

WATCHMAN'S TEACHING LETTER

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TO THOSE WHOM THE COVENANT BELONGS

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A MONTHLY TEACHING LETTER

This is my one hundred and seventh monthly teaching letter and continues my ninth year of publication. Since *WTL* #88 we have been continuing a series defending the apostle Paul. This is a subject for our own time for Peter said at 3:3-4: “³ **Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,** ⁴ **And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation.**” One of the “scoffings” that is going on today is that of ridiculing the apostle Paul. Surely Peter, in his second epistle, prophesied of what we are witnessing in our present day. Peter went on in verses 5 through 7 to remind his readers that the “last days” would be similar to the days just before Noah’s flood, and speaks of them as being “willingly ignorant”. In verses 9 through 12, Peter warns his readers that they shouldn’t become overconfident in their own estimation, as Yahweh is not “slack concerning His promise”, and that Yahshua’s second advent would come upon them as a “thief in the night”.

After Peter warns his readers of these things which were to happen in the latter days, he paints a very descriptive picture of the upheavals of those events (i.e. “great noise”, “elements shall melt”, “fervent heat”, “shall be burned up”, “be dissolved”). After presenting all this, Peter admonishes us not to discredit Paul (and the message is for our present day in which we live), verses 14-16: “¹⁴ **Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.** ¹⁵ **And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;** ¹⁶ **As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.” I would highly recommend that all Paul-bashers reconsider their position and repent while there is still time to do so, for it’s your “destruction” of which Peter speaks! With this lesson we are going to address another topic related to Paul and the ekklesia, and it will be presented by William Finck as follows:**

MISCONCEPTIONS CONCERNING PAUL AND THE 'CHURCH'

So many men look at the oppressive behemoth which calls itself the Roman Catholic Church, and then foolishly place the blame for the creation of this monster and its offspring upon Paul of Tarsus, as if he ever developed such a thing. In doing so, these men are only repeating the romish church's lies by which it claims an apostolic founding, and giving them credence as if they were true, which they certainly are not!

It should be evident to nearly anybody that the apostles probably wrote many more epistles than those which we have in our Bibles, that if we possessed them, we may possibly have a more complete picture of their ideal model for the function and structure of the truly Christian community. However, not out of line with that spirit of simplicity of life which is an object of Christian teaching, it may very well be that we need none other than the scant instruction which we do have. Here we shall examine precisely what the New Testament books, and especially the letters of Paul, really do say concerning the organization and management of a Christian community.

In the apocryphal books are found some writings, in the so-called epistles of Ignatius for instance, which do attempt to clarify or enhance the instructions in our Bibles (i.e., those of 1 Timothy). These writings must be rejected, viewed with suspicion not only because they often conflict with Paul's writing, but also because they bear full support for the organized romish church structure as we know it. They are most certainly mere forgeries, and many commentaries have professed as much. All such post-apostolic writing shall be ignored here.

Both the prophet Daniel (7:8, 20-26) and Yahshua Christ Himself (Rev. 13:11-18) recorded beforehand the troubles that the romish church leadership would cause for us. Once one obtains a sound knowledge of history, the meanings of these prophecies and many others become astonishingly clear. Yet this foreknowledge by Yahweh of the romish church surely is not a divine blessing of such an organization, that it may somehow be considered righteous and legitimate (note Luke 4:5-7), for the prophecies themselves put forth a declaration quite to the contrary. Rather, it must be understood that the children of Israel were to be punished for seven times for their disobedience (Lev. 26). A "time" in prophecy being 360 years, seven times is 2520 years. This period began with the Assyrian invasions and deportations of Israel, which occurred from 741 to 676 B.C. (the 65 years of Isa. 7:8). The two beasts of Rev. 13, entities which are also outlined in Daniel chapter 7, are the succession of ancient world empires (also discussed in a different way in Daniel chapter 2) ending with the Roman, followed by the popery of the romish church. Each of these beasts was to last for about 1260 years (Revelation 13:5 dates the first, Daniel 7:25 the second) which is 3-and-a-half "times" ($3.5 \times 360 = 1260$), or 42 "months" of years ($42 \times 30 = 1260$), a day being a year in prophecy (i.e. Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6). A study of history surely does reveal that each of these beasts did indeed endure for about 1260 years. It is certainly evident that both the succession of ancient empires and the romish church were a part of Yahweh's means of punishing the children of Israel for their disobedience. There is much more that could be said here, however it suits not the purpose of this discussion.

