



Three Rivers Fellowship

Pauline Bootcamp (Session 6)

The Conduct of the Ministry

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1. The Extended Service

Not everyone within a local Pauline assembly is part of the assembly's eldership. If that were not so, one would either have an extremely mature assembly or an exceedingly small one! An important question that comes up in a discussion of local assembly polity is the role/responsibility of those not formally part of the assembly's eldership. To set the stage for this topic it is important to remember that the purpose of the local Pauline assembly is the formal edification of the Body of Christ, meaning that *the entire infrastructure of the assembly is designed for the saints of the congregation.*

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:

13 *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 fulness of Christ:*

14 *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

Note in these wonderful Ephesian verses that the very purpose of the eldership (Deacons and Bishops [teaching-deacons]) is for the express multi-fold purpose of:

1. Perfecting of the saints (congregation)
2. Work of the ministry
3. Edifying (building up/education) of the Body of Christ,

Each of which is to continue until all members of the Body of Christ reach a mature state, no longer *tossed to and fro* by every wind of doctrine, until we all collectively come to be a perfect male, until we are each and all the fullness of Christ (occurs at glory). So, it is especially important to recognize that the saints of the congregation are the very object and focus of the ministry of the formal assembly officers.

Almost every assembly has temporary duties that require periodic performing. To perform this work, the eldership of the assembly may appoint an individual or individuals to perform these tasks. In these cases, the individual "tasked" to perform these things must also satisfy the Pauline criteria that are setup in 1 Tim 3. This requirement would indicate that it ought to be the desire/goal of every saint to satisfy the criteria of the deacon and thus allowing it said ... "the deacon provides the template of maturity for all saints, male and female".

The sub-sections below address various categories of assembly individuals, who are part of the congregation, but are not part of the formal assembly eldership. These dear saints (who are also mature) can and ought to play a large role in the general welfare and vibrancy of the local assembly.

1.1. Servants in General

The word for servant is deacon (διάκονος). It can be used in the broad sense for anyone performing a service or in the narrow sense referring to a deacon-officer of the assembly. At any given time, the assembly may need the services of individuals with specific talents (e.g., electrical, construction, audio-video, accounting, etc.). The persons chosen for these activities would be temporarily working as part of the assembly's extended service under the authority of the eldership.

1.2. The Role of the "Non-Elder" Male of the Pauline Assembly

1. Progressing in maturity as above

As stated in above, the deacon criteria ought to be the goal for every male saint of the assembly. Please examine the criteria. Can a true Christian man say that he would not wish to satisfy these honorable items?

We should think not! Notice that Paul tells Titus that “sound doctrine” produces proper behavior and a “lifestyle” that honors Christ as Head of the Body (Tit 2:1,2,6).

Titus 2:1 But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:
 2 That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience...
 6 Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

2. Honorably operating in an unofficial capacity when called upon by the Eldership

Like Philip the *Jewish* "deacon", all men ought to seek to fulfill the characteristics of the deacon. In this way they manifest and document themselves as saints and worthy of the office of deacon (1 Tim 3:10).

Like the servants briefly mentioned above non-elder males can operate within the authority of the eldership for special tasks and duties. These men would meet the criteria in 1 Tim 3 and may at some time in the future be interested in becoming formally charged with eldership responsibilities.

3. Satisfying the characteristics of a Deacon above and progress to the deaconate

See deacon criteria in the previous session.

1.3. The Role of the Women of the Pauline Assembly

1. Progressing in maturity

Every female-saint is compelled by regeneration to mature in doctrine, faith, and practice. Eph 4 does not just apply to men. Many women think that they are not under the same obligation to master the Scriptures as men. Notice that Paul tells Titus that "sound doctrine" produces proper behavior and a "lifestyle" honoring Christ as Head of the Body (Tit 2:1, 3-5). The ladies of the assembly may not be part of the eldership, but this in no way excludes them from satisfying the criteria of 1 Tim 3 for the deacon.

2. Honorably operating in an unofficial capacity when called upon by the Eldership.

This of course ought to be the desire of every saint. See Phoebe below.

3. Older women teaching the younger women.

The mature women have the responsibility of teaching the younger women. Apparently, this responsibility falls outside of the "official" assembly meeting, when in the normal course of life brings the women together. As a matter of life this responsibility is carried out.

Titus 2:3 The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;
 4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,
 5 *To be* discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

4. Women teaching their children at home.

In the early years of parenting moms have an exceptionally large impact on the "kids". Moms are commanded to teach their children the Scriptures, and considering Eph 4, this includes Paul's gospel. See 1 Tim 2:15; 5:14; Titus 2:4.

5. Women teaching in the assembly and Phoebe the deaconess.

No greater account and misunderstanding than that of Phoebe the deaconess has caused a "feminization" of "professing" Christendom (Rom 16:1, 2)¹. Phoebe was a Body saint and in fellowship at the Cenchranean assembly and a deaconess of that testimony. Now, in what sense was Phoebe a deaconess?

¹ Wayne Grudem, Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism, Crossway Books, 2006

-----, Evangelical Feminism and Biblical Truth: An Analysis of More than 100 Disputed Questions, Crossway Books, 2012

We have seen that the assembly officers (deacons and bishops) are all male as seen in the previous session.

Moreover, we see also that women are to be silent in the assembly (1 Cor 14:34, 35; 1 Tim 2:9-15). The apparent problem is this, how can Phoebe be acting as a "deaconess" and not be committing usurpation?

When comparing various Scriptures (covered in the next session) it seems that the ladies of the assembly were not to usurp the authority of the eldership, especially the teaching-eldership. In this regard, the women of the assembly are to honor the eldership's authority in this special way which is partly why Paul refers to the fall of man (Adam AND Eve).

1.4. Widows

The issue of widows touches several items as taken up in 1 Tim 5. During Roman times, widows often had little means to support themselves if left without a family dowry or children to take care of "mom". The verses below from 1 Tim 5 provide some wonderful illustrations on a local assembly dealing with widows.

1 Tim 5:3 Honour widows that are widows indeed.

4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.

6 But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.

8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man,

10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

11 But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

12 Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

13 And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.

14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

15 For some are already turned aside after Satan.

16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

According to verse 4, a widow who has children or an extended family (e.g., grandchildren, nieces, nephews, etc.) ought to be taken care of by their family. It seems clear that it was part of Roman society to expect the children and extended children to take care of their parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles so that the family was an important element within Roman culture, just as it was in Jewish culture.

