

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: GOD'S DIRECTIVES FOR HIS UNDERSHEPHERDS

II. Titus: Church Planting Manual

E. Biblical Civic Relationships

(Titus 3:1-2)

I. Introduction

- A. When the Gospel is proclaimed in a previously unevangelized area and people there trust in Christ, those new believers need to be organized into local churches for their nurture and for an abiding witness in their area.
- B. This task requires knowing how to plant a church, and Paul's epistle to Titus is a template for such a ministry.
- C. After calling Titus to teach Biblical social relationships to new believers in newly planted churches (Titus 2:1-15), Paul in Titus 3:1-2 had him teach these believers Biblical civic relationships. We view it for our insight:

II. Biblical Civic Relationships, Titus 3:1-2.

- A. The culture of Crete was marked by deception, abuse and a lack of self-discipline (Titus 1:12-13a; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Titus 1:12), so such a dysfunctional culture required that Titus get new believers in newly planted churches on Crete not only to function in Biblical social relationships in contrast to their culture, but also get them to function Biblically in civic relationships.
- B. Paul then directed Titus to remind the believers on Crete to be good citizens in their communities, Titus 3:1a.
- C. The apostle then clarified seven qualities Crete's new believers in newly planted churches were to exhibit in fulfilling God's will that they excel in Biblical civic relationships, Titus 3:1-2; Bib. Know. Com., N. T., p. 766:
 1. Believers are to be "subject" (KJV) to rulers and authorities, Titus 3:1a: though the unsaved on Crete were notoriously rebellious as deceptive, abusive and undisciplined people, Paul taught that they were to subject themselves to duly appointed civic rulers.
 2. Believers are to "obey" (KJV) ruling officials, Titus 3:1b:
 - a. In accord with mental submission to authorities, believers are to obey such civic officials.
 - b. Acts 5:29 limits this order in calling us to obey God over man. However, all human rulers are God-ordained to rule -- even vile Nero (cf. Romans 13:1), so on all issues where human leaders direct that their subjects obey them that are in agreement with Scripture, believers as their civil subjects must obey them.
 3. Believers are to be "ready to every good work" (KJV) in civic realms, Titus 3:1c: even if officials recommend that their subjects heed certain protocols in emergencies that have not been made into law, if the recommendations do not violate Scripture, the believer must comply with those recommendations.
 4. Believers are to "speak evil of no man" (KJV), to slander no one, Titus 3:2a:
 - a. Cretans were notoriously deceptive and abusive, so slander would have been a common practice.
 - b. However, whether it involved magistrates or fellow citizens, believers were to slander (*blasphemo*, "injure the reputation of, revile, defame," Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 142) "nobody" (*medena*, accusative masculine singular of *medeis*, Ibid., p. 519-520; U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 742; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 268) Badmouthing others leads to poor civic relationships.
 5. Believers are "to be no brawlers" (KJV), to be peaceable in matters of civic responsibility, Titus 3:2b:
 - a. The Greek term is *amachos*, meaning non-combative, Theol. Dict. of the N. T., vol. IV, p. 527-528.
 - b. Thus, in contrast to aggressive civic demonstrations that fiercely, openly combat opposing views, we believers are to be peaceable in how we behave, affecting change in society through peaceful means!
 6. Believers are to be "gentle" (KJV), considerate relative to civic life, Titus 3:2c:
 - a. Paul used the word *epiekes*, "yielding, gentle, kind, forbearing" (Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 292) to describe how we believers should function in concert with not being combative.
 - b. This "yielding, gentle, kind, forbearing" activity does not mean we are to compromise our principles, but to convey a gentle bearing as people who contribute to law and order in how we conduct ourselves.
 7. Believers are to show "all meekness" (KJV), true humility toward all men relative to civic life, Titus 3:2d: humility diffuses combativeness in people, and works to bolster a lawful, orderly and peaceful society.

Lesson: Paul called Titus to remind new converts to Christ in newly planted churches to practice good Biblical citizenship, to be subject to civic rulers, to obey them, to do what is civically good, not to slander anyone, but to be non-combative, peaceable, considerate and to relate to others with humility.

Application: (1) May we heed Paul's directive on Biblical civic relationships. (2) May we teach it even to new converts in newly planted churches, for good civic relationships are a necessary part of our witness for Christ.