

*In search of...*

# Truth & Right

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## Pastors and Preachers

The word "pastors" occurs only one time in our English version of the New Testament. More often the original is rendered "shepherd" or "shepherds." By implication the pastoral work is identified with the office of bishops or elders. Since this office is never identified with, or the work of the pastor confined to, the evangelist, we conclude that neither by precept, practice nor implication does the New Testament suggest the evangelist or preacher is to be called or function as a pastor in the church of Christ. Abuses of apostolic teaching and intention do not argue against God's plan and purpose either for pastors or preachers.

In Ephesians 4:11-13, we read: "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Assuming that the work of pastors is properly identified with the office of bishops or elders, and hence is recognized as a divine function in the church now, it is proper to study the part pastors play in the Lord's church by the Lord's authority.

The word "pastor" literally means a "helper" or "feeder of the sheep". From Paul's speech to the Ephesian elders (Acts

20:17-35) the force of the word's meaning is clearly seen in the responsibility the Holy Spirit places upon the men charged with pastoral work. Notice: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers to feed the church of the Lord, which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."

From this passage it is evident that the pastors are to:

1. take heed to the flock;
2. oversee the flock;
3. feed the flock; and
4. guard the flock.

"To feed the church of the Lord" properly is, according to this passage, the right way for pastors to fulfill their mission of overseeing. In this passage pastors are distinguished from apostles, prophets, evangelists, and teachers. While the apostolic office may have included the function of all the others here listed there is no Scriptural basis upon which we can conclude that any one of these offices or "gifts", in this passage had anything other than a definite and distinct work in "the perfecting of the saints", etc. While it is true that much of the work of these offices

overlapped, it is equally true that each had its distinctive function from all the others. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers all taught, but all teachers and evangelists were not pastors any more than all prophets were apostles though all apostles prophesied. Some peculiarity attached to each office which demanded a distinction among them.

As indicated above pastors in Ephesians 4:11 is the only occurrence of the word in our English version, yet the original for the word translated pastors in this place occurs eighteen times in the New Testament and with this singular exception is rendered shepherd in every instance. It is often used for the man who tends sheep and is more often applied figuratively to Christ but this is the only place it is applied to church officers of any kind. Without becoming tedious by indulging in technical criticism, suffice it to say that it is universally admitted that the word translated pastors in Ephesians 4:11 means shepherd and by many scholars and some translations is so rendered in Ephesians 4:11. On this passage J.W. McGarvey says,

"The evidence that this term designates the overseers or elders, is conclusive and may be briefly stated. The Greek term for shepherd is *poimaino*, and the verb *poimaino* means to do the work of a shepherd. Now, he to whom this verb applies is a shepherd, just as he who sows is a sower, he who reaps is a reaper, he who speaks is a speaker, he who sings is a singer, etc., etc. But Paul exhorts the overseers in Ephesus "to be shepherds to the church" Acts 20:28, and Peter exhorts the elders of the churches to which he writes, "Be shepherds to the flock of God which is among you, and promises that when the 'chief Shepherd' shall appear, they shall receive a crown of glory. They then, were shepherds and Christ the Chief Shepherd."

The scholarly McGarvey delineates further as follows:

"The term pastor, the Latin for shepherd, has come into common use from the influence of the Latin version of the Scriptures. There is one all-sufficient reason for preferring our own Anglo-Saxon term 'shepherd'. It is found in the

fact that 'pastor' has become perverted by sectarian usage, and designates in popular phraseology, an entirely different office from the one to whom it is applied in the Scriptures. It has become a synonym for a settled preacher, and is often used for the purpose of distinguishing the preacher from those who are Scripturally called the 'pastors' of the church. It will perhaps be impossible to recover the term from this abuse, and therefore, it is better to throw it away.

"Another good reason for preferring 'shepherd' is, that its primary meaning is familiar to the most illiterate reader, and the metaphor by which the overseer is thus styled is perfectly intelligible to every one; whereas, the term 'pastor' is known to the masses only in its appropriated sense." (McGarvey, A Treatise On The Eldership, pp. 18,19).

From the foregoing considerations it is evident that unless a preacher, or evangelist, be identical with a 'shepherd' he is not a 'pastor' in the Scriptural meaning of the term, and therefore, is not one before God. The work of pastors in other passages (I Peter 5:1-4; Titus 1:5-11; I Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17) is clearly identified with the office and work of bishops or elders. Unless, therefore, the office and work of an evangelist can be identified with the office and work of elders, it cannot be shown that a preacher is a pastor either by title or function. If a preacher is not a pastor he should not be called pastor, much less THE pastor. Calling him such will not make him one. Though some preachers may be doing the work of pastors, in God's sight they are not 'shepherds' regardless of their work or ambitions along this line.

Both elders and preachers need to recognize their respective responsibilities and meet them. Elders should function as overseers or shepherds and do the work enjoined on that office by the Holy Spirit. Evangelists should do the work of evangelists and leave the elders' work to the elders. A preacher not only betrays a sacred trust himself but directly contributes to the breakdown of the divine organization when he pushes himself or allows himself to be pushed into a position of

functioning where the elders should act. Actually such an arrangement weakens the church organically, and therefore, spiritually for there can be no true spiritual development where the divine governmental arrangement is disregarded.

