

THE LOCATED PREACHER

By Donald Townsley

INTRODUCTION:

1. In 1910 Daniel Sommer (in his paper, the *Review*) began to put forth the position of “Evangelistic Oversight” (W.W. Otey, *Contender For The Faith*, p. 224).

(1) Sommer’s Position:

1. If a congregation had no elders the Evangelist had control until elders were appointed.

2. When elders were appointed, the Evangelist was to move on. (Brother L. M. Zerr sets forth the position in his commentary on 2 Timothy. On page 198, in commenting on 2 Tim. 4:5, he says: “*It is also taught in Titus 1:5 that an evangelist is to take charge of churches that have not been established, and hold that charge until matters are set in order and elders are appointed to take oversight of the congregation, at which time the evangelist is to go to other fields of labor.*”

3. They taught it was wrong for an eldership to employ an evangelist to preach Sunday after Sunday to the same congregation – this would be what they called the “Pastor System”.

2. The “Located Preacher” question was not only discussed in the north, but also in the south in the early part of this century.

(1) Earl West, in his third volume of *The Search For The Ancient Order* , says on page 71: “*The twentieth century found many congregations opposed to having one preacher to speak to the same congregation each week. Behind this was the uneasy feeling that this system had produced, in large measure, the digression, since most of the Christian churches and disciples practiced it.*”

(2) Bro. M. C. Kurfees wrote numerous articles in the *Gospel Advocate* during this period of time which helped the brethren see the truth on the matter of a preacher locating and laboring with a congregation. (This information is also from Volume III of Earl West’s book.)

(3) Around 1930 the “located preacher” issue had died down among most brethren outside of the Sommer influence. (I come to this conclusion from *The Mirror of a Movement* by William S. Banowsky, pg. 217 –*dt*).

3. In the early 1950’s Leroy Garrett and Carl Ketcherside stirred up trouble across the United States on the “located preacher” question.

(1) They taught “Evangelistic Oversight”.

(2) They taught it was unscriptural for a congregation with elders to employ a gospel preacher to preach the gospel regularly to the church.

(3) They taught it was wrong for a preacher to get a “stipulated salary”.

(4) They said a preacher could not preach the gospel to the church.

1. Paul did (Acts 20:7; Rom. 1:15).

4. We have taken a brief look at the “Located Preacher” question over the past 84 years, and you can see that this has been a question that has to be settled among God’s people from time to time.

5. Let us now turn our attention to the scriptures to see what the word of God teaches on the subject. We will ask some questions and answer them according to the scripture:

(1) Does the Evangelist have a place to work within a local congregation?

(2) Can a congregation with elders employ an Evangelist to preach regularly to the church and to the world, and can they give him a stipulated wage?

I. DOES THE EVANGELIST HAVE A PLACE AND WORK WITHIN A LOCAL CONGREGATION?

1. We know that the church at Ephesus had elders as early as 58 A.D. when Paul addressed them at Miletus on his way to Jerusalem (Acts 20:17, 28).

(1) In 64 A.D. Timothy was “located” with this congregation that had elders (I Tim. 1:3).

(2) Paul told this young evangelist “*To abide still at Ephesus...*” (I Tim. 1:3).

1. Here an apostle of the Lord teaches that there is a place for the work of an evangelist in a local congregation with elders.

2. He was not at Ephesus to do the work of Elders, but the work of an Evangelist (II Tim. 4:5).

(3) Timothy was located with Ephesus about four years.

1. First Timothy was written about 64 A.D. and Timothy stayed until Paul sent for him in 68 A.D. (II Tim. 4:9).

2. The Evangelist is just one of the flock – the elders have rule over him just like all the other members.

3. The Evangelist and the elders HARMONIOUSLY do many of the SAME things:

(1) Elders teach; and the Evangelist is to teach (I Tim. 3:2; II Tim. 2:24; II Tim. 2:2; 4:2).

(2) Elders watch for souls; and the Evangelist watches (Acts 20:31; II Tim. 4:4).

(3) Elders oppose and expose false teachers; the Evangelist is to oppose and expose false teachers (Tit. 1:9; I Tim. 1: 3,4).

(4) The work of Elders is a trust given by God to qualified men; the work of an Evangelist is a trust given by Christ to qualified men (Acts 20: 28 – 31; Eph. 4:8, 11 – 12; I Tim. 6:20).

(5) Elders are not to be lovers of money; preachers are not to be lovers of money (I Tim. 3:3; I Tim. 6: 6 – 10).

(6) Elders are to be examples to the flock; and the Evangelist is to be an example to the flock (I Pet. 5:3; I Tim. 4:12).