It is evident that the organization of the romish church was very closely patterned after the imperial Roman government, and also incorporated the major elements of pagan Roman religion. The popes were very much like the Roman emperors in many respects, and exercised authority over the kings of Europe for many centuries. The title “pontiff”, from the Latin *pontifex*, is derived from the Latin *pontis* or “bridge”. The title was used of pagan Roman priests and implies that the holder of the title was the bridge to their god. The title “Pontifex Maximus”, which belonged to the pagan Roman religious figurehead from early times, was taken by the emperors for themselves. “Priests” and “church” edifices (temples), “nuns” (vestral virgins), and many of their ceremonies and rituals, along with the colorful costumes and other symbols, are all derived directly from the pagan religions of old Rome. The “canonized” so-called “saints” replaced the pagan Roman pantheon, which included a collection of idols taken out of the nations conquered by Rome. The idea of a “patron saint” of anything, such as a place or an occupation, comes directly from Greco-Roman paganism, where gods or demons were given those same roles throughout pagan poetry. The “college of cardinals” is a shadow of the Roman senate. The diocesan system is quite like a system of provincial government, each bishop a proconsul or procurator. The title “cleric” signifies an “allotment holder”, the word being derived from the Greek κληροῦχος meaning “one who held an allotment of land, especially to citizens in a foreign country” (Liddell & Scott, hereinafter L&S). By the very language used, the romish church lays claim to the entire world! Of course, none of this has any support in the New Testament, neither in the Gospels, nor in the letters of Paul, nor anywhere else. Studying the epistles of the apostles, a very different picture of the intended “church” life emerges.

Wherever the word “church” appears in the standard translations of the New Testament, the Greek word is ἐκκλησία (1577, *ekklesia*). Difficult to discern from those translations, and poisoned by false concepts of the word “church”, the ἐκκλησία is “an assembly of the citizens regularly summoned” (L&S), which does not in any way denote an edifice or any systemized organization with a professional hierarchy, but is rather simply the *assembly*, those of the children of Israel summoned by Yahweh (i.e. Isa. 42:16; 43:1-7; 44:6-7, 21-23; 48:12-14; 49:1-7; Joel 2:32; Matt. 15:24; John 10:3), that body of true Israelite Christians either in the world or in any particular community, depending on the scope of the context. They are called the ἐκκλησία whether or not they happen to be currently assembled together (i.e. Acts 8:3; 9:31; 1 Cor. 14:23). Many in Israel Identity would prefer to translate ἐκκλησία from its components, “the out-called” or “the called-out ones”, which should not be deemed incorrect.

Early Christians gathered not to participate in any rigid program of rituals, scripted and repetitious from week to week. Nor did they gather merely to participate in the “Lord’s supper” (i.e. 1 Cor. 11:22), which the romish church has also made into a vain ritual (see 1 Cor. 11:17-26). Yahshua set the example of communion for us – in a private home at dinner with His loved ones. We should follow His example. Paul’s one recorded example of communion is at Acts 27:33-36 (compare Luke 24:30), where praising and offering thanks to Yahweh he broke bread and shared it with his fellows, without pomp or ritual. Rather, early Christians gathered to learn. The primary teaching

instrument was the Word. Since books were scarce, being very costly to produce, they had to gather in order to receive the Word (Acts 17:2, 11; Rom. 15:4; 16:26). Paul mentions the scriptures often in his letters, and the record shows that he fully expected every Christian to be able to access them. By contrast, the romish church purposely withheld the scriptures from the common people for nearly a thousand years, even putting to death those who dared to translate them from Greek or Latin so that the common people may understand them. Paul would certainly not have approved of such behavior! Until the 1960's the romish church ceremony and ritual was always conducted entirely in 'church' Latin, which the great majority of its attendants never understood, a practice which is absolutely contrary to Paul's very own words at 1 Cor. 14:9, 19.

