

Is the One-Pastor Church Biblical?

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Updated: Nov 28, 2014

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I have had some deacons and pastors cancel plans to allow me to give creation presentations to their congregations based on what I've written here, but not one has yet been able to refute the information I'm providing. This article is not intended to make war with any church congregation. I'm simply showing the truth of the Scripture, and the major problems created when we do not follow the proper church structure given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ, and because of this, I am often shunned.

*Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?
-Galatians 4:16*

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

-Colossians 2:8

Sadly, many pastors today have been brainwashed by traditions and state-funded seminary colleges into doctrine that is not taught in Scripture, and many are completely unaware this has happened to them. Because we are **a nation that highly respects persons** (i.e. sin), and because of that, they refuse to believe that their seminar colleges could possibly be wrong, **very few pastors have been willing to read this article, let alone study to understand what I'm about to say.**

The average church-goer almost never raises the question title of this article, and I have yet to see another pastor or deacon even attempt to discuss it, but as of April 2014, I have received many emails from Christians over the past year thanking us for talking about this issue when so many will not. It is *ASSUMED* that this one-pastor system is a Biblical standard, and the average Christian would not think to question what their church leadership has established.

*It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.
-Psalm 118:8*

Before we begin, I need to make known that I am not condemning the concept of the pastor in the church. Church leadership tends to get overly defensive when they read this kind of subject matter, especially if there's a paycheck involved. I am only here to show where pastors belong in the church, in what capacity, the *ASSUMPTIONS* that have been made, and why this problem needs to be fixed.

Based on personal experience in, and involvement with, one-pastor churches, and based on my reading of God's Word, I must take the position that the one-pastor churches are *NOT* Scriptural, and most are failing. I want to remind everyone that not all churches operate in the manner I'm about to describe, but it is *EXTREMELY* rare to see; much more rare than most church-goers are willing to admit.

I have never met a pastor, deacon, or church leader in general who has admitted that his church is doing things wrong, but it is a ridiculous fallacy to conclude that there are no churches doing anything wrong simply because the pastors of them say so. What we need to understand is that most will not *ADMIT* guilt in certain areas, but would rather attempt to justify themselves.

*And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.
-Luke 16:15*

For example, I have never met a single man or woman who has said, "I'm a bad driver," so should I first conclude that bad drivers don't exist, or should I conclude that some people aren't being honest?

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.
-Proverbs 12:15

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts.
-Proverbs 21:2

I'm sure every pastor, deacon, and church member who reads this article will think his church among the rare breed that are doing things right, but due to our prideful hearts, we often don't want to admit the things we do wrong.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

-Jeremiah 17:9

This article will apply to all sizes of churches, small home churches to large mega-church stadiums, because we are going to address the fundamentals of this issue. I would ask each reader who has been involved in church buildings to take a look at their own situations, and consider each point in comparison.

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

-2 Corinthians 13:5

Outside of one verse in Ephesians (which we will discuss later), Jeremiah is the only place 'pastors' are specifically mentioned in the entire Bible. Though many pastors have preached about the 'law of first mention' (i.e. the first place something is mentioned sets the stage for how it is generally viewed in Scripture), I have not always found it to be a 'law' (i.e. a "law" requires 100% accuracy), but if we go by the first mention rule, the first time pastors are mentioned in the Bible is in a negative context:

The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.

-Jeremiah 2:8

I'm not saying all pastors are bad, but the first mention of them is not good, so it always makes me laugh when I hear a pastor get up behind the pulpit and preach the "law" of first mention. It's interesting to note that the Pharisees and Sadducees were the "pastors" of Christ's days on earth. They were the ones trained in the scriptures, being overseers, and took positions of leadership in the synagogues, but our Lord Jesus Christ warned his disciples:

Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees... Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

-Matthew 16:5-12

It gets even more interesting that many of our pastors come with the prefix "doctor," (some I've seen just given that as an honorary title with a degree) and many of them are required to go to a Bible college or seminary to get an official degree or licensed ordainment status before they can begin "ministering" in a church. The Bible refers to these types of men as "scribes."

Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;

-Luke 20:46

(See also Mark 12:38; Read "Reverend is an Unbiblical Title" here at creationliberty.com for more details; titles were never used in the New Testament churches.)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

-Matthew 23:15

Again, before anyone blows up at me, I'm not saying all "pastors" and "doctors" are teaching bad things. In fact, I've listened to a lot of different pastors teach, and I've learned some very valuable things, as Christ used their words to open my eyes to certain topics. God has anointed some pastors to do His work:

And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

-Jeremiah 3:15

However, we also need to understand that God is going to hold accountable those pastors who are allowing His church (i.e. the flock of God, the Body of Christ; *NOT* buildings) fall into ruin, and those who are claiming unbiblical, heavy-handed authority for themselves, which is extremely commonplace today. God spent a lot more time warning pastors than anything else:

For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.

-Jeremiah 10:21

The Bible describes the details of "*brutish*" men; that they refuse to be rebuked or corrected, and have become vain and foolish:

Whoso loveth instruction loveth knowledge: but he that hateth reproof is brutish.
-Proverbs 12:1

But they are altogether brutish and foolish: the stock is a doctrine of vanities.
-Jeremiah 10:8

God warns these brutish men because they are scattering His children:

Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.
-Jeremiah 23:1

Praise God that we have the Salvation of Jesus Christ that saves us even when we do wrong, but knowing the words of our Lord, should we not, at the very least, be cautious of our pastors? When the Bible warns them about destroying flocks, why is it that we automatically *ASSUME* they can do no wrong? That tends to be the commonplace attitude of church-goers. In fact, I've personally met quite a few pastors who have the "I-can-do-no-wrong," and they will not suffer to hear any rebuke, reproof, or correction. We Christians ought to work to eliminate that preconceived mindset from the Body of Christ, and sanctify ourselves from such people.

Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.
-Psalm 146:3

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
-Proverbs 3:5

I often hear pastors talk about being "accountable" to someone, and that all of us must be accountable to one in authority, but where is *THEIR* accountability? Of course their typical response is to say they are accountable to someone else, but the problem with men in power is that they can cherry-pick to whom they allow themselves to be accountable. The problem I often see is that, *IF* a pastor is accountable to someone, it is often a man chosen whom will agree with his every word and action, and if the pastor is rebuked by this man, the pastor seems to have full discretionary power to conveniently choose another "accountability buddy" who won't do any reproving, because after all, if someone disagrees with the pastor, they've "fallen away."

account (v): to deem, judge, consider, think

(See 'account', Noah Webster's Dictionary, 1828, retrieved May 29, 2014, [webstersdictionary1828.com])

In this context, the accounting is a judging of the person in question, but the concept of an "accountability buddy" is not found in Scripture. I challenge anyone to show a place where that is mentioned or required. In fact, Paul wrote to Corinth that men should account of those in authority:

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.
Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.
-1 Corinthians 4:1-2

So the church building leadership, if they're following the Word, should allow all to judge them righteously. And that's what the noble Bereans did when they listened to preachers:

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.
-Acts 17:11

They didn't take a preacher's word for it; they checked out what he said to them to see if he was legitimate. **They judged righteous judgment.** However, the one we must ultimately be accountable to is the Lord Jesus Christ:

For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.
-1 Corinthians 4:4

So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.
-Romans 14:12

It is not the congregation of a church that needs to be accountable to the pastor, but the pastor must be accountable to the body of believers in the church. The truth of Scripture is exactly *OPPOSITE* of what's being taught in most churches today.

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for YOU.

-Hebrews 13:17

Since the Bereans were "searching the scriptures daily" to find out if what they heard was true, this means the word they received was from the preachers that would stand up and teach. They didn't automatically trust a man just because he said he was a "pastor" or "minister," but rather, they checked him out to make sure he was on Biblical foundation, which is something *VERY* few Christians do today, and very few pastors allow themselves to be made accountable to other Christians. Most pastors, behind closed doors, despise rebuke and reproof, and despise anyone judging them through the Scripture.

