

In response to the "Shepherd's" letter, this is the "Bishop's" reply.

Whereas you restated your position, that it does not really matter about Pastor or Bishop, I am firmly convinced that "Yes, it DOES really matter," especially for those of us who claim to be "right-dividers," who recognize Paul's unique ministry in the dispensation of grace, and who believe in the KJV's authority as God's Word in the English language just as it matters whether we claim to be "born again" or not, whether we "water baptize" or not, whether we pray for "physical healing" or not, whether we believe in "divine intervention/miracles" or not, whether there are still "apostles" and "prophets" or not, etc.

I am sorry that you are unwilling to continue to correspond with me because I am posting our correspondence on my website. I believe it is both informative and helpful for others to be able to read your objections to my teachings, and my rebuttals. That way, others may reason for themselves with the KJV scriptures I use. I do not see that that would "generate heat." I do not believe that constitutes what you call a "public debate," nevertheless, I regret that you chose to end our discussions, public or private. As for my part, I tell you that my position is honorable and honest, and I am open to be convinced by logical (rightly divided) exposition of God's Word but I do not believe you have provided that. I understand that you have objected to my teachings, but your written response did not carefully, nor properly, reason the VERSES. Instead, you made assumptions that misrepresented the exact words of holy writ, such as "In verse 7 (Titus 1:7) the word bishop is used interchangeably with the word elder," which it is not (Page 4); such as "Then why would we not be exhorted to care for the local church as a pastor?" and you referenced 1 Tim. 3:5, which is specifically written about a "bishop" (1 Tim. 3:2). In my opinion, you employed Strong's Concordance and Thayer's Greek Lexicon Definitions (which "generally" I do not oppose, but on this issue, I found several places I thought to be incorrect), human reasoning, temperaments, and personality traits (which are ineffective to change my mind).

Regarding your statement that I win, I say, "Thank you, I accept your concession (although I wish it came from a heartfelt yielding to the holy scriptures)."

I am interested in your upcoming series addressing Acts 20, Ephesians 4, and Titus 1. I look forward to your directly sending me a link or copy of the material. However, I would welcome your comments on "the bishop" (which you promised you would NOT do), because that is the VERY subject

of the matter. I appreciate your promise not to criticize my character or ministry, especially since you accused me of using this issue "as a litmus test for deciding who believes the Word of God and who doesn't," and choosing "the wrong sword to fall on," and you wrote that my "methods and challenges have the potential for causing more unnecessary division in the Body of Christ." I feel your judgments of me are unfair because I am boldly proclaiming that, for years, we "grace believers" (of all people, who should know better) have been using the wrong word (pastor) for the office of a bishop (whether unknowingly or intentionally), and it behooves us to do what we tell others to do, when we put their nose to the Book and tell them to "look at the word" and "don't change it."

In response to your numbered points, this is my response.

1. I'm glad you "say" that you believe the Word of God is preserved for us in English in the King James Version. But you have adamantly called yourself by a term that The Living Bible uses repeatedly ("pastor") in lieu of the KJV's word "bishop." I did not represent you, your ministry, or your beliefs YOU did. I merely observed your own choice of words.

2. You made quite a distinction between your "draft" copy (which I had at the time) and your "published" copy (which I now have also). However, upon my close comparison between the two "versions," other than the opening paragraph in italics being added, like a "Forward," I only found the following differences:

1. Paragraph 2: "a leader" was changed to "leaders"
2. Paragraph 2: the words "bishop" and "pastor" were changed from beginning with capital (upper case) letters to lower case letters.
3. Paragraph 2: the word "being" was added before "sheep"
4. The last paragraph: the word "believer" was added after "King James Version Bible"
5. The last paragraph: the sentence "This is a "straw-man" argument and should be seen for the smokescreen that it is." was deleted.

Out of a nine pages, those five minor changes certainly do not effect the content. You evidently sent your "draft" copy to someone, who sent it to someone else, who sent it to me. That happens!

