



Lifeline

CHURCH of CHRIST
at Galena



Problems with Local Autonomy

One of the most important characteristics of the Lord's church is local autonomy. Each congregation is completely independent from all other congregations or organizations.

Local autonomy is shown in several New Testament examples:

- The church in Jerusalem had control of its own membership and did not accept Saul of Tarsus until they were convinced that he truly was a disciple (Acts 9:26).
- The apostle Paul acknowledged the right of the church in Corinth to choose their own messengers to deliver contributions to the poor saints in Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16:3).
- Paul implied that the church in Philippi did what other churches chose not to do—support him in gospel work (Phil. 4:15).

Whenever men try to mobilize the universal church, even for seemingly noble causes, they compromise local autonomy leading to more departures from the truth. Truly, the wisdom of God's plan is seen when local churches are not swept with the tide into error. Without local autonomy, error at the "top" would permeate the whole body, resulting in wholesale apostasy.

But, admittedly, there is a "down-side" to respecting local autonomy. There are some things we may not be able to accomplish because of local autonomy:

1. We won't be able to accomplish uniformity. Every church will not be identical in what they do, or how they do it. We have come to expect uniformity in many aspects of life. No matter where we go, we expect golden arches and drive-up windows at every McDonald's, a light on at every Motel 6,

and glazed donuts at every Dunkin' Donut shop. But the church is not a franchise or corporate operation. If we are following God's pattern, there will be some things the same in every place, but there will also be many differences.

We joke about congregations which don't meet at "the scriptural time," but we need to remember that's just a joke! When we are away from home we should seek out congregations where we can worship. Simply finding a building where brethren meet doesn't always tell when they meet. I've seen visiting brethren just show up at 11 a.m. for worship only to become angry when they learn that the congregation was saying "Amen" to the closing prayer.

For others, a "red flag" might go up if they hear about a congregation which uses a description on their advertising other than "church of Christ," or if they decide not to have weddings in the building, or if they don't have a second serving of the Lord's supper, or if there is no projector, or the preacher uses a modern translation, or the songbook is not one of the "standard" editions, etc., etc.

It might be a bit more convenient to visitors if all congregations had the same sign, same hours and same order of services, but God didn't organize the church that way. From man's standpoint it might seem to be a problem caused by local autonomy, but evidently God thinks the benefits outweigh the problems.

2. We will have limited resources for mass advertising and evangelism. It may be hard for some to understand why the Lord, who's "*not willing that any should perish*" (2 Pet. 3:9), would not want local churches to pool their funds which would enable us to evangelize using cutting-edge



How Do We Increase Guests?

The first step to increasing guests is to recognize that it is possible to do so. People do have religious needs today! More people are ready to visit a New Testament congregation since there is much less prejudice in those who are under 40 today.

Some congregations turn out scores of contacts to meetings, special topics, VBS, and regular services. Other congregations could not identify six non-Christians who attended their last meeting. You must start by believing that there are plenty of prospects who will visit if we contact them at the correct level.

A recent Gallup Poll indicated that 25% of those who do not attend church say they would visit if they were invited to by a friend. Of course the number who would really attend is much lower. Yet, you still continue to get 5 to 20% response to your invitations if you regularly invite associates who know your morals and life. Invitations do produce visitors.

After you believe that prospects are out there if you look for them, you must find the reasons and the style of relaxed easy invitations that sort through all of your friends to find the ones who are religiously receptive right now.

For men it is like a hunting trip where you must hunt hard for the game. For women, it is like a shopping trip where you must hunt and look hard for that one special dress. A soul is more important than wild game or clothes so we should look very hard for one.

When we invite large numbers of our associates, we are really conducting a survey to find out which one is religiously interested at the present time. Remember, that they may only be thinking about a religious change for a few months and a previous refusal does not indicate where their religious interest is right now. That is indicated when they accept our invitation and visit a service. ☞

-Harold Comer

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techniques and mass media which are financially out-of-reach to any local congregation.

The temptation is to suspend or amend our opposition to centralized control in order to accomplish something we deem to be advantageous to the cause. However, the Lord knew before the Bible was written what our dilemma would be, and still He didn't authorize the mobilization of the universal church through sponsoring churches and/or other organizations.

3. Fellowship issues will not be as "cut and dried." Even among those of us who teach and preach that each church is independent, there are those inclined to meddle into the affairs of congregations other than the one of which they are members. Don't misunderstand me! You have a right and a responsibility to teach what you believe to be truth to anyone and everyone (even members of other congregations), but you don't have the right to use other means to bring them into compliance.

There has been much written about the "fellowship issue," centering on whether certain brethren should be called upon to preach or lead prayer. No matter what conclusion one comes to on this issue, the application must be made locally. Any attempt to enforce compliance on any congregation

other than the local congregation of which one is a member is "none of our business."