Again, many pastors have learned these traditions in their seminary college, and thus they carry them on simply because they were told to do so, rather than checking out the Scripture to see if that's what they should be doing.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

-Colossians 2:8

I have listened to many sermons in which the pastor taught and/or did things that are absolutely not Biblical, so we need to search the Holy Scriptures daily to see if the things our pastors tell us is the truth, because, since the days of Martin Luther, the Christian community has adopted a general saying: "The Bible is our final authority in all matters of faith and practice." In my time working in ministry, I have not found this to be true for most Christians. I hear many say it, but they don't live that way. The Bible is their final authority in *SOME* matters of faith and practice, or even *MOST* matters of faith and practice, but not all. **If you are a Christian who lives the way you say you believe, and the Bible is the final authority for ALL matters, then we need to make God's Word our authority when it comes to the position and authority a pastor is granted in the Body of Christ.**

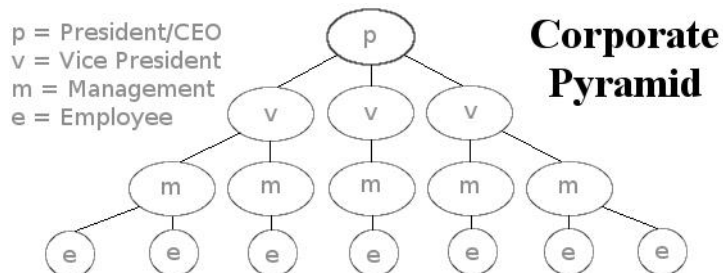
Consider the following:

Where in the Bible is a single pastor given authority and station over the church?

- Where in Scripture is one man given single leadership and representation of his church?
- Where in Scripture is a pastor supposed to be paid a contractual salary?
- Why do church officials seek pastoral applications from far away places, instead of looking to the Holy Spirit to provide what is needed within the congregation?

Some will object to the question of paid pastors, saying that the Bible tells us a laborer is worthy his hire. That's true, but many Christian churches are also practicing "storehouse tithing," which teaches giving of necessity under the old law and yoke of bondage. No where in the Bible does God teach pastors are supposed to sign contracts to take a salary, which can lead to many more problems.

(Read "Is Tithing a Christian Requirement?" here at creationliberty.com for more details)



The typical church will say it is run by a board of elders. Though this may be true in some churches, the structure of the pastor and elders is setup like a corporate structure, giving heed mainly to the pastor, rather than the Biblical system set forth by the Holy Spirit in Antioch.

It's fascinating that the churches of modern-day America are setup the same way. Think about it for a moment. Have you not heard pastors and deacons refer to the "corporate church?" Of course, the word "corporate" literally means "united," but also maintains a corporate business-like structure.

But Jesus Christ told us that this structure of superior authority over one another was *NOT* supposed to take place in churches:

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

-Matthew 20:25-26

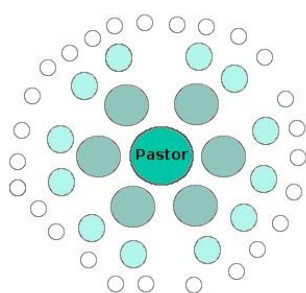
When looking at how many of the churches are structured, they are being primed to join in with a One-World Super-Church, and a One-World Religion. Heretics like Rick Warren have already setup a system and guidelines to bring pastors into a single ruling authority over the church buildings of the world.

(Read "[Rick Warren vs The Gospel - Exposing The Purpose-Driven Church](#)" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

Growing up, I was able to experience small churches (20 or less), medium-sized churches (about 200), and large churches (1000+). Needless to say, I got a feel for the different sizes of a church. The size of the church is not so much the problem as the *STRUCTURE* of the church.