Matthew 16:18 notwithstanding, nowhere in the New Testament is it mentioned that there is any one head over the assembly (any particular body of Israelite Christians), except Yahshua Christ Himself, and nowhere in scripture is it mentioned that any local assembly of Christians would be subject to any other authority (i.e. Eph. 5:21 ff.). Paul himself disowned lordship over anyone's faith (2 Cor. 1:24). The popes have always claimed the title *Vicarius Filii Dei* (which sums to 666, counting the value of its letters in the Latin system), which means *Substitute for the Son of God*. In contrast, Paul wrote at Gal. 3:28 "... all you are one in Christ Yahshua", and at Eph. 5:23 "Christ is Head of the assembly ...", where the verb is in the Present tense, and not past or future. Where Paul said at Col. 1:24 "Now, I rejoice in these sufferings on your behalf, and I substitute for those deficiencies of the afflictions of the Anointed with my flesh on behalf of the body itself, which is the assembly", the term "Anointed" is simply another term for the children of Israel, as demonstrated in my recent pamphlet *Yahweh's Anointed: The Children of Israel*. Paul never wrote anything about Yahshua Christ needing any substitute! It should be apparent that **dead men** need successors as **substitutes**! Yahshua Christ, who lives, certainly needs no such thing! There is no support for popery anywhere in the New Testament – and especially in the letters of Paul – unless one wants to consider a small number of statements which are disjointed, misinterpreted, and taken out-of-context to be such support!

Concerning Matthew 16:18 and the changing of Simon's name to "Peter", this is mentioned in Mark 3:16, Luke 6:14 and John 1:42, however only Matthew's gospel has the statements attributed to Christ in Matt. 16:18-19. Even so, there is no indication that these statements could be an interpolation and they should not be considered as such. They must, however, be examined more closely. The A.V. translates Matt. 16:18 in part: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter (*πέτρος*), and upon this rock (*πέτρα*) I will build My church ...", and there is a distinction between *πέτρος* and *πέτρα* (*petros* and *petra*) which is lost in translation. Liddell & Scott define *πέτρος* "a stone, distinguished from *πέτρα*", and *πέτρα* "a rock, a ledge or shelf of rock ... Properly, *πέτρα* is a fixed rock, *πέτρος* a stone". Consequently, I would render this part of Matt. 16:18: "... you are a stone, yet upon this bedrock I will build My assembly ...", in order to maintain the distinction, while at the same time demonstrating the false claims of the romish church to be but vanity. Even the A.V. rendering of *πέτρος* at John 1:42 indicates the correct meaning of the word, "stone", where John gives the Hebrew equivalent, spelled

“kephas” in English, and its Greek meaning. Certainly Peter, as he subsequently became known, is but a stone, and is not the rock upon which Yahshua Christ builds His ἐκκλησία (assembly). Even Peter saw this distinction, where in his own epistle he in turn calls his readers “living stones” and refers to Yahshua Christ as the “chief cornerstone” (1 Pet. 2:5-6). Paul describes Yahshua Christ as the foundation of His own building (1 Cor. 3:9-11). The authority given to Peter by Yahshua (Matt. 16:19) was also given to the other disciples (Matt. 18:18).

The romish pope-cult claims an unbroken chain of succession from Peter and Paul through a line of bishops of Rome down to today, and claims his authority from Peter, being the “rock” upon which the romish catholic church is built. An examination of history would reveal that the first claim is a lie: the early bishops of Rome were martyred in the persecutions, and most later bishops were mere political opportunists. An examination of scripture, including Paul’s epistles, reveals that the second claim is also a lie. In reality, the romish church is built upon the bones of the saints, both figuratively (i.e. Dan 7:25; Rev. 6:9; 12:17) and literally: for the cult’s foremost temple, called “Saint Peter’s Basilica”, is built upon a large necropolis (see *Archaeology Odyssey*, March - April 2001, p. 60, “City of the Dead”)! From the edicts of Justinian, and armed with the forged so-called “Donation of Constantine”, the romish church gained dominion over all of the Christian assemblies of the οἰκουμένη (the Adamic world), and persecuted all those who refused to prostrate themselves before it, such as the Waldenses (Vaudois) and the Celtic church of the British Isles. The romish church has been but a tool for the dragon in his war against the woman, true Israel.

Paul wrote not to the popish “one true church” at Rome, but to “all those in Rome who are beloved of Yahweh, called saints” (Rom. 1:7), who were actually distributed among several different assemblies, or “churches” (i.e. Rom. 16:5), as they were in other places also (i.e. 2 Cor. 8:1; Gal. 1:2). Nowhere did Paul recognize any single leader of the Roman Christians. In the Revelation, Yahshua Christ sent messages to seven different assemblies, all independent, and not to “one true church” (Rev. 1:11), and Rome was not even considered among these seven! How could even the enemies of popery or “churchianity” possibly blame the romish catholic beast on Paul? Here it shall be endeavored to examine precisely what Paul did say regarding the organization of the assemblies to which he wrote. Hopefully then it may be realized that Paul cannot in honesty be blamed for the romish catholic church behemoth.

