracles and the Greeks keep seeking after wisdom, and we keep preaching Christ crucified.

I AM NOT WHAT I ONCE WAS!

In his old age, when he could no longer see to read, John Newton heard someone recite this text, "By the grace of God I am what I am." He remained silent a short time and then said: "I am not what I ought to be. Ah, how imperfect and deficient! I am not what I wish to be. I abhor that which is evil, and I would cleave to that which is good. I am not what I hope to be. Soon, soon I shall put off mortality, and with mortality all sin and imperfection. Though I am not what I ought to be, what I wish to be, and what I hope to be; yet I can truly say, I am not what I once was--a slave to sin and Satan! I can heartily join with the apostle and acknowledge--By the grace of God I am what I am!"

By: William Plumer, "Sinners Saved by Unmerited Kindness"

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