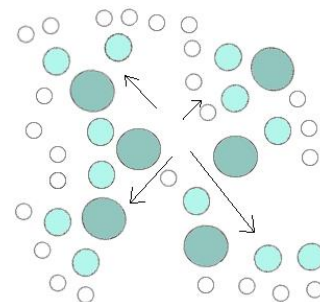
In this diagram, those of you who have gone to church on a regular basis all your lives can relate to this turtled existence of your church structure. This puts all the low-pyramid members on the outside, moving all the way into the hard-to-reach, and often times prestigious, inner circles.

For those of you who have gone through the church process of "losing your pastor," (i.e. the



pastor moved on to another location) you will be able to relate to mild depression that comes over the church, not to mention, the lack of direction. Is this depression and lack of direction because the Holy Spirit left the church? No. The problem is in the church structure because when a pastor leaves, everything the church followed left with him.

Many church split-ups happen after a pastor, under this structure, leaves the church. I have discussed this with other Christians who testify to, at minimum, members leaving the church after the pastor is gone.



For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.

-Jeremiah 10:21

It is quite common that people go to a church building on a Sunday morning to be entertained by a preacher who is a very charismatic speaker, or in other words, they're not really going to hear the Word of God; they're going to hear the preacher. It kinda' reminds me of the *Price-Is-Right* TV show -- once Bob Barker left the show, CBS lost many of their ratings because when the audience's favorite host left, the show wasn't as entertaining so they stopped watching, and that's exactly what's happening in church buildings all over the U.S. right now.

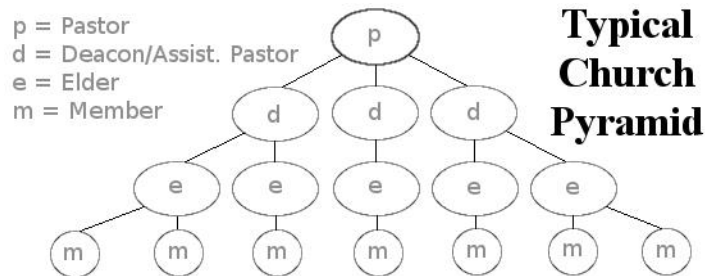
In describing the Biblical structure of the church, we need to look at the books of Acts and 1 Corinthians. In Acts, the only people appointed and ordained, or those that received anyone, were the elders.

And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

-Acts 14:23

And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

-Acts 15:6



This shows us that the church is to be overseen by a team of people, not by a pastor. We need to stop for a moment to address those that will say their church has a group of elders that make the decisions in the church. Here are some points to consider:

- The pastor is still viewed as the representative and authoritative leader of the church. As a single leader, he influences the rest of the congregation outside of the elders. This leaves the pastor with little rebuke if he goes astray.
(501c3 corporations automatically promote the pastor to "CEO" of the corporate structure by contractual agreement with the IRS. Read "501c3: The Devil's Church" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)
- Many members are put in a "laity" position, separated from the inner circles of the church leadership.
- Most churches keep their meetings private, where the rest of the church body cannot hear what is being said. In general, most churches just have the pastor deliver a message to the church when a decision has been made, and most of the time, the church body will not contest anything, even if the decision is not good.
- That separation causes the "laity" of the church body to neglect their God-given responsibility for witnessing to the lost, edification of the church body, personal Bible study, charity (including non-financial), etc.
- When was the last time you heard of your Christian leadership fasting in prayer for the selecting of new leaders as described in Acts 14:23?

Though I will probably never find an answer, I am very curious how the church went from Antioch with the church body having overseeing elders, all working to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the charity of His Kingdom, to a pastoral position overseeing the elders and creating an outside laity of the church body that, generally, is only relied upon for cash offerings and extra hands for a bake sale. Though I doubt there is a way to prove it, I suspect Christians foolishly adopted this corporate structure from **the Catholic church**, and have traditionally held on to it, rather than bringing the bride of Christ back into the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Continuing in the book of Corinthians, we see Paul, a humble man of the Lord who thought himself not worthy of being an apostle, describe the diversity of the body of Christ in administration and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

-1 Corinthians 12:4-5

For the body is not one member, but many.