Paul was reckoned as an ἀπόστολος (652, *apostolos*), which is “a messenger, ambassador, envoy” (L&S). In spite of his modern critics, there is no indication that the original eleven apostles ever denied Paul this title, but rather they respected him as such (i.e. Acts 15, 2 Pet. 3:14-16). Once the “lost” nations of Israel received the gospel, there was no longer a need for such an office, and no successor “apostles” were ever appointed. Yet Paul also counted himself as a mere “servant” or “minister”, i.e. 1 Cor. 3:5; 2 Cor. 6:4; Eph. 3:7; 1 Tim. 1:12, even though his unique concern as an apostle was for all of the assemblies (2 Cor. 11:28), many of which the record shows that he himself founded. Paul had no subordinates, only colleagues: Rom. 16:3, 7, 21; 1 Cor. 3:5, 21-23; 4:1; 16:10; 2 Cor. 1:19, 24; 6:1-4; Phil. 4:3; Col. 1:7; 4:7 ff.; 1 Thess. 3:2; Ph’m. 1, 2, 24; and partners: 2 Cor. 8:23; Ph’m. 17. The Greek word συνεργός

(4904, *sunergos*) is “*working together, joining or helping in work, and as Substantive a fellow-workman, help-mate ...*” (L&S). The A.V. rendered it “helper” at Rom. 16:3 and 2 Cor. 1:24, but more correctly “fellow laborer” at Phil. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:2 and Ph’m. 1 and 24, since “helper” may imply subordination to some, which the Greek *συνεργός* does not imply. Certainly Paul did not think well of self-promotion (i.e. Phil. 2:3, 7-8), and always wrote in the spirit of the words of Yahshua Christ such as are found at Luke 13:30 and 22:26-27. Evidently, individual members of an assembly communicated with Paul directly (i.e. 1 Cor. 1:11), and his letters were written to be read to the entire assembly, not being merely summarized or interpreted by some “priest”, but read in full (1 Thess 5:27; 2 Thess. 2:15), and even read to other assemblies besides those who were initially addressed (i.e. Col. 4:16), which surely also encouraged the copying and distribution of those letters. Paul probably wrote many more epistles than those which we now possess, and the ones which we have themselves indicate that others are missing, i.e. 1 Cor. 5:9 and Col. 4:16.

While Paul in his ministry had allocated resources both human (i.e. 1 Cor. 4:17) and monetary (Rom. 15:31; 2 Cor. 8 and 9), he coerced no one (i.e. 1 Cor. 16:12). His “service to the saints” at Jerusalem must be understood in the context of the social climate there at the time, and it does not provide a reason or excuse to beg support for “missionary” work in foreign lands to alien peoples as so often witnessed in this age. The example Paul set for himself was to work for his wages in order to support himself (i.e. Acts 18:3; 1 Cor. 4:12), which he also recommended others to do (1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Thess. 3:9-12; 1 Tim. 5:8). Paul left no model for a professional priesthood which lived off the fat of the community like parasites (Matt. 23:14; Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47), which we see in the romish church and all of its offspring. There is not even a mention of any word meaning “priest” in connection with a New Covenant assembly in any of Paul’s writings! Only the most ignorant and unjust men could blame Paul for that monster which the romish church became, or for modern judeo-churchianity, things certainly not found in any of Paul’s instructions.

Here we have mentioned some of the various assemblies (*ἐκκλησίαι*) which Paul wrote to. Paul founded Christian assemblies throughout the cities of the Greco-Roman world, as the records in Acts and his epistles attest. Note that Paul did not found the assemblies at Rome, which he wrote to before ever visiting. That the assemblies which Paul founded in Anatolia were valid Christian assemblies is verified both by Peter who wrote to them (1 Pet. 1:1), and also by Yahshua Christ Himself (Rev. 1:11; 2:1 - 3:22) who addressed and even commended some of them. So anyone who questions the validity of Paul’s work also questions the validity of 1 Peter, of 2 Peter (3:14-16) and of the Revelation. Only a **fool** could do such a thing. Hence, all Paul-bashers, of their own volition, make themselves **fools**!

