

INFLUENCE OF DENOMINATIONALISM ON THE LORD'S CHURCH III

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THE ELDERSHIP

God in His infinite wisdom has organized the church in such a way that there are buffers placed in the church to prevent the invasion of false teachers and teaching. Of course, the Word of God is one such buffer. But, another is the eldership. But why is it that people having been influenced by denominationalism can enter the fellowship of the church and preach and teach unmolested, their false doctrine? Unfortunately, in many congregations today, false teaching goes un-rebuked and unquestioned by the eldership. Brother Goebel Music forcefully stated, "Elders need to arise and "sound the trumpet" or suffer the consequences of being overthrown! Elders are the Lord's watchmen; the responsibility is awesome and God's word is being mightily opposed by a mighty host of enemies. This tells me that it is more than a glorified finance committee, as they watch in behalf of souls as they that shall give account. Let it not be overlooked that the charge of the Christian is to submit, and when one rebels against them he rebels against God! In an age of general anarchy and tendency to ignore duly authorized powers, this point needs stressing ... The elders have the awesome duty of being a watchman and that means they are to warn, be it (1) drifting and drinking members, (2) immoral members with illicit affections, (3) false teaching members, (4) an implacable world-invading spiritual host, (5) skepticism, (6) atheism, (7) the seen and unseen that is infiltrating the church members disguised as sound teachers and brilliant leaders (8) members who surrender to the evil of inertia, (9) neglectful and indifferent members, (10) pleasure-seeking members, or (11) members with dispositional diseases like jealousy, anger, pride, envy, rivalry, etc."

There are at least two reasons for the shameful lack of leadership in the church. One is the absence of vigilance on the part of the eldership. Another is the lack of biblical knowledge among them. Sadly, some elderships do not understand, or they simply do not want the responsibility, for being the watchmen over the walls of Zion (Ezekiel 33). It is the responsibility of the eldership to "exhort and convince the gainsayer" (Titus 1:9). There is a distinct absence of a backbone in many elders. They will not muster the courage to stand against a "popular and influential" preacher. The

preacher has brought error into the church, but nothing is done. Or perhaps the false teacher is a liberal giver in the congregation. It may be that the elders do not want to “rock the boat” and cause “waves.” Their view is that the church will have peace at any cost. This is **not** the teaching of Jesus (Luke 12:51-53). It also might mean that there would be a mass exodus of people from the congregation. Because of this fear and the consequences of this action (loss of contribution, loss of participating members, budget problems) elders will remain shamefully silent. Had the elderships that oversaw the work of Shelly, Cope, and Walling squelched and marked these men, and men like them, their influence would have been greatly checked. To be continued.... Lee