(7) The Elders are to take heed to themselves; the Evangelist is to take heed to himself (Acts 20: 28; I Tim. 4: 16)

(8) The Elders do the work of the Lord; the Evangelist does the work of the Lord (I Tim. 3:1; Tit. 1:7; I Cor. 16: 10).

(9) The God of Heaven has interwoven what the Elders are to do and what the Evangelist is to do; He has also made a DISTINCTION in their work:

1. Elders possess some qualifications that the evangelist does not have to have:

(1) Family qualifications (I Tim. 3: 4 – 5).

(2) Must be older.

2. The Elders are to RULE over the local congregation; the Evangelist is not to rule, but is under the rule of elders when he is a member of a local church which has elders (Heb. 13:17; I Tim. 5: 17; I Thess. 5:12).

II. CAN A CONGREGATION WITH ELDERS EMPLOY AN EVANGELIST TO PREACH REGULARLY TO THE CHURCH AND TO THE WORLD, AND CAN THEY GIVE HIM A STIPULATED WAGE?

1. We have already proven by Timothy that a preacher can locate for several years with a church that has elders and do the work of an evangelist.

2. Can the church employ an evangelist?

(1) “EMPLOY” means: “To make use of ; to use; to make use of the services of” (*Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*).

(2) A synonym for “employ” is “HIRE”; EMPLOY “stresses the use of a person’s services”; HIRE – “the act of engaging a person’s services for compensation (*Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*).

1. To employ an evangelist is to use his services in the work of the Lord, preaching the gospel of Christ.

3. For a church to use the services of a preacher is scriptural.

(1) Paul said he did “service” for the church at Corinth (II Cor. 11:8; II Cor. 4:5).

(2) Timothy did the work of an evangelist at Ephesus for four years (II Tim. 4:5).

4. Paul said when he rendered service at Corinth other churches supplied him “WAGES” (II Cor. 11:8).

(1) The word “wages” is from the Greek “*Opsonion*” which means “Pay, wages, salary in general” (*Moulton and Milligan*, p. 471).

(2) “Rations for a Soldier, his stipend or pay – wages” (*Strong*).

1. “*Stipend*” –settled pay or compensation for services”.
(*Webster*)

(3) The word “wages” includes stipulated pay (The same word “*opsonion*” (wages) is found in Rom. 6:23 – the wages of sin are stipulated – Death!

5. Jesus taught that those who labor in the gospel are worthy of their hire (wages) (Luke 10:7; Matt. 10:10).

6. Paul taught the laborer is worthy of his wages (hire) (I Tim. 5: 18; Gal. 6:6).

7. Paul used three illustrations and what was written about the ox in the Old Testament to prove the laborer is worthy of his wages (hire):

(1) The Soldier: The duty of fighting for his country throws the burden of his support upon others (I Cor. 9:7).

(2) The Husbandman: His labor is rewarded by the fruit (I Cor. 9:7).

(3) The Shepherd: His labor is rewarded by the milk (I Cor. 9:7).

(4) The Ox: He is rewarded by being able to eat of the corn (I Cor. 9:9).

1. In like manner, the preacher who labors in the gospel and renders service is entitled to live of his work (I Cor. 9:11, 13 – 14).

8. So, we learn from the New Testament pattern (the sum of that which is taught on a subject in the New Testament) that:

(1) A preacher can locate several years with a local church that has elders; Timothy did at Ephesus.

(2) A local church can use the services of a preacher.

1. Corinth used Paul’s services a year and six months (Acts 18:11; II Cor. 11:8).

2. Ephesus used Timothy’s services for four years.

3. Therefore, a local church can employ a preacher because “employ” means “to make use of the services of”.

(3) The scriptures teach that when a preacher renders service to a church he is worthy of hire (wages) (Luke 10:7; I Cor. 9:14; II Cor. 11:8).

(4) We conclude from the New Testament pattern that it is scriptural for a congregation with elders to employ an evangelist to preach regularly to the church and to the world, and that they can pay him a stipulated wage.

CONCLUSION:

1. For a congregation with elders to employ a preacher that he might do the “work of an evangelist” among them does not make him “their errand boy”, “their pastor”, nor a “hireling” who will preach what they want to hear.

(1) He is among them to do “the work of the Lord” (I Cor. 16:10)

(2) He cares for their spiritual state (Phil. 2:20).

(3) They have fellowship with him in his work or preaching the gospel (Phil. 1:5).

(4) He is to keep back nothing that is profitable to the brethren (or sinners) and is to teach publically and from house to house the whole counsel of God (Acts 20: 20 – 27; II Tim. 4: 1 – 5).