Paul left no successors [unlike romish pope succession], and warned the assemblies that they were on their own after his final departure, clearly illustrated at Acts 20:17-38. Here Paul tells the leaders of the assemblies gathered to him that they themselves are overseers (*ἐπίσκοπος*, 1985, *episkopos*, the word from which “bishop” comes) of the “church of God” (the assembly of Yahweh), and no one else! Anyone who reads this account in Acts and then blames Paul for popery and the romish church

beast is terribly **foolish!** Since Paul himself would not rule over the assemblies of Christ (2 Cor. 1:24), surely neither would he recommend that anyone else do so, except Yahshua Christ Himself, for whom there is no substitute (i.e. 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18)! So it is evident that Paul left behind him a collection of independent, autonomous Christian assemblies, which both Peter and Yahshua Christ also recognized and acknowledged. Now the internal structure of the local assembly, from the epistles of Paul and elsewhere in the New Testament, shall be examined, beginning with a compilation of the terms used to describe governance within the assembly, or Christian community. The usage of these terms outlined here may be verified with a Strong's Concordance.

ἐπίσκοπος (1985, *episkopos*) is a noun, and the very word from which the English word *bishop* is derived, by way of the Vulgar Latin *ebiscopus* and Medieval English *bisceope*. ἐπίσκοπος appears five times in the N.T. and in the A.V. it was translated only once, at Acts 20:28, as “overseers” in the plural. Otherwise it appears as the borrowed “church” word *bishop* at Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7 and 1 Pet. 2:25. An ἐπίσκοπος is properly “one who watches over, an overseer, guardian ... a public officer, intendant ...” (L&S). The related noun ἐπισκοπή (1984, *episkopê*) is “a watching over, visitation ... the office of ἐπίσκοπος ... generally, an office ...” (L&S). In the A.V. ἐπισκοπή is “the office of a bishop” at 1 Tim. 3:1, “bishoprick” at Acts 1:20 (compare Psa. 109:8), and “visitation” at Luke 19:44 and 1 Pet. 2:12.

Verbs related to ἐπίσκοπος are ἐπισκοπέω (1983, *episkopeō*), and ἐπισκέπτομαι (1980, *episkeptomai*). The verb ἐπισκοπέω is in the A.V. the “looking diligently” of Heb. 12:15 and “taking the oversight” of 1 Pet. 5:2. ἐπισκέπτομαι is in the A.V. to “look out” at Acts 6:3, and to “visit” on ten other occasions.

My own translations have rendered the word ἐπίσκοπος either *overseer* or *supervisor*. The word ἐπισκοπή is either *office* or more fully *office of supervisor*. The transliteration “bishop”, which is not a translation but is instead a borrowed word interjected into the language for devious “church” purposes, I have cautiously avoided.

πρεσβύτερος (4245, *presbuteros*) is the comparative form of πρέσβυς which is “an old man ... Comparative πρεσβύτερος ... elder ...” (L&S), and appears over 60 times in the N.T. as a noun, an *elder(s)*, as it usually is in the A.V. The related noun πρεσβυτέριον (4244, *presbuterion*) is “a council of elders” (L&S). The A.V. renders πρεσβυτέριον as “elders” at Luke 22:66, and “estate of the elders” at Acts 22:5. However at 1 Tim. 4:14 the A.V. merely transliterates the word, using another “church” word merely borrowed from Greek: “presbytery”.

διάκονος (1249, *diakonos*), a noun, is “a servant, waiting-man, Latin minister ...” (L&S) and appears 30 times in the N.T. In transliteration, it is the source of the borrowed “church” word *deacon*, Old English *diacon* and Late Latin *diaconus*. διάκονος is in the A.V. “minister(s)” 20 times, and “servant(s)” 7 times, and either of these translations are acceptable, so long as the term *minister* is understood to mean *servant* and not taken as some position of authority, which the Greek meaning of the word surely does not bear. On 3 occasions the A.V. renders this word as “deacon(s)”, at Phil. 1:1 and 1 Tim. 3:8 and 12, which is not acceptable since those renderings

manipulate the word so as to somehow support the artificial structure of the organized “church”. *διάκονος* in those passages should not be distinguished from the other 27 passages in which the word appears.

The related noun *διακονία* (1248, *diakonia*) is “*the office of a διάκονος, service ... 2. attendance on a duty, ministration ...*” (L&S) and appears 34 times in the N.T. The A.V. has rendered the word “administration(s)” twice, “to minister” once, “ministering” three times, “ministry” or “ministration” 22 times, “relief” once, “service” three times, “serving” once and “office” once.