We venture into dangerous territory when we begin to brand as "unfaithful" whole congregations or quarantine brethren because they have not arrived at the same convictions as we have. Our Lord had some pretty strong warnings for most of the seven churches of Asia. If we found a church today like the church in Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-29) would we consider them "faithful" or "unfaithful"? How about Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6)? As bad as things were in these churches, it appears there were some in each which pleased the Lord (2:24; 3:4). Nor did the Lord tell the faithful brethren in nearby Smyrna and Philadelphia to put a quarantine label on the other congregations.

There is a certain comfort zone we enter when we "write off" some brethren as apostate or unfaithful. We no longer feel a kinship to them and we are able to ignore them instead of trying to correct them. Furthermore, we don't have to listen to the abuse they heap upon us. But at the same time we lose the opportunity to be a safety net for a few honest truth-seekers who eventually may be open to study when they realize that they are unable to halt digressions.

We "talk a good game" when it comes to local autonomy. We need to practice what we preach. ☞

-Al Diestelkamp



Bible Blueprints #4

(Phippians 1:9-11)

Introduction: Autonomy means self-government. God gave each local congregation the responsibility of self-government. Each local church is subject to Christ and His authority alone, as revealed in the scriptures.

I. Congregational Form & Function in N.T.

- A) "Elders in every church" (Ac. 14:23; 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; Heb. 13:17).
- B) These elders, bishops or pastors watching only the flock "among _____" (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2).
- C) This is the _____ arrangement specified by the blueprint of Christ (through His apostles) which excludes all other organizations or forms of directing, or overseeing, the affairs of local churches of Christ.

II. Local Congregation: Only Way the N.T. Church Carried Out Mission & Purpose

- A) Each congregation practiced and supervised its own work.
 - 1. The local church sent out _____ (Acts 11:22).
 - 2. The local church _____ preachers in new fields (Phil. 4:15-18).
 - 3. The local church made up its own funds for _____ work (1 Cor. 16:1-3; Acts 11:27-30).
 - 4. The local church selected and sent its own _____ with its funds for the work to be done (1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:4-6, 16-21).

III. Local Congregation: How Christians of the N.T. Functioned

- A) Paul associated & _____ with the congregation at Jerusalem (Acts 9:26).
- B) Fellowship with the church in its work necessitates working in _____ with other members of the congregation (Rom. 12:4-5).
- C) Christians were admonished to work together, be at peace and _____ themselves to the authority of Christ (1 Thess. 5:11-14).
- D) Individual members of the local church were held responsible for enabling the congregation to do its work (Eph. 4:16).

IV. No Inter-Congregational Alliances Among the N.T. Churches

- A) Jerusalem took care of its own _____ (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37; 6:1-3).
- B) Several local churches _____ Paul (2 Cor. 11:8).
- C) Each church sent directly to Paul by its own messenger (Phil. 4:14-18).
- D) Macedonia, Achaia & Galatia sent relief to Jerusalem (Rom. 15:25-27, 31).

V. No Local Church Became the Agent of Another Local Church in the N.T.

- A) There were no "_____ churches" and "contributing churches." No congregation received and forwarded funds for another.
- B) There were no congregations that promoted themselves into a "_____ agency" for promotion of an agenda and sent out "agents" to raise money for their work.

Conclusion: There are some "problems" with the local church autonomy. However, they are not problems with God's plan or the effective function of the Lord's church. God has drawn the blueprint. Are we willing to measure and frame the local church according to His instructions?

LORD'S SUPPER MEDITATION



Why Did Jesus Come to Die?

...That There Might Be
No Condemnation For
Those Who Are in Him

(1) "There is therefore
now no condemnation
for those who are in
Christ Jesus."

(Romans 8:1)

(34) "Who is to con-
demn? Christ Jesus
is the one who died—
more than that, who
was raised—who is at
the right hand of God,
who indeed is interced-
ing for us."

(Romans 8:34)

Taking Out the Trash

(Matthew 5:27-30)

Introduction: At my house taking out the trash is not exactly a coveted chore. It is too oft ignored until I take care of it but, I really get no satisfaction or enjoyment out of the process. However, I know of one household where taking out the trash is considered honor....

I. "Throw It From You"

- A) When We Sin We Have Stumbled (Matthew 5:29).
- B) Sin Must Be Amputated
- C) Whatever Brings Sin Into Our Lives Must Be Cut Off & Cast Away
- D) Holding Onto Sin Will Only Bring Us To Hell
- E) Am I Holding Onto Anything That Brings Sin Into My Life?

II. How Do We Take Out the Trash

1. _____ It _____
 - Toss The Sin & Take Up The Armor (Romans 13:12).
 - Renew Your Mind To Recognize Deceit (Ephesians 4:22).
 - Fix Your Eyes On Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-2)
 - Am I Filling My Life With God's Power?
2. _____ It _____
 - Starting Fresh In Ephesus (Acts 19:18-20).
 - Seek Help Openly (Acts 19:18).
 - Eliminate Satan's Hooks (Acts 19:19).
 - Appreciate Others Who Have Overcome (Acts 19:20).
 - Am I Really Done With My Old Sin? (1 Peter 4:3)
3. _____ To _____ Sins _____
 - Consider Yourself Dead to Sin (Colossians 3:5).
 - Remember The Death That Sin Brings (Colossians 3:6).
 - Redefine Yourself In Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:7-11).
 - Are You Ready To Accept His Death To Save You?

