

SICK LIST:

HEALTHCARE CENTERS:

Ruby Harrison

HOME: Freddie Alexander, Fred & Romaine Elliott, Michael Files, Henry McDonald, Bruce Windham, Vercie Griffin, Braden Wright

PRAYER LIST: April Lazenby, Sue Hinds, Harold Walton, Louise Alexander, Donnie Bryant, Joshua Jackson, Elmer Williams, Debra Webb, Patsy Tucker, Rhonda Poe, Debbie Odom, Robert Turner, Bobby Holloway, Ricky McDonald, David Brown, Kim Elliott, James Felton, J.D. Dailey, James Horsley, Brenda Holloway, Jake & Diane Chambers, Donna Laratta, Kathy Windham, Lane Clark, Arthur Mason, John Pruitt, Madison Banks, Charles Crump, Martha Ann, Debbie Jackson, Diane Townley, Ralph Moon, Elesia Wright, Jamie Long, Margie Thomasson

AM - NEIL MYERS

PM - SINGING AND FELLOWSHIP NIGHT

BIRTHDAYS:

Feb 17: David Preston

19: Margaret Barton

21: Bettye Henderson

THE WEST WALKER WELCOMER

WEST WALKER CHURCH OF CHRIST
26036 HWY 78
CARBON HILL, AL 35549
(205) 924-9038
westwalkerchurchofchrist.org

TIMES OF SERVICES

SUNDAY MORNING

Bible Class 9:30

Worship 10:20

SUNDAY EVENING 5:00

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY 7:00

ELDERS:

Gene McDonald 924-4827

Carlton Myers 221-0637

Neil Myers 924-9289

Bruce Windham 221-2348

DEACONS:

Danny Busby 387-0213

David Preston 300-1927

Kevin Richardson 295-8864

Chris Robbins 388-1354

Vince Roden 924-4062

MINISTER:

Ben Wright 522-8004

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Guy N. Woods

“Does the eldership of a local church possess the character of a self-perpetuating board? More specifically, does such an eldership have exclusive power to select

other men to be considered as elders, and to determine the validity of any scriptural objections raised by any member of the congregation?”

There are actually two questions involved here: (1) Is the eldership a self-perpetuating board? (2) When additional elders are being appointed does the eldership have the right to “determine the validity” of the objections offered to the men being considered? The answer to the first question is an unqualified “No!” The second question must be answered with a qualified “Yes.”

While there is very definite and clear evidence of the appointment of elders in the apostolic church, details of procedure are not given. Paul and Barnabas “ordained” elders in the communities of Lystra, Iconium and Antioch (Acts 14:21-23), and Titus was instructed to remain in Crete to ordain elders in all the cities of the island (Titus 1:5), but there is no prescribed rule for the accomplishment of this end in the instances given. It is far from correct to say, however, that we are without divine direction in this matter; on the contrary, there is clear and positive information touching the Spirit’s will in this important aspect of church work. Once we learn what was the Lord’s will in the matter of selecting any man, or group of men, in the performance of church functions, we may properly conclude that such is his will in other comparable areas, though no specific rule is provided.

Luke, historian of the early church, gives us a detailed description of the *selection* and *appointment* of deacons in the Jerusalem congregation. We direct special attention to the fact that there were two actions - not one - involved: the selection by the people preceded, and differed from, the appointment by the apostles. “In those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, ...whom we may appoint over this business.” (Acts 6:1-3). If ever a situation existed where it appeared proper for apostles to arbitrarily to choose the men and appoint them, it would seem to be so here; the apostles were all present; their authority was unquestioned and their selection would have been infallible. Notwithstanding, the multitude of disciples made the selection, and this by divine decree. This, then, is the apostolic mode and must not be dispensed with. *May we not thence conclude that the right of those to be overseen to select the men whom they believe to possess the necessary qualifications to be elders is inherent and that if the apostles were precluded from such, that an existing eldership would have reserved to it no such powers?*

To the question, May an existing eldership determine the validity of any objections offered to additional men proposed for the eldership? The answer is a qualified “Yes.” Because the

elders watch for the souls of the saint (Hebrews 13: 7, 17), and are over them in the Lord, it is quite obviously their responsibility to the congregation to examine with closest scrutiny those suggested. But, this responsibility is neither exclusive nor is it limited to the eldership; it is the responsibility of all knowledgeable members of the church, *as individuals*, thus including the elders as such, to determine the fitness of those proposed to serve as overseers of the flock, such fitness to be ascertained on the basis of the qualifications set out in detail in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

“Is it correct to speak of an ‘elder’s office,’ the ‘office of an elder,’ in referring to the position and work of one in the oversight of the church?”

It depends entirely on what is meant by the word “office,” in these phrases. The older versions have the words “office of a bishop,” in I Tim. 3:1, a phrase which translates the one word *episkopee*. In Acts 20:28, the word “overseers,” in the King James’ Version, and “bishop,” in the American Standard Translation is from the word *episkopos* (bishop), and an *episkopee* is one who does the work of an *episkopos*. The meaning of I Tim. 3:1 is that one who seeks the work of a bishop (elder), desires a good work. The translators, in rendering the work *episkopee* by the phrase, “office of a bishop,” used the word “office,” in its older sense of function, work, duty, a significance now obsolete. The eldership is in no sense an official position into which men are inducted and which they hold for life or for a number of years. Brethren become elders (bishops) for two reasons: (1) they have been appointed to the work with the consent of those over whom they serve; and (2) they are qualified for, and are actually performing the work of the eldership. When (1) they lose the qualifications; or (2) when they cease to perform the functions of elders, they are no longer elders. A man who has been a farmer, but who has ceased to cultivate the soil, and has become a grocer, is no longer a farmer; similarly, a man, no longer engaged in the work of elders, is not an elder, though he may regard himself as such, and those about him may call him one. The eldership is a *functional* position, not an *official* one. Often, an elder offers his “resignation.” If his design is simply to inform the congregation that he will not henceforth be performing the duties thereof, the action is proper; but, if the impression obtains that this is necessary in order to divest himself of the “office,” he is under a grossly erroneous impression. He may indeed simply save himself the trouble; if he has ceased to desire to do the work or, if he is no longer doing the work of an elder, *he is already out of the eldership*, whether he, or others, recognize it or not. Temporary lapses, due to illness, emergencies, etc., are not involved any more than they would be in determining whether we are Christians or not. But one who quits the Christian life is not a Christian; one who *quits* the eldership is not an elder!