Interestingly, verses 9 & 10 speak of widows who are truly widows without family or an extended family. These verses clearly teach that a local assembly could take into their responsibility the care of widows, who were over 60 and had a faithful life upholding Paul's gospel and supporting the ministry of the local assembly.

This speaks to several items:

1. First, the eldership of the assembly was within their responsibility to assess widows as to their faithfulness over the years. This seems almost contrary to our lovey-dovey culture today, where one is not allowed to be offended if one does not come up to a particular level or standard.

- Secondly, this element of caring for widows seems to indicate that a local assembly could be significant enough to be able to financially support the caring for widows. This at least indirectly addresses the issue of “how big or small should a local church be permitted to be?”

This issue shows that widows and women in general are to “serve” the local church. In this capacity, they are serving an important role in keeping the assembly alive and vibrant as they work and operate under the authority of a vibrant eldership. While not part of the official eldership, these ladies, whether widows or not are acting in an extended service and provide a vital function of the local assembly. When acting as part of this extended service, they may be referred to as “deaconesses” as was Phoebe below.

1.5. Phoebe

We come to our beloved Phoebe, who is called a servant of the assembly at Cenchrea.

Rom 16:1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

2 That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

Here we see Phoebe from the assembly at Cenchrea, apparently commissioned by that assembly to bring various business concerns to the Roman assembly. She was a lady saint in good standing with her home assembly (Cenchrea).



Figure 1. Cenchrea and Rome

Cenchrea was a coastal city and served as the eastern seaport for the city of Corinth. During the time of Paul Cenchrea was an important center of commerce and shipping.

Apparently, the eldership of the Cenchrean assembly had business with the assembly at Rome when Paul was residing in Corinth. When on her way to Rome, no doubt she stopped by Corinth and picked up Paul’s Roman epistle and brought it with her to Rome.

Why is the example of Phoebe important? Phoebe provides us with the mechanism for understanding the lady’s role within the assembly and how far that role goes. It allows a further distance than often thought but places a clear upper limit on that role. Let us examine the issue at hand. What is the role of women in the local assembly?

First, we see in our very example of Phoebe that she is acting on behalf of the Cenchrean assembly and in this regard, similar to an American Ambassador being under the authority of the President, Phoebe is under the authority of that assembly’s eldership. She does not speak for herself, nor does she have any additional authority other than that which the Cenchrean eldership has given her for the specific duties with which she

is to relay to the Corinthian assembly. Furthermore, no doubt as mentioned above, along with her Cenchreran duties Paul gave her an apostolic task to deliver the Romans epistle.

Secondly, and what causes an apparent conflict on one hand and the very solution to our topic at hand is found in 1 Tim 2:11 & 12.

1 Tim 2:7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, *and* lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.

9 *In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;*

10 *But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.*

11 *Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.*

12 *But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.*

13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

Here we shall discuss the notion of women teaching and usurping authority over the man. There seems to be two areas in life that provide the context of this admonition of Paul:

1. Firstly, in the family where the husband is head of the wife, providing headship protection for her.
2. Secondly, in the local assembly where the eldership has authority over the congregation. According to 1 Tim 3, the formal eldership is only male (deacons and bishops).

We are not talking here about informal discussions between husband and wife, but her headship protection that the husband naturally provides as husband. Nor are we talking about an informal discussion of lady saint to bishop. The clear reason is simple ... the wife can certainly teach her husband new things, whether it be secular or sacred and certainly a bishop can learn things from a godly women in all matters, whether they be secular or sacred. So, it is clearly seen that as far as the teaching aspect is concerned, we are limited to talking about the teaching authority of ladies *within* the local assembly.

In this regard, Paul explicitly states:

1 Tim 2: 11 *Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.*

12 *But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.*

When the assembly is formally meeting for instruction under the authority of the eldership the ladies are to be silent and take no part in the formal teaching ministry of the assembly. Does this sound harsh? To modern readers perhaps! However, we see this apparent harshness as being caused by our modern-day worldview of Materialism and Post-Modernism each of which teach a form of Darwinism for the origin of man. The reasoning Paul gives for this line of authority is seen in Genesis as part of Creation and the Fall of man.

1 Tim 2:13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

Paul refers to Genesis to defend his position² and the Creation/Fall of man. There are two elements that enter this issue.

1. Firstly, the priority of man's creation over woman's. This is not a matter of creating a lesser or inferior creature in women, rather it is an exalting statement of woman's complimentary nature to man. Humanity would be incomplete without woman and that she is created second is stating that she is created for that complimentary purpose. Indeed, Paul states in 1 Cor 11 that woman is the glory or reputation of man

1 Cor 11:7 For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

8 For the man is not of (ek) the woman; but the woman of (ek) the man.

9 Neither was the man created for (dia) the woman; but the woman for (dia) the man.

10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on *her* head because of the angels.

11 *Nevertheless neither is the man without (apart from) the woman, neither the woman without (apart) the man, in the Lord.*

12 For as the woman is of (ek) the man, even so is the man also by (dia) the woman; but all things of (ek) God.

We see by her very creation that woman as the compliment of man is his glory. Note verse 11 clearly states that man and woman are intrinsically linked by their very creation. This distinction in creation pictures the relationship that the Father and Son share as Members of the Trinity, where the Son is the express glory of the Father. So, the woman is the express glory of the man.

2. Secondly, the Genesis account records for us the actors participating in the Fall of man and their respective roles. Let us check out this action and perhaps we shall see a glimpse into the fallen nature of Adam and his absolute intended betrayal of his BFF, who was given him by creation (my comments in parentheses and *italicized*).

Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil (*shrewd or crafty*) than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it (*God did not say the this, Eve's perverting of Scripture [she has just manifested her fallen nature]*), lest ye die.

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. [*Satan's corrupting of Scripture*]

6 And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat ... [*Eve's deception*]

Eve manifested her fallen nature in two ways. First, she added to Scripture, where Christ never told them (Adam and Eve) not to touch the Tree of KoG&E; after all they were to cultivate every tree in the garden including the ToKoG&E and the ToL. They had to touch it to prune and take care of it; what they could not do is eat of it! Second, she allowed herself to be deceived by Satan (who though he is the Chief Seraph charged with protecting

² It should not be surprising, given the entirety of Western Civilization has abandoned the orthodox doctrine of Creation, that such ignorance regarding the distinction between genders is becoming more and more blurred.

the word of God), Eve did not turn and run from him when he perverted the words of the pre-incarnate Christ.

