

**'DOWN TO EARTH LOVE FROM ABOVE'**  
***(A Good Shepherd and the Sheep in Wolf's Clothing)***  
**Studies in 3<sup>rd</sup> John**

**'Shepherdology'**

That term isn't original with me, but I remember the first time I became familiar with it back in Philadelphia. I was a full-time student in Philadelphia College of Bible and a full-time associate pastor in Camden, New Jersey. A guest speaker from California was teaching in the chapel services and caught my attention regarding the biblical model for local church leadership that his church followed. After he, Pastor John MacArthur, left, I bought his tape series that was called '**Shepherdology**' and set out to learn it and implement it in our multi-cultural inner-city church. I don't have the tape series anymore – like lots of things I've loaned out over the years, it was never returned. However, the biblical lessons I learned from it are indelibly engraved upon my mind and heart.

In these bizarre days of Christianity, many contemporary ministers seem to be unclear about what the church is supposed to be and who God wants to lead a church and even what leaders should be called! CBF is committed, not to a video tape series, but to God's biblical model set down in the New Testament Scriptures. Although some apparently confused ministers feel they can play fast and loose with God's local church purposes (*a social gospel rather than spiritual salvation*), those who lead (*lady preachers and leaders sporting new unbiblical titles*) and the role of church members (*to an audience of spectators instead of functional parts of the body of Christ*). In this day and age of many using the local church like a religious laboratory to experiment with like mad scientists, a fresh review of the basics of **Shepherdology** seems to be in order.

At the end of the first century AD, the **Apostle John starts 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> John** with '**the elder**'. This is the simple title for leaders of a local church from the beginning (**Acts 14:23** – *the pattern of the Apostle Paul for all 'church plants'*; **Philippians 1:1** – *plurality of church elders receiving the prison epistles from Paul*; **Titus 1:5** – *name of the leader position in new churches on Crete*; **1 Timothy 3: 1-7** – *standard title of leaders in Ephesus and all churches; etc.*). Elders are both **epi-skopos** (*over-seers*) of a local church flock of believers and **presbuteros** (*spiritually mature and biblically wise*). The pastor-teacher of a local church is one of the elders (*such as John, pastor of Ephesus*), and not as the typical 'Baptist' leadership, where the pastor is the sole elder with others (called *deacons*). (*This is also the leadership organization of Calvary Chapels called the 'Moses Model'*).

**At Christ's Bible Fellowship** we currently have three elders (*Avery Ferreras, Karvin Flynn and Pastor Tom*). In Scripture there is also an office of **deacon** (**diaconos** – *one who serves with the spiritual gift of practical handling of a church's physical or material needs* - **Acts 6:3-6, Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:8-13**). **At Christ's Bible Fellowship** we currently have three deacons (*Buzz Shiroma, Justin Castro and Ed Hardie*). The elders and deacons of CBF serve the Lord and the congregation together on a co-equal basis (the elders oversee the people-related ministries; the deacons oversee all material and facility matters of the ministry). These are not rigid job descriptions because we all help one another in our areas without either leadership area superior to the other (**1 Peter 5:1-5**). All of us see ourselves as *under-shepherd sheep* of Christ, led by the Holy Spirit to care for God's flock at CBF (**Acts 20:27**) for the Lord Jesus, the Chief Shepherd.

Collectively, elders and deacons at CBF are called **the Ministry Board**. Individually, we serve without *term limits* but can *step down* or take temporary *sabbaticals* if personal issues dictate the necessity to discontinue one's biblical call to lead as an elder or deacon. This is the simple, yet efficient **Shepherdology** leadership model of the New Testament. Amazingly so many act like this is an optional arrangement to be tinkered with, altered, embellished, or completely ignored! Usually, such ministry manipulation is done to permit biblically unqualified people into leadership, assert control over a church (**3 John 9-10**) or just biblical ignorance of God's Word. To simply follow God's biblical leadership plan is best!

What is the role and responsibility of the flock of God (*church congregation*) to the Lord's leaders? Their primary role is to be faithful, cooperative, generous, unified, helpful church family members who are actively involved in one or two regular ministries (*Ephesians 4:1-6, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15, Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24*). Unless a leader neglects leadership or disgraces the Lord somehow, he is to be respected and lovingly confronted with concerns of anyone in the church (*1 Timothy 5:17-22*).

At CBF we are always praying and looking for those who are biblically qualified and faithfully involved to join the ministry board team as a *role model* Christian for the church family. Please pray with us that God will raise up future elders and deacons at CBF to help lead, feed, guide and protect God's people at Christ's Bible Fellowship 'til He comes. **Shepherdology** is a great honor to be called of God to do for Him and His people in a local church with future, eternal rewards from the Savior for *shepherding God's flock* (*1 Peter 5:2-4*).  
PtL

**'Shepherding God's Flock'**  
(Commending, Confronting & Consoling the Savior's Sheep)  
John's 3<sup>rd</sup> Letter

**A Shepherd's Delight – Commendation**

*"The elder, to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. **I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.**"* Vs. 1-4

*Beloved, you **do faithfully** whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers who've borne witness of your love before the church. If you **send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God**, you'll do well because **they went forth for His Name's sake** taking nothing from Gentiles. We therefore ought to **receive such that we may become fellow workers for the truth.**"* Vs. 5-8

**A Shepherd's Duty – Confrontation**

*"I wrote to the church, but **Diotrophes, who loves to have the preeminence among them**, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, **he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting them out of the church. Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.**"* Vs. 9-11

**A Shepherd's Desire – Consolation**

*"Demetrius has a good testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness and you know that our testimony is true. I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink; but **I hope to see you shortly and we shall speak face to face.** Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name." Vs. 12-14*