-1 Corinthians 12:14

So once again, we see here that the church body is to be overseen by a team of Christians, based on gifts of the Spirit. Nowhere in scripture is a single pastoral leadership given authority over the church, and though I'm sure some pastors will be upset if they read this, we need to stick with the Holy Word of God:

Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

-Acts 5:29

The only thing that has ever been required to start a church is to have a small group of believers, studying the Word and growing in the Lord, to come together to begin the work of the Holy Spirit. No church building is required. There's no need of hiring a pastor. When the body of believers come together, and listen to the Holy Spirit, elders will be appointed as they are needed.

Pastors vs Bishops - Things That Are Different Are Not The Same

A pastor is described in the Bible as one who teaches and cares for the flock of God.

And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

-Jeremiah 3:15

Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.

-Jeremiah 23:2

However, there is a lot more put on to the role of pastor than there should be. Pastors are typically viewed as overseers, ruling over the church building they're in, and it's gotten so bad, church buildings are no longer viewed as a "church" unless they have a pastor running it.

One of the terms we never hear anymore in Christianity is "bishop." Catholicism has the title of bishop, but those men are not a bishop according to Christian doctrine.

This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

-1 Timothy 3:1-7

In defining a bishop, we can see that they must be men (*husband of one wife*), they shouldn't be young (*not a novice*), and they serve and teach the church. Many Christians have mistakenly taken this to be the role of a pastor, and it is not because the Bible actually uses the words "elder" and "bishop" interchangeably.

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

-Titus 1:5

Then it goes on to give the similar descriptions we just read in 1 Timothy:

If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

-Titus 1:6-7

Why is it that we give the role of a pastor all the descriptive qualities of a bishop/elder?

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

-1 Timothy 5:17

Keep in mind, this doesn't mean everyone that's an elder rules well. And it also doesn't mean all of them labor in the word and doctrine, because there are many roles to fill in a Biblical church. The point I'm making is that this role of elder/bishop is *NOT* equivalent to a pastor.

The church buildings in America are leaving the ruling of the elders, and they are turning to pastors to rule over them as a prince, which we have already established that Christ said we were not to do.

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

-Matthew 20:25-26

There are some churches who automatically consider the pastor an elder, and most churches consider the pastor above the elders in an ultimate ruling authority. None of this is Biblical.

The typical church-going Christian cries out for a pastoral overseer taking up an authoritative position over the whole. If Christians cannot see this happening, just look at how much red tape one has to go through to become the single, head-pastor of a church building. The Bible tells us, in 1 Samuel, why Christians are calling out desperately for someone to reign over them:

But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

-1 Samuel 8:6-7

Our sinful nature gives us the desire to have someone reign over us. Why else would mankind have bowed to kings throughout history? Even in the supposedly-free nation of United States, though we were once at liberty as a body of Christians to be without an earthly ruler, the people now seek out the president to be the king (single-leadership) of the nation. Likewise, Christians, due to the fall of mankind through sin, still have a desire to be ruled over, but our Lord Jesus Christ is our ruler, and He uses the Holy Spirit in us, so if we reject the system of the church our Lord setup for us, we are rejecting His ruler ship over us, and seek out a pastor (single-leadership) of the church.

There are some who will question why having a single pastor is wrong, claiming that the pastor is listening to the Lord and Holy Spirit, and is a representative of what God wants the church to do. But I say to them, what is the difference between your church and the Roman Catholic church? The Catholics will claim the same thing about their priests.

Those of us who are Saved by our Lord Jesus Christ should be of one heart and one mind, and though we will have disagreements, they should be minor matters, as talked about in [Romans 14](#). (If the issue is greater than minor disputes, for example doctrinal issues, or sins against one another, then [Matthew 18:15-20](#) has the proper way to address the situation.) The reason a pastor is required of most churches, and the reason churches split up when a single-leadership pastor is not involved, is because the brethren in Christ today are unable to trust, love, and edify one another by lack of faith in the Holy Spirit.