It is for her deception that she condemned her entire gender to a state of fallen authority. While everyone (male or female) can be deceived it is because of Eve's deception in the Garden that this authority has been placed upon women. It is not necessarily³ that women are likely or more easily deceived than men; rather it is because of Eve's disobedience that women are under this authority. Like Adam condemned all his progeny (male and female) into a state of sin, so Eve condemned her gender to an earthly authority beyond her original intended creation.

Adam on the other hand played a unique and evil role in the Fall.

Gen 3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband *with her*; and he did eat.

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.

Notice that Adam was with Eve throughout her dialogue with Satan. He watched it all happen. No doubt he set up an experiment to see if Eve would really die. When she did not physically die, he ate of the fruit also. In this context, Adam was acting as a rank empiricist, applying the scientific method of observation and repeatability to see if death occurred upon eating the fruit as the Lord indicated. The first application of the scientific method was in a sinful manner that condemned the entire human race to sin. In the context of the Fall of Man, Adam knew what he was doing, challenging the Lord's warning of dying upon the eating of the fruit. Immediately, Adam and Eve spiritually died and became quite aware of their sinful condition; so much so that they recognized their nakedness and sewed leaves together to hide their "uniqueness". Embarrassed and ashamed, when sought after by the Lord Himself, they hid themselves and eventually blamed one another for the Fall, but in Eve's case she blamed Satan because he deceived her.

At every level authority was violated at the Fall. Satan, corrupted Scripture; Adam violated his own authority by allowing (setting up) Eve to be interrogated by Satan; Eve did not run to Adam for his protection as Lord of the Earth. In all Adam gave the Earth over to Satan, and Eve allowed herself to be deceived in her discussion with Satan. Satan knew what he was doing; Adam knew what he was doing; but Eve was deceived.

So, Paul goes back to the Genesis account of the Fall to explain why ladies are not to be part of the official teaching ministry of the assembly.

2. Resolving Conflicts within the Local Assembly

Paul by inspiration has outlined a methodology for the resolution of disputes among Body saints of each local assembly. The main text is found in Titus.

Tit 3:10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;
11 Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

We must understand what we are talking about here is not a trivial matter under dispute, but one that in context is contrary to Paul's Gospel. Thus, we are talking about doctrine, behavior, and lifestyles that are contrary to Paul's gospel.

³ The author has often heard from women that they believe women are more susceptible to deception than a man. The author has never verified this statement.

A *heretick* is one who chooses to cause dissension or chooses to create factions that in context are contrary to Paul's Gospel. Paul seems to have picked up the situation after the heretick has been talked to by individual members of the assembly. The reason for this conclusion is he/she is already considered a heretick - one who causes dissensions. Afterwards, the people discussing with him formally bring this person to appear before the assembly's eldership to be heard, make his case, and be formally assessed by the assembly's eldership. The heretick is given a second opportunity to respond, clarify, and make his case. If the eldership decides that the heretick is guilty then he is to be dismissed (disfellowshipped) from the local assembly because he is subverted and sins in his/her heresy. It is important that this is not a trivial matter and each local assembly may have to create their own system of due process and procedures to manage this process.

Subverted means that "he has been turned aside"; specifically, abandoned Paul's gospel in some very remarkable way, either by doctrine or practice.

This *subversion* is a state of sin and Paul so states, but Paul goes on to say further that this person is self-condemned (αὐτοκατάκριτος).

This procedure seems to be a modification of the Jewish methodology as laid out in Mat 18:15-17, where there are three levels of admonition. Firstly, the heretick is dealt with by an individual who may have been offended at the doctrine or behavior or who recognized that these things are opposed to Israel's law. Secondly, if no satisfaction is gleaned, the heretick is brought before two or three witness. Finally, if there is still no satisfaction the heretick is brought before the officers of the synagogue and they settle the matter.

In Titus, it seems that the middle procedure (before 2 or 3 witnesses) is substituted for one additional hearing before the assembly's eldership. So, for the local assembly it seems that we have:

1. Individualized counseling
2. Two trials of formal assembly hearings adjudicated by the eldership

An example of this procedure not being followed is to be found in 1 Cor 6:1-8.

- 1 Cor 6:1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?
 2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?
 3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?
 4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.
 5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?
 6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.
 7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather *suffer yourselves to be defrauded*?
 8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that *your* brethren.

It seems clear that the Corinthian eldership was not performing its responsibilities properly or at all. As a result, people were going to the secular courts to resolve disputes and this is considered a bad assessment by Paul.

And after Paul's admonition of the Corinthian saints and eldership, he states that at least some of these things should not even be happening.

- 7b Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather *suffer yourselves to be defrauded*?

We should be esteeming each other in such a way that we are willing to be defrauded rather than taking our brothers and sisters to court before the unbelieving world and in context why take each other before the eldership of the assembly? Thus, it seems that legitimate hereticks are in view here in Tit 3:10.

Reconciliation with the local assembly

1 Cor 5 and the account of the incestuous man seems to provide some interesting information for the working toward reconciliation with the assembly and the sinner.

- 1 Cor 5:1 It is reported commonly *that there is* fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.
 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.
 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed,
 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The man in 1 Cor 5 was committing a very heinous sin, namely having sexual relations with his stepmother. Of course, this is a significant violation of the law and one worthy of death, but the Pauline local assembly does not have the power of life and death⁴. As such the only recourse is to get the sinner out of the assembly and do it quickly and fairly. Thus, this man was excommunicated immediately upon Paul's admonition of the Corinthian eldership, which was to blame for this mess going on for so long.⁵

We see as part of Paul's instructions to the Corinthian eldership that the man may be delivered to Satan so that he eventually manifests himself as a saint. This seems to teach that within the adjudication of these matters the heretick is also to be provided a way of reconciliation so that if he/she should repent of their sin they might be in a position of manifesting that repentance and able to provide evidence of such repentance to the local assembly's eldership and desire to return to fellowship.

If 2 Cor 2:6-9 are discussing the man in 1 Cor 5, then he eventually repented and was back in fellowship (within a year) with the Corinthian assembly.

- 2 Cor 2:6 Sufficient to such a man *is* this punishment, which *was inflicted* of many.
 7 So that contrariwise ye *ought* rather to forgive *him*, and comfort *him*, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.
 8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm *your* love toward *him*.
 9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.

Note too that should repentance come the assembly is compelled to forgive and confirm their love toward the sinner. Of course, this may be emotionally difficult to do in some cases, but Paul does not excuse difficulty. Algebra might be difficult at times, but you stick to it and solve those problems one exercise at a time!