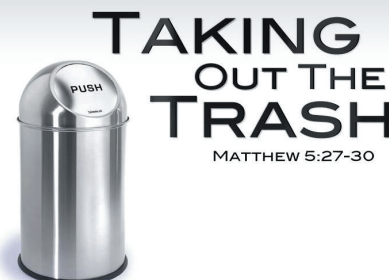
III. Take Out The Trash Today

Matthew 5:27-30

Conclusion: Just as the astronauts have to thrust the trash into the Earth's atmosphere to be totally obliterated - your sins must be trust onto the CROSS. You could run from you sins, you can try to hide from your sins, but only JESUS can totally wipe them away. Only Jesus, and His loving sacrifice can wash away all the junk, and make you clean, whole, and pure.

Some people hide their sin. Other people try to hold onto it, ignoring the problems and pains directly connected with their sin.

Don't be one of those people. Let Jesus help you take the trash out of our life.



Are You Searching for a Church?



"Upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." - Matt. 16:18

A church is built on these four things that begin with the letter B.

The Book- the inspired, infallible Word of God.

The Blood- the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Birth- the new birth.

The Blessed Hope- the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God tells us in Hebrews 10:25, *"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."* He wants us to find a scriptural church and connect with the people there.

If you're looking for a church, find out if they take a stand on the Book, the Blood, the Birth, and the Blessed Hope.

If they don't, keep looking.

WE'RE PRAYING FOR...

Shut In Members & Friends:

Preachers We Help Support:

Vicente Cay
Edwin de Pedro



March 12-17 - Hebron Lane with Joe Price
March 19-24 - Westside Salem with JR Broger
March 19-24 - Manslick Road with Dan Lankford



W **PROPHETABLE**
LIFE **MAJOR** *from the* **MINOR**
LESSONS **PROPHETS**

BRING APPLICATION POINTS ON WED.

Barker February 26 th	Dowling March 5 th	Loughmiller March 12 th	Mitchell February 5 th	Scott February 12 th	Stout February 19 th
Farmer Keehn Loughmiller, B. Woolbright, Randol	Barker, Ashlyn Keehn Michell Sieg, Don	Dooley Schoenbaechler Shaffer Woolbright, Ryan	Buchanan Hudson Sieg-Swank	Bailey Miller Sieg, Donny	Loughmiller, N. Maudlin McKinney Woolbright, D.

Benevolence Organizers:
Miller & Scott



2 - Jennah Sieg B'day
5 - Lailah Miller B'day
7 - Lou Sieg B'day
10 - Benny & Amy
Loughmiller ANN.

BIRTHDAYS ANNIVERSARIES

SERVING IN WORSHIP

THIS WEEK

Sunday Morning (03/12)

Announcements: Bill Buchanan

1st Prayer: Don Sieg

Song Leader: Dale Woolbright

Lord's Table: Mike Loughmiller (Lead)
S. Mitchell, M. Stout, J. Hudson

Sermon: Shannon Shaffer

Closing Prayer: TBA

Sunday PM (03/12)

Announcements: Bill Buchanan

1st Prayer: Randy Scott

Song Leader: Dylan Culver

Lord's Table: Mike Loughmiller (Lead)
S. Mitchell

Sermon: Shannon Shaffer

Closing Prayer: Benny Loughmiller

Wednesday (03/15)

Announcements: Tim Maudlin

1st Prayer: Kyle Dowling

Song Leader: Jonathan Maudlin

Invitation: Jeff Farmer

Closing Prayer: Keith Keehn

NEXT WEEK

Sunday Morning (03/19)

Announcements: Dale Woolbright

1st Prayer: Jim Hudson

Song Leader: Ryan Woolbright

Lord's Table: Shanon Miller(Lead)
Buchanan, Schoenbaechler, Barker

Sermon: Michael Stout

Closing Prayer: Randol Woolbright

Sunday PM (03/19)

Announcements: Dale Woolbright

1st Prayer: Scott Mitchell

Song Leader: Don Sieg

Lord's Table: Shanon Miller(Lead)
Buchanan

Sermon: Kyle Dowling

Closing Prayer: Mike Loughmiller

Wednesday (03/22)

Announcements: Keith Keehn

1st Prayer: Benny Loughmiller

Song Leader: Donny Sieg

Invitation: Luke Dooley

Closing Prayer: Randy Scott

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CHURCH of CHRIST at Galena

Lifeline

Meeting at

5466 Featheringill Road
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Sunday

Worship: 9:00 AM

Bible Classes: 10:00 AM

Worship: 3:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes: 7:30 PM

Website

[http://churchofChrist
inGalena.com](http://churchofChristinGalena.com)