Disagreements over minor, disputable matters should never be something that would separate the church, and if the church is splitting over two pastors arguing amongst one another, then the church congregation is following after pastors instead of the Holy Spirit. I'm not saying that a church split is automatically wrong, as some have split due to size, and others due to "rightly dividing the Word of truth" ([2Ti 2:25](#)), standing up for the truth of the Word against infiltrating wolves, but most of the church splits I hear about typically involve a pastor feeling his authority is being questioned or threatened.

But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

-Matthew 20:26-28

I've witnessed far too many pastors spend more time protecting their authority than teaching the truth of the Word. This is not to say that every pastor is like that, as there are some good pastors out there, but the personal experience of myself, and other who have written me with their testimony, have demonstrated that the authority claimed by pastoral leadership in most churches today is unbiblical.

(Read "Who is an Authority in the Church?" here at creationliberty.com for more details.)

So the elders are to be edifying one another's leadership, allowing each to teach and speak correction to one another, in humility and meekness, being unworthy before our Lord Jesus Christ, not in any arrogance of a leadership role that he must protect for the sake of pride and/or paycheck. We must all remember that our individual voices are not the end all to Christian faith, and that the strength of the church body is built through edification:

How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

-1 Corinthians 14:26

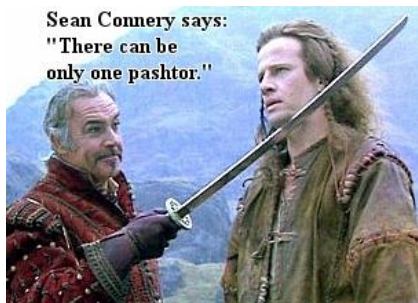
So what roles are to be in the church? Paul, by the grace of our Lord, gave us four categories of eldership in the church:

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:

-Ephesians 4:11-12

- **Pastor:** This role helps train and counsel Christians in the doctrine of the Bible, focusing on strengthening and developing those in a congregation.
- **Evangelist:** This role also trains and counsels Christians, but instead of shepherding one specific congregation, they move around outside the congregation, and focus on church growth.
- **Prophet:** This role trains and counsels Christians as well, but keeps the congregation in check with proper rebuke, focusing on maintaining truth and righteousness in God's Word. (Just as the prophets of the Old Testament did.)
- **Apostle:** This role is that of a missionary, typically working in pairs of two or more, to develop church congregations in places where none exist. Apostles must temporarily fulfill all three roles until the congregation is big enough to develop roles from within itself.

NOTE: Some Christians object to apostleship, claiming that only the original twelve could be apostles. The twelve apostles of Jesus Christ are very distinct in Scripture, and had specific roles assigned to them, and there will never be any more like them. However, the Bible never says there would be *ONLY* twelve apostles, because an apostle is the same as a missionary, and we've had plenty of those over the past 2,000 years. I believe the term missionary was developed to respect the Christ-selected position of the original twelve, but 'missionary' is not a term found in the Bible; they were called "apostles." Anyone today who claims to be an apostle with the same authority as the original twelve are delusional, operating outside Biblical authority, but those who claim to be an apostle in respect to missionary work are standing on Biblical foundation.



The problem with the church today is that the pastor is typically the only commonly recognized administration, and in modern-day systems, there is only one (with an occasional back-up deacon). I am not saying that churches don't *CLAIM* there is other administration, I'm telling Christians to look at how the church operates. If you add in the kind of bickering and gossip I've seen among many pastoral circles, we have developed a "Highlander" form of church.

This kind of single-leadership thinking causes a lot of undue strife, and scatters the flock.