The specific example discussed in 1 Cor 5 is a major moral infraction, but the passage in Tit 3:10 can also speak of doctrinal error. In that passage we are told that the heretick is to be "admonished" twice, then should there be no repentance that person is to be excommunicated and treated with the same due process as the man in 1 Cor 5. The word for *admonish* is the Greek word "νουθεσία" a compound word from "νοῦς",

⁴ The medieval notion of church and state being a united ecclesiastical union is utter heresy.

⁵ A form of this process found in Titus has to be imposed in Corinth as well. How else would the due process be given to allow the man an avenue of repentance, forgiveness, and restoration? Apparently, the entire assembly knew about this man's sin, but the eldership did nothing until Paul's admonition. Apparently, the verification of the fact of this man's sin was through the mouth of 2 or 3 witnesses as found in 2 Cor 13:1.

meaning *intellect* or *mind* and “τίθημι”, meaning *to put in*. Literally, meaning *to put into one’s intellect*. So, it is important that we are not talking about emotions here, but how an individual thinks doctrinally; how one thinks and behaves regarding Paul’s gospel.

3. The Finances of the Local Assembly

As the apostle of the Body of Christ, Paul is our example on how we are to walk as Body saints. This example extends beyond the individual saint and continues to corporate Body-life. Paul is our example for how the assembly is to operate as well.

1 Cor 4:16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

1 Cor 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.

Eph 5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

Philp 3:17 Brethren, be followers together of me (joint or equal followers) and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is* *their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

1 Thes 1:6 And ye became followers of us (Paul, Silvanus, Timothy), and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

(Following Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy is precisely following Christ today)

2 Thes 2:14 For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they *have* of the Jews:

15 Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

16 Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

(These Body assemblies came from two different religious cultures. The Jewish-Body Saints suffered at the hands of reprobate Israel, while the Thessalonians [Gentile-Body Saints] suffered at the hands of their Gentile ethnic counterpart [Greece]; each for the sake of Paul’s Gospel)

Here Paul admonishes the Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Thessalonians to “mimic” his walk as he walks after Christ. This of course is dispensationally significant since he is talking to the Body of Christ, who are to follow Paul as outlined in the Seven-Ones defined in Eph 4:4-6, which Paul calls our vocation (calling).

Ephesians 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

- 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
6 One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

In the matter of assembly finances, Paul as the Body-apostle and therefore the template for the officers individually and the assembly corporately, was a tentmaker and as a citizen of Rome (who paid taxes) and having a ministry to the Saints was totally self-supporting.

- Acts 18:1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;
2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.
3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.
4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

Paul's trade was such that he could take it with him, supporting himself whenever he needed to. Furthermore, and not detailed here is that Paul probably came from a "well-to-do" family and may have had money and resources that were beyond his trade. The mobility of Paul is a prime example for the Pauline-Evangelist, who as we have seen in other studies is essentially a "traveling-bishop" setting up Body assemblies in other areas and instructing them in Paul's Gospel. Our modern-day notion of a missionary is faulty on this point when these missionaries are solely dependent upon the gifts of the assembly(ies) that support them.

- Acts 20:33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.
34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.
35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.
36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.
37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,
38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

Could Paul have been any more explicit regarding the financial support of able-bodied Body saints and in particular the eldership of the local assembly? Does not verse 35 fall in line with the great Pauline mandate?

- 2 Cor 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

In all matters of assembly life Paul is to be our standard of practice and this includes finances. The sections below on assembly finances will be strictly Pauline.

3.1. Local Assembly Giving in General

To repeat the Pauline mandate for giving:

- 2 Cor 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

The Body saint is to give to their local assembly with a purposeful heart, not in a grudging manner, and by explicit statement enjoy doing it (the Lord loves a cheerful giver). However, we see that there is a Pauline constraint on each of us found in 1 Thes 5:8:

- 1 Thes 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

Here we see that Paul is placing a constraint on the individual Body saint's ability to give. If they are in a situation that giving to the local assembly places them in a position where they cannot take care of their own family, then they are not to give. To do so would be tantamount to manifesting oneself as reprobate (worse than an unbeliever). Thus, we are to give out of our abundance as Paul explicitly states:

1 Tim 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;
 18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;
 19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Thus, two things are readily apparent:

1. Give out of one's abundance
2. The percentage from one's abundance is entirely up to the individual saint. No rules of 10% or 30% or tithing in general. Tithing is not taught in Paul and it is not part of Paul's gospel. Tithing was for Israel when a nation or temple needed supporting. There are no such temples or states within the Body of Christ; thus, the only ecclesiastical organism that is in view here is one's own local assembly or an extended assembly as agreed upon by the assembly and only then if the assembly is not placing itself into financial difficulty. Let everything be done decently and in order and perspicuously⁶.

As we correlate and sift through the fiscal information provided, it seems that a Body saint today living according to Pauline principles, might look at their finances in the following priority:⁷

1. Family (e.g., Housing, Clothing, Food, Savings, Investments, College, Retirement, Vacation, etc.)
2. Local Assembly
3. Anything else a person wants that does not violate Paul's gospel

3.2. Financial Support of Officers

The fiscal responsibilities and process of the local assembly are to be perspicuous. This includes all manner of the finances as we are to assess ourselves as we have an Assessor in heaven (Eph 6:9). As members of the Body of Christ we are given plain and simple instructions as to how to live our lives.

3.2.1. Paul Our Example

We are explicitly told that Paul is our example for our daily and ecclesiastical walk.⁸

1 Cor 4:16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

1 Cor 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.

Philp 3:17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us (Paul and Timothy) for an ensample.

1 Thes 1:6 And ye became followers of us (Paul, Silas, and Timothy), and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:

Paul is the apostle to the Body of Christ, and it is he that we are to mimic (follow) as he mimics Christ. Paul was given a gospel that brings the regenerated saint to an eternal hope which includes the ruling of the

⁶ Clearly or transparently.

⁷ This is simply an example offered by the author. It is not intended to be written in stone nor part of the Pauline fiscal creed, with the exception of #1.

⁸ Note that this is not two walks, but one walk!

entire created order from the Father's throne, the equality of Christ's Righteous Humanity, and the administrative overseeing of the angelic host. Unlike Israel and the Kingdom program the hope of the Body of Christ is non-ceremonially expressed (Gal 4:9-11; Col 2:9-23).

Paul was a former Pharisee, who had his own trade as a tentmaker and was fully self-supporting⁹.

