

Midtown Messenger

Volume 4

January 3, 2021

Issue 1

HELP...WANTING

By: Ronnie Scherffius

“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).

We are familiar with the sign *HELP WANTED*, but the present condition of the church at Midtown may better be represented by the notice: *HELP...WANTING*. Writing to Titus, Paul noted “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:” (1:5). An examination of Paul’s charge should stir within us a great desire to make *establishing an eldership* the priority of 2021. Let us study together two key phrases in Paul’s admonition, note the situation of a local congregation without elders, and close with an emphasis on God’s ultimate plan for leadership in the local congregation.

Set In Order

Paul begins his letter to Titus noting that he was to “*set in order*” things that are wanting in the local churches in Crete (1:5). The Greek term translated “thou shouldest set in order” is a rare word found only here in the New Testament. Strong defines this word as “to straighten further; arrange additionally” (*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*), and Thayer defines it as “to set in order further” (*Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*). One scholar noted that the word was “used by medical writers of setting limbs or straightening crooked ones” (*A.T. Robertson; Word Pictures of the New Testament*).

Throughout his letter, Paul notes multiple matters that needed to be “set in order”: instruction against false teachers (1:10, 11), further teaching regarding the conduct and responsibilities of the aged (2:2, 3) and the young (2:4-6), the conduct of Christian slaves (2:9, 10), and submission to government authorities (3:1, 2) are especially emphasized. However, Paul begins with an emphasis on the appointment of “elders in every city” (1:5-9). A logical conclusion would be that as important as all of the above is in the life of Christians

and the soundness of the church — of foremost importance is establishing an eldership!

Three thoughts immediately come to mind from an examination of Paul’s charge. **First**, the local church can exist with God’s approval and function without an eldership. The existence of faithful churches in Crete are clear evidence of this fact. **Second**, the local church without an eldership, though functioning and accepted is not fully complete. A church without an eldership remains to be fully and completely arranged. **Third**, it is God’s will, desire, plan, and purpose that the local church have elders. The apostolic authority of Paul’s inspired letter unequivocally establishes the foundation for this timeless truth.

Things That Are Wanting

The second key phrase in Paul’s admonition to Titus regarding the local church and elders is “*the things that are wanting*.” The Greek term from which this phrase is translated is another rarely used word. It is found six times in the New Testament and is used to denote things lacking or failing. Jesus admonished a Jewish ruler saying, “Yet **lackest** thou one thing” (Lk. 18:22). Paul instructed Titus to “Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing **be wanting** unto them” (3:13). In the opening of his inspired letter, James instructed Jewish Christians that joyful endurance of trials would mature them to be, “perfect and entire, **wanting nothing**” (1:4).

This Greek term is very graphic and carries the sense of a thing that has been “left undone” (*Robertson*), a thing that is “lacking or absent” (*Thayer*), or even “to fail, be wanting, be deficient” (*William D. Mounce, Mounce Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*). One may suggest that words such as *failing* or *deficient* are too strong in reference to a church without an eldership. Let us honestly and frankly examine the situation. If a professional sports team/franchise existed for twenty-five years, but was unable to establish and maintain leadership in its management, would that franchise thrive or would it more likely be characterized as failing and deficient? Similarly, if a nation existed for enough time to establish a name,

working economy, military, social structure, etc., but was unable to establish and maintain leadership within the government, would it be historically noted as a success or would it be more characterized as failing and deficient? Make the same application to the local church and we put the Midtown Church of Christ directly in the spotlight!

A Local Congregation Without Elders

Unfortunately, the circumstances of the local church without an eldership is common. Therefore, we are by experience very familiar with the challenges and struggles that come with such conditions. The work of the church must continue; worship must be organized and conducted, Bible classes for all ages should be zealously maintained, works (new and old) must be investigated and supported, local evangelism should be enthusiastically approached, works of edification and fellowship should be developed and put into place, local and regional benevolence should be progressively pursued, and maintenance of the building and property must persist. However, all of these must be discussed and decided within the framework of the infamous “men’s meeting.” And regardless of how well organized, attended, and conducted such a meeting is, the “men’s meeting” will **never** adequately satisfy the needs of the local church! Though the men engaged and participating in such meetings may be eminently qualified with management, organizational, and interpersonal skills *for the secular world*, it remains that many of the men involved are still *wanting* in their spiritual maturity and abilities to lead the church. Such is evident from the fact that in any other situation, most would not be in church leadership because they are not qualified (cf. 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9).