Now let's take a look at the Antioch church structure lead by the Holy Spirit:

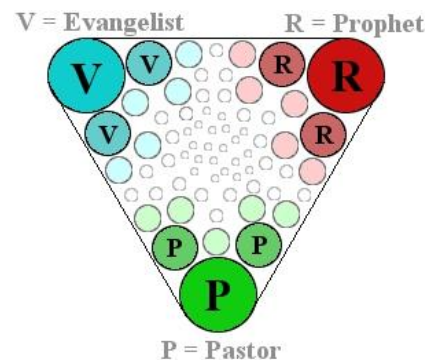
In this Antioch-style arrangement, instead of the members of the body being on the outside, they are on the inside, protected by those most experienced leaders to keep the new converts safe, and in a better position to be educated in the fullness of God's Word, as well as given direction by the Holy Spirit of what role he will fulfill in the body of Christ. This basic triangle shape is not limited to 3 points of leadership, but can have more than one prophet, evangelist, and/or pastor, and though a gifted pastor can be used to speak from the pulpit, other pastors may take on that role as the Holy Spirit leads them. One of each role should always be among the elders.

Instead of a single head, the church operates in families working together in discipleship. Disciples must be in voluntary submission to the elders. (They may leave at anytime if they do not accept the elders, or if the elders abuse their authority.) This submission is not the heavy-handed kind that damages relationships, but rather, a submission for protection and growth within a family who loves and listens, and as ministers, the elders become servant to those in submission to them. (Similar to how a teenager's submission to one's parents allows them to provide for him, protect him, and enable him to fulfill his God-given role.) With this setup, if an elder is called away from this church body to be an apostle, their role is easily and immediately filled by those directly involved in that family of administration, allowing the church to remain strong no matter what comes their way.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *Elders are required to be bound to each other in love, humility, and meekness of heart. That means they must be submitted to one another, or it would be very dangerous to have disciples submitted to them. The model of Christ's love is demonstrated to the rest of the church by how elders edify one another and humble themselves to each other.*

This church structure also places the new church members direct in the center of the church, which makes them directly involved in the church's business. Whereas most churches today, many people sit on the sidelines watching everything happen, this involves all the Christians together, with some elders for leadership with very specific purposes.

I have listened to some Christian church leaders say this structure of church system would invite in false doctrines and incompetent church leadership. But I say to them, be careful what you speak because you are also heavily implying that the Holy Spirit is incompetent and incapable of putting in place efficient leadership, and therefore, Jesus Christ needs you to take on what He cannot accomplish.



*And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?
-Matthew 8:26*

Though disciples are placed in a family of administration, all elders speak to and learn from one another, as all disciples do the same. As long as the elders present themselves in humility and meekness before the Lord and before each other, they will be protected and guided by the Holy Spirit.

The greatest example we have of this type of edifying, loving, and family-based system working is in The Holy Trinity. The Father tells us, "Listen to My Son." The Son says, "I do only as My Father does." The Son sends the Holy Spirit to guide us, and the Holy Spirit glorifies the Father and the Son. In this perfect example of unity, is this not how we should also act, being of one mind, and speaking of one mouth, in Christ?

*That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
-Romans 15:6*

*Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.
-Phillipians 2:2*

*Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be
courteous:
-1 Peter 3:8*

Not just in the church, but also in ministry (even creation ministries), there is so much bickering and arguing over the dumbest stuff that doesn't really matter. Because many Christians in America have lost sight of the Gospel, and can no longer work together in love, they demand a ruler set over them in the church.

Because the church body demands a single-leadership pastor in their church, it not only forces the pastor to take on the impossible task of running all the roles permanently at the same time (which only Jesus Christ can do), it diminishes the other roles intended for administration. The churches of America have turned away from the Word of God due to the rejection of prophets. Evangelists are now generally absent among the church body, and are being forced to get an ordained license as a pastor, just to be able to do the work evangelists are intended to do. In short, all non-pastoral roles of administration are forced into a pastoral position (i.e. music *pastor*, youth *pastor*, etc) which is not among the roles the Bible has established.

(Some reason for this can be attributed to the 501c3 contracts most churches now maintain; Read "501c3: The Devil's Church" here at creationliberty.com for more details)

The more I speak with Christians in discussion involving the problems with the church, the more I find the humanistic corporate system to be another serious reason for the falling away of the church of Christ. (It's not the only reason, but it's a serious problem among them.) More and more, home churches are starting to appear once again because church leadership is failing, and this is a good thing because the Lord can once again use the Holy Spirit to work in the church bodies in the homes, just as He did in the book of Acts.