Acts 18:2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

3 And because he was of the same craft, he aboded with them, and wrought: for by their occupation, they were tentmakers.

Besides making a remarkable theological trio, Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla shared the trade of tentmaker; this was a trade that one could take with them and make money at it along the way, which was perfect for an apostle traveling throughout the Roman countryside. When in Athens, Paul would find himself in the "agora" (marketplace) no doubt making and selling his tents and in so doing debating with anyone who would stop by (Acts 17:17). Even in Ephesus Paul "ministered unto his own necessities and others with him" taking nothing from anyone (Acts 20:33-35). It seems that Paul was a well-off man, who could not only take care of his own self, but others as well.

Phm 17 If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

18 If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;

19 I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it.

Apparently, Paul's trade allowed him to pay for other's debts as in the case of Onesimus and Philemon. Paul did not know the value of Onesimus' debt or potential debt; like a wealthy man he simply stated that he would take care of it out of his own account.

Thus, Paul provides our template in both personal and ecclesiastical fiscal matters. We saw above how Paul lays out the diagram for personal fiscal matters, but how does it fall out for local assembly matters?

In a sense, Pauline fiscal policy is no different in matters of the local assembly as it is in our personal spheres. The assembly is led and guided for sake of the congregation by the eldership made up of deacons and bishops. It would be fiscally unsound for the eldership to engage in any activity for the assembly, especially on a long term basis, that they as a fiscal unit (the eldership) could not afford or rigorously justify with a way forward to avoid fiscal chaos. No eldership should enter a situation where they as an eldership are beholding to anyone within and without the eldership; the eldership must ensure the assembly's fiscal independence.

3.2.2. When to Accept Support

Paul again is our example. He never accepted money or support from saints or assemblies that were doctrinally or behaviorally problematic.

1. Paul consistently refused financial aid from the **Corinthians**, both for poor doctrine and bad behavior, all showing an extremely poor state of immaturity in Paul's gospel.

2 Cor 11:8 I robbed other churches, taking wages *of them*, to do you service.

9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all *things* I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep *myself*.

10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

11 Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth.

⁹ No doubt Paul was well-to-do as he was apparently from a very prominent family in Tarsus, Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey).

It is interesting in the case of the Corinthians that because they were Paul's "children in the faith" he could have accepted their financial gifts but refused.

1 Cor 9:13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things of the temple*? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

15 But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for *it were* better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of *the gospel* is committed unto me.

18 What is my reward then? *Verily* that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

19 For though I be free from all *men*, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

Note that it is a Body distinctive not to accept gifts in this manner. Where the priesthood of Israel lived off the temple, there is no such temple for the Body of Christ.¹⁰

2. In contrast to Corinth, the **saints at Philippi** were mature and in line with Pauline truth. In the Philippian case, Paul accepted gifts since they were arm-in-arm with him. Their maturity is seen in Philp 1:7-10 and 2:12-13.

[NASB] Philp 1:7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.

8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus.

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment,

10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;

[NASB] Philp 2:12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;

13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

Because of their maturity in the faith, Paul accepted financial gifts from the Philippians and in so doing provides an example of how all relationships as such ought to work together.

[NASB] Philp 4:15 And you yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone;

16 for even in Thessalonica you sent a *gift* more than once for my needs.

17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account.

¹⁰ What does this say about our modern-day notion of "pastor", who lives off of the congregation? The modern-day pastor places himself into a position where he necessarily becomes a "tickler of the ear" for a congregation who wants to be tickled and not taught. Furthermore, he places himself in a position where in order to "keep his job" he may have to compromise the truth (Paul's gospel).

18 But I have received everything in full, and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

See the **Thessalonian saints** as well (1 Thes 1:2-8; 2:10-13; 2 Thes 3:7-9)

3. It seems clear from our Pauline example that Paul accepted financial gifts from saints and assemblies only when he needed it and only if the saints and/or assembly were of a mature walk (doctrinally and lifestyle-wise).

Since Paul is our example, he is also our example for both individual and assembly giving and receiving. Who should give to the assembly and as a corollary question, from whom ought the eldership accept money?

The answer is the same as that of Paul.

1. Is the money needed or required?
2. Is the individual a mature saint, progressing in Pauline practice and doctrine as enumerated in the Seven-Ones in Ephesians 4?

Thus, new saints or visitors are not to give to the assembly, unless a visitor has been commissioned by another assembly on behalf of the one in question and they are of a mature standing.

It is also clear that the eldership of the assembly can be supported from time to time with financial remuneration, especially those who teach. We find this is 1 Tim 5:17-18.

1 Tim 5:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.

It is important to recognize that this is not referred to as a salary, but support for the time and effort the eldership put into the ministry, since they are sacrificing their time for the sake of the saints. This is especially true for the teaching ministry of the assembly.

3.3. Support of Assembly Widows

If the assembly is large enough to support the work of widows, then these widows are to be supported out of the finances of the assembly. This requires that the assembly be of a rather fluid fiscal state so as to afford this luxury. There are however criteria that must be met beyond the fiscal policies.

1 Tim 5:9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man,

10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

These criteria could also be used to model other activities an assembly might be involved in. Note that all these activities are to go to the furthering of the edification of the Body of Christ. In this regard, how do gymnasia edify? Certainly, the body, but not the soul! The local assembly is not a place of entertainment, but one of sober reflection, edification, and maturing for the saints.

4. The Music Ministry of the Local Assembly

The importance of music within the local assembly cannot be understated, though it is often misunderstood. In today's so-called modern-evangelical church culture the music ministry of local churches has been so

corrupted from a Biblical view that I hardly know where to begin. Let us just start with what Paul has to say by inspiration concerning the local assembly's music ministry.

Before we get into a brief exegesis of the verses below, it is important for our purposes to examine a part of these verse sets beforehand. Paul states (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16) that Body saints are to sing to each other and make melody in their heart. Music is an activity that combines doctrine with emotion, so that when we sing, we burn the doctrine taught in the song into our hearts or souls. Music is that which binds doctrine with emotion and gets into the very soul of the believer. For this reason, the music ministry is under the authority of Eldership, specifically as part of the teaching ministry of the assembly under the purview of the Bishopric.

The sister epistles Ephesians and Colossians form parallel references to the theme of local assembly music. These sister passages are Eph 5:18-20 and Col 3:16, 17. We shall examine them together.

Eph 5:18 [A] And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;
 19 [B] Speaking to yourselves in [C] psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;
 20 [D] Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Col 3:16 [A] Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly [B] in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in [C] psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
 17 [D] And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Section [A] (Eph 3:18 and Col 3:16a)

In Eph 3:18 we see "being drunk" in contrast to "being filled with πνευματι". The using of πνευματι here is referring to "divine power", namely the power that comes from regeneration. As a saint progresses in doctrine and practice, they seek to be more and more filled with divine power, which expresses itself as living a life that honors Christ as Head, which is the process of sanctification.