3. I hear your insistence that your concern was that "this article was written out of a necessity to establish" your "position on this subject in" your "own local church." I personally think it is wise that a "bishop" teaches (1 Tim. 3:2) his congregation what his position is on any issue, particularly when a person asks about a certain subject. However, it is very apparent

to me that your article (although kindly does not give my name) mentions many things that I have personally said and preached. Upon recognizing several statements that I know I made, I felt quite sure that my teachings on the subject must have been what stirred your article to be written. Therefore, I sense no remorse for having addressed it. I did not use your name. You spoke up to identify yourself, as I had done, when I admitted to saying things I knew I said that were written in your article.

You certainly have the freedom to express whatever you want to to your assembly, and likewise, I have the liberty to do the same and on Paltalk, as well. I opened a room and invited people to listen if they were interested to do so.

In your second paragraph of point 3, you have defended yourself for doing the very thing you faulted me for: You stated that you **“write daily, teach at least weekly, and occasionally write a blog entry. All of these things are publicly available in written, audio or video format on the web. This is how I make our material available to our local congregation and others who wish to see it.”**

Well now, that is what I did too! I have articles posted on my website that anyone can download and print. Having someone oppose them is a risk we each take when we make them “publicly available” on the web!

4. If you want to “air” my Paltalk message of Nov. 11, 2007, that’s fine with me. I hope people will listen to it, and reason it with their KJV Bible!
5. I will take your recommendation to “think about” Colossians 4:6 again.

I have several questions that I would like to ask you. Such as,

1. Why do you “single out” the discussion of this issue (Pastor or Bishop) as having “the potential for causing a great deal of confusion and certainly dissension in the Body of Christ” yet you do not consider other issues, that distinguish us “grace believers” from many mainline traditional religious denominations, are not “off limits” Should I seek your counsel on which issues may be “divisive” before I teach on them?

2. Why do you think that the word “elder” (Titus 1:5-7) is “meant to be an equivalent term” to the “bishop” when a distinction can be seen by comparing 1 Tim 5:17 with 1 Tim 3:1, between elders who “rule” and those who “rule well” and those who “labor/work” “in the word and doctrine” (naturally, the “bishops”)?

3. You quoted Eph. 4: 11,12:

*"Eph 4: 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"*

Then you made the statement "It is obvious from these two verses that pastors were given to edify the Body of Christ." "What other conclusion could we come to except to say that pastors were given for edifying the Body of Christ?"

Using the exact same reasoning, then it would also be applicable to say that it would be obvious that the "apostles" and "prophets" were also given to edify the Body of Christ.

So, do you believe there are also apostles and prophets today? Many people claim to be apostles and prophets today. Could you/would you teach that they are wrong? Would that not be "divisive" to the Body of Christ? What if they quoted:

*"1 Cor 12:27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.
28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."*

How would you retrieve the "pastors" while disposing the "apostles" and "prophets" as "transitional?"

4. You made the statement "Yes the flock is the "church" as in The Church "which is His Body." How do you reason that, especially if you listened to my explanation on Acts 20: 17, because we know by Acts 19: 1-7 and Acts 18: 24,25, that there were believers in the church at Ephesus which were in the "Jewish" program, knowing only the baptism of John?

5. What makes you think that the term "sheep" is an inter-dispensational title?

6. I would really like to know your answer to one of your own questions, to which you did not reply: "When did the flock become a Body?"

7. Why would you "substitute" the word "pastor" for the man GOD called a "bishop" in 1 Tim. 3:1-5 while claiming that you are true to the KJV?

I understand and regret that you are closing the door on our discussion, and therefore, I do not expect a reply. However, as is your practice and mine, this will be "publicly posted on the web" (still without your name, of course).

I believe your "bottom line" paragraph is completely wrongly concluded.

On the issue of "Pastor or Bishop," both of us cannot be right. I want to be teaching the word of God rightly.

In simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God,

Bishop Dowell