So here are some important questions that I want you to take with you and search the scriptures for answers:

- What qualifies a man for leadership in the church? Is it seminary training? Or is it the Holy Spirit?
- Where is the scriptural authority to have a single pastor as the head authority and representation of the congregation?
- Why do many Christians and church leaders reject the system that our Lord gave us for the church body?

I feel the need to make a note here as a warning to other Christians that may see this to be an important issue in the church today: These kinds of questions have gotten me shunned out of churches and ministries in the past. As soon as I start posing these questions and backing up my answers with God's Word, I soon find myself abandoned, and many Christians/pastors will not have any more communication with me. For example, in a church a while back, I had one assistant pastor see this article, and I was rejected by him in coming to their church to give a presentation on the lies of evolution. Think about it: Was that a decision made by the church congregation or the elders? No, it was made by one man who has claimed authority over the church congregation, which is more evidence to the problems mentioned in this article. If you bring up this topic in your church, I recommend you be prepared for strong opposition because you will find people that will seek to stop you from ministering *AT ALL*.

As sad as it is, our nation's churches have become respecters of persons. If someone with the title of 'pastor' in front of their name doesn't like what another Christian teaches because it's a conflict of interest, **even if it is directly from the Word of God**, then the pastor will often direct sheep away from what the Holy Spirit would have his flock learn, and no one keeps him accountable because he's the sole administrator and representative. (*I have seen pastors do this against members of his own church!*)

(Read "Why Are Christians Respecters of Persons?" here at creationliberty.com for more details)

Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.
-Jeremiah 23:1

Many Christians do not stop to consider that, typically, the head pastor's word is taken for granted. Most of the pastor's congregation, in any church building, takes his word for whatever he says and teaches, whether it is Biblical or not, instead of doing what the Bible commands of us:

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.
-1 Thessalonians 5:21

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
-Romans 12:2

The changes required to shift the modern American corporate church into the Antioch system are very simple, but most Christians will find them too difficult or too radical to even bother to attempt. In this author's opinion, I believe only a small number of pastors in our country would even be willing to humble themselves to the level required to achieve their proper role in the church, and most church members would not want to have to take on any of their God-given responsibility. My belief is not because I think it is impossible for them to do so, but because I observe 2 Thessalonians:

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;
-2 Thessalonians 2:3

As we prepare for the final upcoming days of persecution, as our Lord Jesus Christ has warned us would come, we need to stop and seriously consider if we are on the right track. Thessalonians speaks of the church falling away, and I want to remind Christians that though the Catholic church is in the position right now to become **the covering for the one-world religion in Revelation**, the Catholic church is not the church falling away because it was never on track to begin with. This is talking about people who are on the right path, but are falling away. We had better make **ABSOLUTELY** certain we are doing what Christ would have us do:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.
-Matthew 7:13-14

On the other hand, I know there are some Christians, and pastors, looking for these answers. They are working themselves into the ground because they have to run around doing all the jobs of the church of Christ at once, and in their heart and mind they know something is not right. Those few pastors also know there is a problem, but do not know the solution. I pray that these men of the Lord would have their eyes opened, as they are wonderful servants of God's Kingdom, and if it is in our Lord's will, I pray Christ would use this article to be a blessing to them.

If you are a Christian, I plead earnestly with you to search the Scriptures and find out if what I say here is true. Don't take my word for it, and don't take your pastor's word for it. Set aside your emotions, search the Word of God, and allow Him to teach you.

Some Christians have asked me: "Doesn't the Bible say we are to be under an authority?"

Yes, and that authority is our Lord Jesus Christ who was given authority by Almighty God the Father. What I find amazing is how many Christians (pastors included) think that all Christendom must be put under the authority of a pastor and/or pastoral leadership. I challenge anyone to search the Bible and find where it is that we are commanded to put ourselves under the authority of a single pastor.

(See "Who is an Authority in the Church?" here at creationliberty.com for more details)