

## The Bishop's Reply . . . . 11-18-07

I was previously unaware that my preaching on the issue caused you such concern about the spread of division amongst your own assembly and other Christians, which is more reason for you to have sent a copy of the article to me. However, I do appreciate and accept your apology for not sending me a copy of it.

I would be happy to continue a discussion with you on the subject of "Pastor or Bishop, Does It Really Matter?". This letter may serve as notice that our correspondence will be posted on my website, as I have done on occasion before on other issues with other people. Some readers find it interesting to see written rebuttals to my teaching, and then be able to read my response to them.

My 2.5 hours of refutation to your article may not have been so lengthy, had I not taken such time as to thoroughly represent your comments, along with my own. I am glad you say you "have no ego regarding this" and that you were "not offended personally," since I do not know you personally and certainly had no intention of making this a personal criticism.

Whereas you termed my presentation a "spectacle," .... "carefully examine the verses" is just what I want people to do. I try to call attention to "the words on the page of the Bible," and use them. It is my goal to cause people to look at them. My slogan is to "think about it."

I preach on the internet about various subjects. I defend doctrines that I believe distinguish right-dividers who promote Paul's epistles as the scriptures for the Body of Christ in the dispensation of grace. I guard the KJV as God's word, the final authority in the English language. I plead guilty on all counts, although I am sorry that it made you "very sad, tired, and disappointed." Hopefully, you'll cheer up if you get some rest and let the verses stand as written. It really is a comfort to submit to the scriptures.

I admit that I think 'substituting' words that are not even synonyms is a litmus test for showing who believes the Word of God and who changes it. The word 'pastor' does not mean the same thing as 'bishop.' God did not use the word 'pastor' as the title for a 'local church leader' in this dispensation. He used the word 'bishop' in Paul's epistles (1 Tim 3:1, 1 Tim 3:2, Titus 1:7, Phil 1:1) for that office. That's plain "cut and dried" .... if you use/believe the KJV.

I am well aware of Rom. 16:17 about the issue of fellowship. That was not my message topic. Therefore, I will not switch the subject to fellowship, nor will I address it now, in order to reply to your comments about it.

I assume that, since you don't mind exchanging the word 'pastor' for 'bishop,' then neither would you have a problem replacing 'dispensation' with 'sacred trust' or 'special work' or 'secret plan.' Those 'choices' are found in The Living Bible, as is 'pastor' instead of 'bishop.' My position is that trading such words are not only inaccurate, but corruption (2 Cor 2:17) of purity.

Using the same reasoning, that you see it as being "a matter of liberty" (rather than "a test of faith in God's Word"), surely you allow other preferences, such as water baptism, being born again, speaking in tongues, divine healing, prophesying, miracles, continually confessing sins to get forgiveness, etc. under the same "grace umbrella." Shouldn't a bishop teach "right division" on those dogmas .... or might that cause "more division"? I think he should teach about all those things (certainly including the title of the office of a "local church leader"), and I do. I wonder if you would water baptize a brother, if he asked you to. I'd like to know if you would allow a brother to speak in tongues in your church. They may accuse you of being a source of contention if you spoke to them, or even taught sermons, on those issues. After all, aren't those matters of liberty, and not tests of faith? How would you handle that? I suppose each pastor/shepherd decides when to apply his staff and rod to his individual sheep and his flock.

I am still waiting on your refutation to my teaching. After I taught in the room, no one produced any verses to dispute my points, rather a shepherd (you) and two of your "sheep" criticized my personal presentation. I remember years ago, one of my mentors warned me that if someone couldn't attack with scriptures, they would resort to assailing the messenger. My friends told me they thought I was firm but fair. Several encouraging comments have been given to me, including the reminder that "Traditions die hard." I'm not trying to get off the hook (I don't think I'm on one); I'm not dismissing my own words (I actually agree with myself); I'm not excusing my style or manner of preaching (I'm just "being myself;" I'm only "being who I am.") Like a poem my wife used to read to our young children said, "I am me and you are you. I don't drink or eat like you, or even chew my meat like you, for I am me and you are you." Words of truth should be the revelant matter, not one's voice. I spoke the truth with love .... I have love, first of all, for the truth, and secondly, for the saints .... that was the reason for spotlighting the office of a 'bishop,' as opposed to calling a

“bishop” (an overseer) by the incorrect (and The Living Bible’s) title of “pastor” (metaphorically, a shepherd, who pastures sheep), which you choose to be called. We have habitually been using the wrong term for years, and I believe we should do what we tell others to do .... and that is to “leave the words as they are written, and don’t change them.” Whether “pastors” were aware that the title they were using was in The Living Bible or not, nevertheless, it is there, and it’s there in abundance. It is in error and we should avoid it.

Although you believe I “have chosen the wrong sword to fall on when it comes to faith in the Scriptures;” actually, I don’t believe I’m falling on a sword at all. God’s sword (Eph 6:17) fell on me, and “cut” a word I traditionally used to call “a local church leader.” Now I’m glad I’ve bucked the conventional protestant religious system, in favor of God’s Holy Word. I used the methods available to me to challenge my dispensational brothers to have the courage to do the same.

I have considered that you do not think I have given “sound teaching” on the subject (although you think you can teach soundly on it, and you have promised to do so in the near future, and send it directly to me). I have heard your warning that I will have to answer “for causing more unnecessary division in the Body of Christ.” I have listened to your plea that I will not press this issue and, as you view it, thereby “cause more division in the Body.” But my decision is to continue to expose the verses, compare the KJV with The Living Bible, and boldly proclaim the office of a “bishop” (as “a local church leader,” to use your phrase) as the correct title to use today.

I’ll give you this: You definitely made it clear where you stand (“when the spotlight is off”). But I admonish you to look at what you’re standing on. It’s not the KJV verses, which is the rock of final authority; it’s sinking sand.

I also look forward to our correspondence. Surely, I could expect you will specifically address “a number of errors” you said were in my “argument.” Since my study has already shown that Apollos had been speaking and teaching diligently at Ephesus, knowing only the baptism of John (Acts 18:24-28) until he was called aside and taught the grace message, and the Ephesian church already had disciples who had John’s water baptism (Acts 19:1-7); that church could thereby logically have been called a “flock” (Acts 20:28), during the transition time when God’s programs were moving from Israel’s to the Body of Christ, and before the completed canon of scripture was available, when the special gifts were being exercised (Eph 4:8-13, Rom 12:4-8, 1 Cor 12:27-31) .... I can’t imagine what you’ll come up with!