

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: GOD'S DIRECTIVES FOR HIS UNDERSHEPHERDS

II. Titus: Church Planting Manual

A. Understanding The Task Of Church Planting (Titus 1:1-5)

I. Introduction

- A. When the Gospel is proclaimed in an unreached area and people respond by trusting in Christ, believers need to be organized into local churches to provide for their nurture and for an abiding witness in their community.
- B. This task requires knowing how to plant a church, and Paul's epistle to Titus is a template for such a work.
- C. Titus 1:1-5 reveals the insight one must have to start to plant a true church, so we view it for our edification:

II. Understanding The Task Of Church Planting, Titus 1:1-5.

- A. Paul clarified in Titus 1:5 that his central reason for leaving Titus in Crete after his brief visit there with Titus was that Titus put what remained to be organized in order and appoint elders in every town, that is, that local churches with appointed leaders be established in every town, the planting of local churches.
- B. However, that goal was preceded by an unusually long introduction in Titus 1:1-4, one twice as wordy as Paul's introductions in the other pastoral epistles and eclipsed in length only by his introductions to the letters to the Galatians and the Romans. (Wm. Hendriksen, *N. T. Com.: Exp. of The Pastoral Epistles*, 1974, p. 339)
- C. Accordingly, **before** we can focus on the **goal** of church planting in Titus 1:5, we must heed the insight provided in Titus 1:1-4 for **spiritual effectiveness** in even **starting** to plant a church (as follows):
 1. The directives of church planting in this epistle were given by Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. What he commanded in this letter is thus to be followed in obedience to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, Tit. 1:1a. Thus, no other advice on church planting is as authoritative as this epistle!
 2. There were two main objectives in Paul's ministry that applied to the work of church planting, Titus 1:1b:
 - a. God had called Paul to evangelize the lost that the elect might put their faith in Christ for salvation.
 - b. God had also called Paul to minister that believers upon salvation might then know the truth about the Christian faith in order to live godly lives as Christians. (*Bible Know. Com., N. T.*, p. 761)
 3. These two objectives rested on the fact that the non-lying God had promised before times everlasting the hope of eternal life, which hope had been manifested in His Word through the preaching with which Paul had been entrusted by the command of God his Savior, Titus 1:2-3; *Ibid.*, Hendriksen, p. 340.
 4. In summary, then, church planter Titus was to realize that Paul's words in this epistle were God's authoritative directives for him on church planting, and that his church planting ministry would involve not only leading people to Christ that they might have eternal life in accord with God's eternal plan, but that they might also live godly lives as believers in victory over their past sinful way of life!
- D. Thus, **to that end**, Titus was to be **committed** as a church planter to the **following guidelines**, Titus 1:5:
 1. First, Titus must view Paul's words in this epistle as divinely authoritative above all other authorities on the subject of church planting if he would please God and Jesus Christ! (Titus 1:1a) Others might offer ideas on how to plant a church, but those ideas were to be subjected to what was written in this epistle.
 2. Second, the church planter must begin by proclaiming the Gospel of Christ whereby people are saved through faith in Christ, Titus 1:2-3. The church planter must thus establish a church that is composed of regenerate believers, not a community of unbelievers mixed with believers as in the seeker-friendly model!
 3. Third, the church planter must organize believers who have come to Christ that their local church and daily lives might function in righteousness (as Paul clarifies in this epistle), Titus 1:1b. The true local church is not a mixture of secular people in the community and believers, but a group of believers who have been called out of the world to function as a body that is holy, i. e., that is separate from the lost, corrupt world!
 4. Fourth, the church planter must appoint elders in every town where believers live as the human framework around which the local church body can function, Titus 1:1b. A local church must have Biblically qualified leaders or it will be a "defective" church. (*Ryrie Study Bible, KJV*, 1978, fn. to Titus 1:5)

Lesson: *In planting churches on Crete, Titus was to heed Paul's epistle to Titus as God's authoritative Word on such a ministry, that following evangelization, he organize true believers into local churches in each town arranged around Biblically qualified elders for the practical holiness and testimony of the local bodies of believers.*

Application: *May we understand that church planting starts with a firm commitment to heed God's authoritative Word to Titus to evangelize, then arrange true believers into local churches around qualified elders for holy living.*