Col 3:16a gives a more detailed definition as to what Paul means when he says "be filled with the Spirit" in Eph 3:18. Paul equates "being filled with the Spirit" with "letting the word of Christ dwell in you richly".

"being filled with the Spirit" = "letting the word of Christ dwell in you richly".

Letting is a poor translation of the Greek word "ἐνοικέω" which means "to dwell". However, here it happens to be in the Imperative mood, which makes it a Pauline command. So, it is not an optional thing, but rather an order of the "drill sergeant" to his troops and must be obeyed. The interesting thing is that regeneration and sanctification both drive the believer into this obedience and thus we manifest our current state by the love we have in our hearts and how that love manifests itself for the believers. Note: We sing and speak to EACH OTHER.

The word of Christ is a remarkable phrase and is only used here in Paul. The Greek phrase is precisely as one might expect, "ὁ λόγος τοῦ χριστοῦ" and refers to the very message or doctrine of Christ which in context is the hope of the Body of Christ in particular and Paul's gospel in general, which of course includes the doctrine of the Great Mystery.

Richly is an adjective or adverb that describes the character of how Paul's Gospel is to dwell in us. We are to actively and most aggressively pursue a detailed understanding of Paul's Gospel; for in so doing, we both find out Who Christ is and who we are as members of His body.

Section [B] (Eph 3:17a and Col 3:16b)

This process is called “sanctification” and is often expressed corporately in local assembly life as singing together the doctrine to which we learn, hold, and obey. Thus, we are to sing our hope in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Speaking comes from the Greek word “λάλεω” which means to “speak meaningfully”. There is no room for gibberish in the meaning and intention of this word as the modern-day Pentecostals / Charismatics would have us believe.

To yourselves, means that the local assembly speaks corporately to each other as they sing together in a meaningful way the doctrine to which they cherish, namely Paul’s Gospel ... the great Mystery of Eph 5.

In Col 3:16b, Paul adds a wonderful idea to this “speaking to each other”. The idea is the reason why we are to speak to each other in understanding and meaningfulness.

The phrase “*in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another*” has several wonderful points to be discussed. Firstly, *in all wisdom* speaks to us that we are to be careful how we discuss, and how we are to study to ascertain this understanding that Paul talks about. We are to be careful with our Bible Study as we apply the same rules of grammar and syntax by which the Bible was written in order to understand the text. This process of Bible study is to be performed with care and diligence and this is how wisdom is to be expressed. Furthermore, as we discuss Paul’s gospel, we are not to be silly or vain, but “wise” and wisdom only comes from a lifelong process of careful study and applying Paul’s gospel to the Body member’s daily walk. It is in this wisdom that we are to teach and admonish each other.

Teaching comes from the Greek word διδάσκω and is in the Imperative mood meaning that by Pauline command we are to teach each other. Through the element of music, we teach each other Paul’s Gospel, namely the Great Mystery.

Admonishing is an interesting word and comes from the compound Greek word νουθετέω. νουθετέω comes from νοῦς, which means “mind” or more specifically “intellect” and τίθημι, which means “to put into” or “to place into”. Thus, the compound notion of *admonish* means to put into the intellect.

So, by these three wonderful means of musical score we are to put into the very soul of each believer the doctrine to which we are to learn, master, and obey. The doctrine of course being Paul’s gospel in general and our eternal hope specifically.

Section [C] (Eph 3:19:b and Col 3:16c)

Psalms is from the Greek word ψαλμός and refers to the playing of musical instruments, specifically the plucking of stringed instruments with the fingers. The notion that stringed instruments are unbiblical, and that all music is to be sung acapella is anti-Pauline. While it is not wrong to sing in an acapella manner, to make it dogma is anti-Pauline by placing a religious ordinance onto the expression of saints’ hearts.



Figure 2. A Ramirez Guitar

A modern-day example of a stringed instrument¹¹ is the guitar as shown above and can be used to accompany the local assembly in singing the songs of their heart.

¹¹ This is a Ramirez guitar and manufactured in Madrid, Spain. The author considers it the best commercial classical guitar made in the world. Every teaching elder should own one! 😊

Hymns is a transliteration from the Greek word ὕμνος and as Vincent well states refers to “songs of praise”¹². Hymns are songs that contain religious or theological content and are a direct correlation to what we call Hymns today. We as members of the Body of Christ should write our hymns in remembrance of what Christ as our atoning Head has done for us. Christ has secured the mystery for us (Eph 3:9) and has brought us as members of His body to sit upon the Father’s throne ruling the entire created order for eternity (Compare Eph 1:19-22; 2:6; Rev 3:21). Thus, these psalms and hymns tie both these rich glorious doctrines together with the emotion of our whole being (soul) so that the excitement of our hope is “burned in our memories and consciences”.

Spiritual songs comes from the Greek phrase ᾠδή πνευματικός and literally means spiritual odes (songs). Here Paul modifies ᾠδή with the adjective “spiritual” to emphasis that the songs being written and sung are songs manifestly designed to express the Body saint’s hope. It is important to understand the relationship of assembly music to the saint’s eternal hope. By inspiration, the writer of Hebrews states to Israel:

Heb 6:18 That by two immutable things, in which *it was* impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:
19 Which *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast...

The eternal hope to which believers of all of God’s salvation economies are saved does in fact supply psychological stability both in times of trouble and times of peace. The Body’s hope contains the facts of:

- Being equal in authority and glory with Christ’s glorified humanity
- Sitting upon the Father’s throne with Christ *within* the unapproachable light
- Administrating the angelic realm
- Administrating the entire created order

The hope is to be central to our love of Scripture and daily walk as members of the body of Christ. It is the hope which we are to wondrously sing to each other and secure in the very fabric of our souls the longing for, the love, and earnest expectation of entering into such a glorious hope and securing it. As Israel longed for their hope as indicated by the writer of Hebrews, so members of the Body of Christ are to long for our hope. As we learn independently and corporately more details about our hope, we should desire more and more the very hope to which we have been saved. Out of this doctrinal, emotional, and spiritual walk we naturally desire to sing of our hope and express the glory and honor that Christ has brought about. Thus, the music ministry is especially important for the psychological well-being of the individual Body saint and the local assembly.¹³

Col 3:16c also tells us how we are to sing, namely “singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” So, we are to “ode” all three of these musical scores with appreciation to the Lord which is seated in our hearts. The Greek word for heart is καρδιά and forms a one to one, onto mapping to our soul. So, in a very real way:

καρδιά = ψυχή
 Heart = Soul

Thus, in context of our overall topic of local church polity, it is the responsibility of the Eldership, specifically the teaching-elders to manage the music ministry of their local assembly. The music ministry is to be under the authority of the assembly’s bishopric, no matter who is singing or playing the instruments. Those who may be singing or playing or composing the assembly’s music (lyrics and/or music) are to be honorable and mature saints and operate under the authority of the assembly’s eldership. Let everything be done decently and in order!