The verb *διακονέω* (1247, *diakoneō*), is “*to minister, serve, do service ... II. to furnish, supply ...*” (L&S) and appears in the A.V. 37 times. The A.V. has rendered the word twice *to administer*, ten times *to serve* and 23 times *to minister*, and all of these are acceptable, as long as one understands the word *minister* as a verb in the sense of performing a service to the assembly, or for the assembly, and not ruling over it, a perception which the Greek meaning of *διακονέω* does not support nor convey. Yet like *διάκονος*, the A.V. rendered *διακονέω* as “to be a deacon” twice, at 1 Tim. 3:10 and 13, which following the “church” Liddell & Scott also mentions, but which is omitted from the definition given above. Of course, *διακονέω* may mean *to be a διάκονος*, but “deacon” is a “church” word borrowed from Greek for artificial “church” purposes, and not an English word.

In my own translations, *διάκονος* is usually *servant*, but nearly as often *minister*. *διακονέω* is usually *to serve*, but nearly as often *to minister*. *διακονία* is most often a *service*, but also in various contexts an *administration, attendance, ministering, ministry, office, or supply*.

It must be mentioned, that in the A.V. a diverse group of 12 other Greek words have on a total of 28 occasions been rendered “(to) minister (-eth, -ing, -s, -try)”, none of which should be taken to imply the holding of any office or position within the assembly, and so they shall not be discussed here.

Now that the basic terms describing offices within an organized Christian assembly have been defined, and the manner in which the A.V. has treated those words has been observed, their application in the New Testament may be discussed, once the meaning of one more Greek word has been examined.

χειροτονέω (5500, *cheirotoneō*) only appears twice in the N.T., however it is a very important word. Its interpretation determines whether a Christian assembly should select its own leaders, and thereby remain autonomous, or whether some outside, **supposed authority** selects those leaders, where the assembly then becomes subject to that **supposed authority**.

Liddell & Scott define *χειροτονέω* “*to stretch out the hand, for the purpose of voting ... II ... to vote for, elect, properly by show of hands ... Passive to be elected ... χειροτονηθῆναι, election, was opposed to λαχεῖν, appointment by lot ...*” and this is the natural meaning of the word, since its components, *χείρ* and *τόνος*, are *a hand* and *a stretching* respectively. This definition was derived from the 7th edition of the Liddell & Scott *Greek-English Lexicon*. The 9th edition of Liddell & Scott does add “*appoint*” to the word’s definition, yet it is obviously following the “church” since it cites both N.T.

passages where the word appears, but no secular authority in order to show that the word was ever actually used in such a manner.

The A.V. rendering of Acts 14:23, “And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed”, contains **several errors** which shall not be reviewed at length here, but which are discussed in the notes for this passage in my own translation of Acts, part of my forthcoming edition of *The Records of Luke*. My own translation of Acts 14:23 reads thusly: “And elders being **elected** by them in each assembly, praying with fasting they presented them in whom they had confidence with the authority.” The important issue to note here is that χειροτονέω is rendered “**elected**” (appearing here in the past tense), **and NOT “ordained”**.

The second occurrence of χειροτονέω in the N.T. is at 2 Cor. 8:19, a verse rendered in part by the A.V.: “And not *that* only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us in this grace ...”, language which is quite **ambiguous**. From my own edition of Paul’s epistles, this same pericope reads: “and not only, but our fellow traveler has also been hand picked by the assemblies to be endued with this favor...”, and “**hand picked**” may just have well been “**elected**”. The assemblies chose who was going to represent them by traveling to Jerusalem with Paul to present their gift to the needy there; Paul himself did not make the choice. This is even more evident reading the previous verse, 8:18, which I have read: “And we have sent along with him that brother of whom there is approval in the good message throughout all of the assemblies”.

There are many Greek words which may be rendered *appointed, chosen, or ordained* in English. The use of χειροτονέω by Luke and Paul in these two passages very clearly shows in both context and definition that the leaders and servants of a Christian assembly should be **elected** by that assembly. The assembly chooses its own leaders. No one sets leaders over them, as so-called “churches” do today, and there is no other passage in the New Testament which gives credence to such an idea. The romish church built its authority upon the decrees of Justinian and its own false claims, and the ignorant masses were led to believe them, just as so many still do today. Only the most foolish of men could blame this on Paul of Tarsus. *W.R.F.* [End of the first installment of two by William Finck on this subject. The second installment will be continued in *WTL* #108.]

It should be becoming obvious here that, even in Identity circles, there are false concepts of just what an “assembly” should be.