

+ Distinctives #2

Independent but inter-dependent

+ INDEPENDENT

A reminder & return to Acts 20

Acts 20v17, 25-28

17 From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. 18 When they arrived, he said to them...

25 "Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. 26 Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of everyone. 27 For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. 28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

1 passage 3 names:

- Elder (Presbyter) - presbuteros - ideas of wisdom / maturity / stature
- Overseer (Bishop) - episkopos - overseeing the church - leadership element
- Shepherd (Pastor) - poiemon - shepherd / pastoring

So BISHOPS then?!

Why?

Saint Jerome (347-420):

A presbyter, therefore, is the same as a bishop, and before dissensions were introduced into religion by the instigation of the devil, and it was said among the peoples, 'I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, and I of Cephas,' Churches were governed by a common council of presbyters; afterwards, when everyone thought that those whom he had baptised were his own, and not Christ's, it was

decreed in the whole world that one chosen out of the presbyters should be placed over the rest, and to whom all care of the Church should belong, that the seeds of schisms might be plucked up. Whosoever thinks that there is no proof from Scripture, but that this is my opinion, that a presbyter and bishop are the same, and that one is a title of age, the other of office, let him read the words of the apostle to the Philippians, saying, 'Paul and Timotheus, servants of Christ to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons.

What are the main reasons that bishops began (from Jerome)?

When?

Ignatius (35-108AD, Bishop of Antioch)

Be eager to do everything in godly harmony, the bishop presiding in the place of God and the presbyters in the place of the council of the apostles and the deacons, who are most dear to me, having been entrusted with the service of Jesus Christ.

The Bible?

1) Paul does appoint Titus to appoint elders. but...?

2) Emphasis on bible over bishops...?

Hence we are 'independent'... but ...

...what are the potential dangers then, with independency?

+ INTER-DEPENDENT

What kind of partnerships/interdependency do we see in the New Testament?

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-

Urrrr.

But what about?

- trouble?

- training?

So who's in?

Why do we have 'formal membership'?

1. Helps _____

2. Helps _____

3. Helps _____

4. Helps _____

What does that mean at MRC?

As you enter into membership:

- The church community accepts a responsibility to care for, encourage and disciple you.
- The church community and the Elders accept their responsibility to nurture the spiritual gifts that God has given to you, and to receive blessing from God through you.
- The Elders of the church accept the responsibility of teaching you the truths of the gospel and ensuring that you are disciple within the church community.

In practice, every church member is expected wherever able to:

- Regularly attend when the community gathers to worship, principally on Sunday mornings.
- Regularly pray for the other members of the church, for the church's community life, and for our witness to the world.
- Regularly give financial support as able in order to ensure the continued ministry of the church.
- Regularly serve the community life of the church in whatever ways appropriate to his or her gifts and calling.
- Regularly attend the business meetings of the church and contribute to decision