¹² M.R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, Eerdmans Printing Company, Grand Rapids, MI. Vol 2, p. 506.

¹³ While most of Evangelicalism’s music ministries are corrupted, we should look upon this corruption not just in a negative way, but learn from it; that it, in fact, pictures the state of these people individually and corporately. Evangelicalism is in a serious decline from the Word of God. In this regard, we should be stating “...come out from her and be ye separate”.

5. Starting (Booting-up) a Pauline Assembly

Assembly bootstrapping is not a trivial matter. The basis for forming a proper Pauline assembly is corporate mastering of the doctrinal creed of the 7-Ones provided in Eph 4:4-6. The people involved must have this as their goal - to master the Seven-Ones considering the infrastructure that Paul lays out in Eph 4:7-16.

The Talmud talks about the "numbers" of men necessary to start a synagogue, but upon reflection there appears little to be offered that can be utilized for the Pauline assembly. There is no record of how to form a Pauline assembly, except that it would seem most Pauline assemblies grew out of local synagogues or "people" disassociated from any local synagogue, or Gentiles meeting in their homes. History teaches that after some time, most of early "Christendom"¹⁴ was meeting in homes.

Over the past 50 years the author has been involved with the process of forming several bible study groups and assemblies. In these endeavors, four specific "methods" of boot-strapping an assembly seem to precipitate out. The sub-sections below enumerate and provide summary discussions on each method.

5.1. The Percolating Coffee Method

In this particular case, a Bible Study has been going on for some time and various men of the study group naturally show a love for Scripture, love for the Saints of the Study, and begin to exercise leadership roles within the group. In this way, "honorable men" naturally percolate up to manifest themselves as doctrinal and behavioral leaders of the group.

Often the group recognizes them before they do, or they discuss among themselves and decide to create an assembly.

Minuses

- May be difficult to separate personalities
- Often one or more seek preeminence
- A doctrinal creed (understanding) may not have been established for assembling

5.2. Infrastructure First

Here mature men independent of any assembly choose to form the infrastructure of an assembly. They begin to meet and anyone wishing to attend may do so. In this case, the eldership forms first.

Minuses

- Often occurs when people are dissatisfied with their own church
- Baggage is often brought to the table

5.3. Approximating the Titus Approach

This is the closest to the Titus example of defining the eldership of existing assemblies of believers (Pauline saints). Essentially a single individual is used to "get the ball rolling". A man who is familiar with the personnel and Pauline doctrine selects individuals to the eldership (deacons and bishops). Variations on a theme are possible as well, such as the single man selecting the deacons only, then allowing the deacons to select the bishops from among them. In either case, the starting point is a single individual male who is familiar with the people and doctrine required for the starting of a Pauline testimony.

Minuses

- Some people may not agree with the choices
- Potential for leading to a one-man ministry when it is not necessary
- Justification for selections can become problematic

¹⁴ By no means do we believe these accounts of ancient Christendom to be reliable. Paul's gospel was perverted even during his own time (2 Tim 1:15), so to completely trust these accounts is sometimes unwise.

5.4. One Man, One Vote

In this case, each male of the group casts a vote for the members of the deaconate. Whether the vote is to be unanimous or not is determined prior to the election. From the deaconate the bishops (teaching deacons) are determined from a one deacon, one vote scheme.

Minuses

- Personal assessment is often done publicly
- Can easily violate the oligarchy nature of the local body of Christ
- It is the least compliant with the Titus method
- The potential for embarrassing people is at a maximum
- A risk is run for no one to be elected to the deaconate

One solution to this problem is to examine the Cretan account of Titus and his activity. People had "naturally" come together to fellowship around the scripture, and men eventually "manifested" themselves as "leader material" - those satisfying 1 Tim 3:1-13. In Titus' case he ordained the bishops from among the honorable men (deacons).

Since, we have no "charismatic" empowerment today the casting of votes would seem to provide a "due process" for the "official" starting of the assembly. The males decide by vote upon the selection of the deacons, and then the newly "ordained" deacons select from among themselves the bishops (those apt to teach and desiring the office).

Another method may be a Bible study that naturally grows into an assembly. Back in the late 70s the author was involved with a bible study group where most of the young people were already involved with a Plymouth Brethren assembly. Arguably, it would have evolved into a local assembly if need be. The group had a plurality of teachers and non-teaching men who could "handle the load". Interestingly however, none of the young male leaders of the bible study group were part of the Plymouth Brethren eldership.

While the number of elders in the assembly is not specified a "more than one man" ministry is preferable. What happens if say a pioneering set of families settled in Iowa and there was only one man "apt to teach"? In this case, there would be a temporary one-man ministry until as such time as others percolate up to accept the role of teaching-pastor. Ideally, in the beginning of an assembly it would have at least one pastor and one teaching pastor, though preferably at least 2 of each office.

The starting up of a Pauline assembly is not a trivial task. Perhaps it is difficult for a reason ... that no matter how it comes about, it is important that the goal of any permanent independent bible study is to become a local assembly. The permanence of the group excludes college groups and such that may only exist when the folks are in school.

6. Summary

The local Pauline assembly is the prime means for edifying each member of the body of Christ and expressing that maturity. The focus of the local Pauline assembly is for the maturing of the saints and as such all activities are to have that as its goal and expressions of local Body life are to be witnesses to that maturity. No matter what role we play in the assembly we are to honor each other as Body saints and show that respect for the sake of Christ as our Head.

7. APPENDICES: Examples of Familiar Pauline Hymns

Ascend, Body Faithful

(sung to the tune of "O Come, All Ye Faithful") [SER]

As-cend, Bo-dy faith-ful, glor-i-fied, tri-umph-ant,
As-cend ye, as-ce-nd ye to Christ's heav'n-ly Throne.
Rise from cor-rupt-ion, rise to rule from he-a-ven.