Another situation that ultimately arises from the absence of an eldership is factious partyism. (there really is no other way to word it!) The scenario often plays out in the following fashion: at the men’s meeting, brother Smith presents an idea to the men that seems good/reasonable. However, brother Jones objects for reasons equally sound (at least to some). Some brethren side with brother Smith and some with brother Jones; either no decision is made or a decision/vote is forced. Following the meeting factions begin to rally around prospective brothers and future men’s meetings are characterized by needless debate over simple matters because the Smith-party is sure to oppose the Jones-party (and vice versa) regardless what is brought before the men for discussion. The work of the church grinds to a halt, factious cliques form in the church, and gathering for worship becomes dreadful. Add a major “church decision” to the mix and watch the fireworks! Be honest with yourself, is that thriving, success, and

Christian or is it wanting, lacking, deficient, and failing.

God’s Plan

God’s plan is so much simpler and effective—men qualified according to the direction and revelation of the Spirit to spiritually feed, guide, and protect the flock of God. Additionally, these men can stand and lead the church in other practical matters that the work of the local church is carried out in the most expedient fashion.

HELP...WANTING. Brethren we need elders! Let us set as our goal to appoint qualified men to the office and work. Let us forever cease being noted as “wanting.”

Our Rest

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!" Revelation 14:13

What is the rest promised in this verse?

This rest is not merely a cessation of physical labor. There is work in heaven. Part of the reward for faithful stewards in this life is additional responsibility in the next (Matthew 25:21, 23; Luke 20:17, 19).

The rest God has promised us is spiritual in nature. When the forbidden fruit was eaten in the garden, a connection was revealed between sin and labor. The ground produced thorns and thistles and man had to eat bread by the sweat of his face (Genesis 3:18-19).

A contrast is also made between war and rest in the Bible. When Joshua finished his violent conquest in taking Canaan, the historian would say that the land then had "rest" from war (Joshua 11:23, 14:15). We also read that the people were given "rest" from the wicked nations they had driven out of the land (Joshua 21:44; 22:4; 23:1).

A similar conquest is still going on today. We are in a struggle against sin: "In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood." (Hebrews 12:4) The Hebrew writer tells us that a rest remains for the people of God (Hebrews 4:9). It is a rest from our struggle with sin!

-Selected-

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE
Week of January 3, 2021

subject to change

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Bryant Siegel
Scripture Reading: Isaac Jobs

Lord's Supper & Offering

Communion: Ron White
Offering: Bryce Dolan

Prayer

A.M. Opening: Dale Hill
A.M. Closing: Steve Randle
P. M. Opening: Lupe Escojido
P. M. Closing: Doug Jobs

Song Leaders:

Sun. A.M.: Kevin Sheeran
Sun. P.M.: Rick Bass
Wed. P.M.: Fred Scherffius

Ushers: Allen Clifton

Greeters: Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devo: Lupe Escojido

Open/Close Building: Randles

To Our Visitors: We welcome you to our service. Perhaps this is the first time you have visited us. It is our desire to have you return often and give us a chance to become better acquainted with you. You will find visitor cards on the back of the pew in front of you. Please fill one out.

Sermons are available on our website
www.midtowncoc.org under Resources.

MidTown's Bible Classes and Worship services
can be viewed livestream on YouTube. Search
MidTown church of Christ Victoria.

Please check the 2021 working copy of the Pocket Directory in the foyer. Make any corrections and if everything is correct, put a check mark by your family name. Thank you!

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

The Arnot Family, in the passing of our dear brother Roy Arnot. Sissy Craiker, from the Goliad church of Christ who has COVID.

Happy Birthday: Veronica Serenil (3); Glenodine Pitts (4); Gayla Pitchford (5); Elana Carroll (7)

Happy Anniversary: Jeff & Amy Harris (9)

Upcoming Events:

TODAY: Men's Meeting @2:30pm

Feb. 13, 2021: Ladies' Day hosted by Midtown.

Janet Morales will be taking family pictures for our Bulletin Board today & next Sunday.

*****FRIENDLY REMINDER TO CONTINUE PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING*****

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS:

Jeff Cannady
Les Daltry
Ken and Sandra Marie
Wayne Martin
Ann Pantel
Veronica Serenil
Clark Withers

SHUT-INS:

Dee Gilpatrick
Faye Henderson
Charlie Mabe
Sandy Malone

If you would like to add or remove a name on the "Keep in Prayer" List, please see Nina Siegel.

MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Minister: Ronnie Scherffius
Secretary: Nina Siegel

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class: 9:00 AM
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00 AM
Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible Class: 7:00 PM

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Week of December 27, 2020

A.M. Bible Class.....33
A.M. Worship.....47
Sunday Evening Worship.....43
Wednesday Bible Class.....37

Offering : December 27, 2020.....\$3,490

Reading for this week:

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors , for their deeds follow them!"

Revelation 14:13

SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli

Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore

Southwest School of Bible Studies - Anthony Scherffius

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