We can preach all we desire on the "evils of the pastor system" but not until gospel preachers learn to preach the gospel and leave the "pastoring" to the Scripturally qualified pastors, will the situation improve. Evangelists are destroying their own souls when they look upon preaching as a profession and gospel work as the primary means of a livelihood. They are robbing churches of their spiritual power and doctrinal integrity when they "take over" some local "charge". And the proof of the pudding is the helpless condition in which elders find themselves and the church when it becomes necessary for a change in preachers, either through their decision or his. Something is wrong, when a change in preachers results in a disgruntled membership and a decline in the spiritual development of the church. When such occurs it is already past time for elders to check on the effectiveness with which they have been performing their God-ordained duties and it is equally late for the preacher to take inventory of the type of preaching he is doing and the personal ties he has formed in the church.

The preacher who would place his personal feelings and ambitions above the peace of the church and would encourage criticism of faithful elders either by silence or consent is unworthy of support, morally or financially. He is digging his own grave, and at the same time making it large enough to receive all who are so weak and foolish as to follow him. Likewise elders who would allow a preacher to entrench himself in the church of the Lord as to wield such an influence have revealed their incompetency both to oversee and to rule and are equally unworthy of the confidence of the church. They are losing their own souls and are held accountable by the Chief Shepherd for the manner in which they meet their obligations toward those whose souls have been entrusted to their care and keeping (1 Peter 5:4; Hebrews 13:17). Elders need to meet their responsibilities and preachers need to "preach the Word."

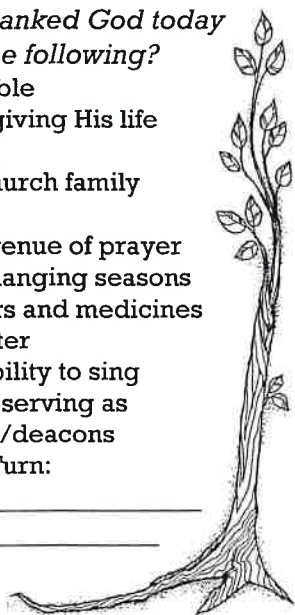
James R. Cone

God gave you a gift of  
**86,400**  
seconds today. Have  
you used one to say  
**THANK YOU?**

*Have you thanked God today  
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- Jobs
- The avenue of prayer
- The changing seasons
- Doctors and medicines
- Laughter
- The ability to sing
- Those serving as elders/deacons
- Your Turn:

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**WELLSBURG CHURCH OF CHRIST**

92 Rose Cottage Lane  
Wellsburg, WV 26070  
304-737-1422

<http://www.truthandright.org>



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# A Man Healed

R A C A L J L G I A T M S D R H P K D W  
 I F D I L W N Q S F F Z U J P Z B Z U M  
 Q O P E N I N G A W B M H P X R Z D L F  
 B R A V T C L A K A I U I C F E N R X J  
 U G R C M R R U B L A S P H E M I N G R  
 R I A B F M W T Z K Q E P A T O K C B L  
 H V L F L B R H G F S O S W T V M N M L  
 Y E Y T K Y H O L I W D X H H E O O Q H  
 S N T N R V K R G A T H E R E D O Z N T  
 V W I Q M M N I C P J A Z N R L B W E J  
 E V C Z W W I T M R R F T L I V W L W S  
 T B O Z N P O Y F E K P F G S H B A H L  
 R O V F B K G X T G M Q L T P B K S P X  
 O S O Z N S F T J N U P G X E D J T R P  
 M L S C J Y C N P W A A B V Y T L M E X  
 Y A S C Z T G I M N X J H M H W T T A G  
 R A D T W J L I A Q F M T I F P Q L C U  
 G N Y J Q U E S T I O N S F Y K O K H G  
 S G O Y C A P E R N A U M G A G C X I U  
 A U R W F F E A S I E R G K D E H B N W  
 A C G O G J J E C B U N D X A D V A G C

**DIRECTIONS:** Look up the scripture in the Bible, and find the answer in the crossword above.

Mark 2:1, Jesus returned to \_\_\_\_\_ after some days

Mark 2:2, Many were \_\_\_\_\_ together; there was no more room

Mark 2:2, He was \_\_\_\_\_ the word to them

Mark 2:3, They came, bringing to Him a \_\_\_\_\_ carried by four men

Mark 2:4, Since they could not get near, they \_\_\_\_\_ the roof above Him

Mark 2:4, And let down the bed through the \_\_\_\_\_ they had made

Mark 2:5, Jesus said to him, "Son, your sins are \_\_\_\_\_."

Mark 2:7, The scribes thought, "He is \_\_\_\_\_!"

Mark 2:8, Jesus asked, "Why do you \_\_\_\_\_ these things in your hearts?"

Mark 2:9, "Which is \_\_\_\_\_, to say 'Your sins are forgiven'...

Mark 2:9, ..."or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and \_\_\_\_\_'?"

Mark 2:10, Know that the Son of Man has \_\_\_\_\_ on earth to forgive sins