Hear now the trum-pet, call-ing us to-geth-er,
See how She-khi-nah bears us up to His Throne.
Crush Sa-tan now, oh crush him with the Mys-ter-y.

Sing, all ye an-gels, sing in full submission,
Sa-raphs and Zo-a and the Wheels and the Court,
Thou-sands of thou-sands, myr-iads of the myr-i-ads.

Sit now with Christ, the full-ness of His glor-y,
Sit as His Bo-dy in His ri-ght-eous-ness.
Go-vern the cos-mos—an-gels, Is-rael, Ge-n-tiles.

CHORUS

As-cend to govern with Him,
As-cend to govern with Him,
As-cend to govern

O Come, Let Us Proclaim the Mystery

(words by M. K. Nawojski [MKN], sung to tune of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel")

O come, let us pro-claim the Mys-ter-y,
The ris-en Christ taught Pa-ul, face-to-face.
O, let us learn the Se-cret long held,
And mag-ni-fy the rich-es of God's grace.

Be-fore God spoke the wor-ld t-o be,
Be-fore He placed the sun and moon a-bove,
He fo-re-kn-ew us with His Son,
Pre-des-ti-na-ting each of us in love.

Then let us show our-selves ap-proved to God,
By fath-om-ing the mir-a-cles He's wrought—
By la-bor-ing to kn-ow the truths,
That Paul, the mas-ter ar-chi-tect, has taught.

O, let us ever un-der-stand and guard,
Our u-ni-ty—set forth in God's own Word!—
One Spir-it, Hope, and Bod-y, and Faith,
One Bap-ti-sm, F-a-ther, and Lord.

To-geth-er let us list-en for the shout,
And for the trump that sounds to call us home—
That sum-mons us to crush Sa-tan's head,
And join our Bless-ed Lord up-on the throne.

O come, let us pro-claim the Mys-ter-y,
And mag-ni-fy the rich-es of God's grace.
To-geth-er let us prai-se our Head,
Un-til the day we look upon His face.

CHORUS

Re-joice! Re-joice!
Let us re-joice for-ev-er-more, O Saints,
And pray with-out ceas-ing!

Onward, Hundred-Fourty-Four Thousand

(sung to tune of "Onward, Christian Soldiers") [SER]

Hundred-forty-four thousand, Jacob's hope secure,
Not defiled with demons, bloodlines wholly pure,
Christ the Lord of Glory, oversees them all,
Angels marking every forehead, not a man can fall,
Hundred-forty-four thousand, Jacob's hope secure,
Sealed to mete out vengeance, make Mount Zion pure.

Hundred-forty-four thousand, hidden in the cleft,
Safe from all Six Trumpets, wait in Olivet,
Christ the Loving Shepherd, sends His care below,
For the time and times and half-time, 'til the Seventh blow,
Hundred-forty-four thousand, resting in the cleft,
Nourished by the angels, wait in Olivet.

Hundred-forty-four thousand, marching out to war,
With Shekhinah Glory, going on before,
Christ the Royal Master, reaps the reprobate,
Harvest every head of grain, tread out every grape,
Hundred-forty-four thousand, conq'ring in the war,
With Messiah's angels, going on before.

Hundred-forty-four thousand, winning all the Land,
From the Great Euphrates, to Egyptian sand,
Christ the Glorious Captain, gives the Victor's cry,
From the plain of Armageddon, to Mount Zion high,
Hundred-forty-four thousand, triumph in the Land,
From the Hittite border, to Arabian sand.

Silence of God (Meter is 8, 6, 9, 9, 7, 7) [SER/REW]
 Sung to the tune of “Silent Night”

Silence of God, my-str'y sublime,
 Hidden from, space and time,
 Glor-ious ho-pe in heav'n above,
 Jointly se-a-ted b-y His love,
 Ruling a-ll the ho-st,
 R-u-ling a-ll the host.

Tro-u-bled now, joy without lack,
 Christ our Head, pays them back,
 Acts from heav'n with fl-a-ming fire,
 Venges b-y His angels of power,
 Rest in heavenly pe-ace,
 Re-st in heavenly peace.

(“venge” is verb form of “vengeance”, = “avenge”, see OED)

No Holy Nights

(To the tune of “Oh Holy Night”, original words by Chapeau de Roquemaure, translated by John S. Dwight) [SER]

BODY: DAY OF CHRIST

No “ho-ly nights”, the Bo-dy is pre-par-ing,
the Spir-it drives u-s ful-ly to learn.

Each “ho-ly night”, the Bo-dy is avoid-ing,
now stand-ing fast, ou-r Law to dis-cern.

Made ritu'l-free by Chri-st's per-fect Head-ship,
and Spir-it-dwelt to be the Fa-ther's shrine.

Rise in the Cloud!
With Christ, joint-ly-ascend-ing,
up-o-n the Throne, t-o sit for-ev-er-more,
up-on the Throne, to sit for-ev-er-more.

ISRAEL: DAY OF THE LORD

Un-hol-y night, the wag-ons are un-load-ing,
it is the night of E-lect Ja-cob's birth.

Born in a day, for Zi'n is tra-vail-ing,
God's will is done in the heav'ns and the earth.

The wheat and tares are grow-ing up to-geth-er,
and in the cleft His si-ckle is pre-pared.

Thrust! A-nd reap!
Se-cure the pro-mised bound'ries!
A-ri-se and shine, a-a-rise, thy Light is come.
A-rise and shine, a-rise, thy Light is come.

GENTILES: DAY OF GOD

Each an-cient night, the stars are bright-ly shining,
de-scrib-ing all of the dear Sav-ior's birth.

Night after night, and sign after si-gn,
their voice has gone thro-ugh-out all the earth.

From Vir-go round to Le-o, He's per-form-ing,
for yon-der dawn the glor-ious Gen-tile morns.

Wait! And be-lieve!
Oh hear the Li-on roar-ing.
Rise u-p, re-joice, Hi-s wrath has now turned back.
Rise up, re-joice, His wrath has now turned back.

CHRIST: GOD ALL IN ALL

Pre-night of nights, the Log-os is abid-ing,
with-in the Fa-the-r's bos-om, He dwells.
An-cient of Days, the Fa-ther's will ex-press-ing,
each diff-erent grace and sal-va-tion, He tells.

The Bo-dy's Head, and Is-rael's Priest-Mess-iah,
the Gen-tiles' Sav-ior, that God be all in all.

Fall on your knees!
To God the Fa-ther's glor-y,
con-fe-ss His Name, tha-at Name a-bove all names,
con-fess His Name, that Name a-bove all nam

