

1 CORINTHIANS

1) The church planted

Read Acts 18: 1-17; 1 Corinthians 3: 1-22

The church at Corinth was founded as a result of Paul's visit to the city during his second 'missionary journey'. In Luke's words, "And after these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth" (Acts 18: 1). He travelled from Athens, the centre of learning, to Corinth, a corrupt commercial city. "Although he was scoffed at by the 'high brows' at Athens, his witness was not entirely fruitless even if not so successful as at other places: 'certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them' (Acts 17: 34). In contrast, a great work was accomplished in corrupt Corinth, chiefly among Gentiles and largely, it would seem, among the lower classes who were immersed in pagan darkness (1 Cor. 10: 20; 12: 2)" (J.H.Large). See also 1 Cor. 1: 26-29.

According to J. Anderson, Corinth was some eighty miles by land to the west of Athens, but only about forty-five miles by sea. It lay on the land-bridge connecting the Peloponnese with Central and Northern Greece (a map will explain this) at the junction of sea routes to the west and east, and of land routes to the north and south. (We should note the wisdom of God in directing Paul in this way. Corinth was an ideal place from which the gospel could be spread). It had two ports, Lechaenum which pointed westwards to the Ionian Sea and the central and western Mediterranean, and Cenchrea (see v.18) which pointed eastwards to the Aegean Sea, the eastern Mediterranean, and the Black Sea.

The city visited by Paul had been refounded by Julius Ceasar in 44 B.C., having been levelled to the ground by the Roman general L.Mummius in 146 B.C. after rebelling against Rome. Julius Caesar despatched a colony of freed men to Corinth in connection with rebuilding the city, hence the occurrence of Latin names such as Fortunatas, Crispus and Achaicus in 1 Corinthians. In 27 B.C. it became the seat of administration of the Roman province of Achaia, when it regained its old commercial prosperity. Merchants flocked there from all parts of Greece: Jews were attracted there by the facilities of commerce; wealth, art, literature and luxury revived.

It also regained something of its past reputation for licentiousness, which made it the most notorious city of the ancient world. Corinth was a vile place, so much so that the Greek language made a verb out of the city's name - 'to corinthianise' meaning 'to practice whoredom'. Just south of the isthmus (the land-bridge) stands the Acro-Corinthus, a vertical mountain rising to a height of 1,886 feet. At the summit stood a temple, dedicated to Aphrodite, with the most appalling reputation.

"Even as late as the seventeenth century, the 'Corinthian' in Shakespearean dramas was always a debauchee, making his entry on the stage in a state of drunkenness". (Supplied by J. Waldron). J.H.Large describes Corinth as "the moral cess-pit of the Mediterranean into which drained all the vices of East and West". Paul gives us a dreadful summary of life at Corinth in 1 Cor. 6: 9-11: "Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you..."

But both 1 & 2 Corinthians begin in the same way: "Paul...unto the **church of God** which is at Corinth" (1 Cor. 1: 1-2; 2 Cor. 1: 1). When Job asked the question, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?", he answered it himself: "not one" (Job 14: 4). But that is exactly what God did at Corinth, leading Paul to say of the assembly there "but ye are (were) washed, but ye are (were) sanctified, but ye are (were) justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus (RV 'Christ') and by (in) the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6: 11).

Luke tells us how it all started in Acts 18: 1-8. In this connection we must note the following: **(1)** that God prepared the way (vv.1-3); **(2)** that Paul preached the Gospel (vv.4-11); **(3)** that the Jews provoked trouble (vv.12-17); **(4)** that Paul spent further time there (v.18).

1) GOD PREPARED THE WAY, vv. 1-3

It began with two events. Right at 'the top of the tree', Emperor Claudius (the most important man in the world at the time) "commanded all Jews to depart from Rome" (v.2), and right at the bottom, years before, two Jewish fathers taught their little boys the craft of tent-making (v.3). As a result, Paul had somewhere to live and work when he arrived in Corinth! God was 'one step ahead!' In the words of A.C.Gooding, "God must have wanted an assembly at Corinth to do that!" He had provided for His servant before he even reached

the place, reminding us that He is in complete control of history, whether it's the big events or the little events. Earlier, God had used another Roman emperor to accomplish His will. See Luke 2: 1. There is no such thing as coincidence as far as He is concerned.

It is generally assumed, on the basis of something written by Suetonius seventy years after the event, that Claudius expelled the Jews because they were "indulging in constant riots at the instigation of Chrestus". (We could call this 'ethnic cleansing'). If 'Chrestus' is a variant spelling of 'Christus' then F.F.Bruce may be right in saying that "Suetonius's statement, in fact, points to dissension and disorder within the Jewish community of Rome resulting from the introduction of Christianity into one or more of the synagogues of the city". The important point in all this is that God had prepared for Paul's visit to the city, otherwise he would have been a complete stranger there without means of support.

Paul and Aquila were "tentmakers" (*skenopoios*) which, according to F.F.Bruce, might have the more general meaning of 'leatherworkers'. According to a note supplied by J. Waldron, "The Jewish law, after the exile, held that a father who taught not his son a trade, taught him to be a thief". We should notice that, when necessary, "Paul, as a matter of policy, earned his living in this way during his missionary career (cf. Acts 20: 34; 1 Cor. 9: 3-18; 2 Cor. 11: 7; 1 Thess. 2: 9; 2 Thess. 3: 8)" (F.F.Bruce). Foreseeing future criticism of Paul's service, God arranged, as we have already noted, for young Saul, as he then was, to learn the trade of tentmaker, which he followed on arrival at Corinth (Acts 18: 3). Thus, initially, he supported himself. Latterly he was supported by the Macedonian brethren (2 Cor. 11: 8-10). Hence he could write in connection with his entitlement to local support, "But I have used none of these things" (1 Cor. 9: 15), and "when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man" (2 Cor. 11: 9).

The references in the New Testament to Aquila and Priscilla make a fascinating and profitable study. See Acts 18: 2, 18, 26; Romans 16: 3; 1 Corinthians 16: 19; 2 Timothy 4: 19. Start with their **marriage**: you can divide the six references into two groups - Aquila and Priscilla, and Priscilla (or Prisca) and Aquila. Now that's interesting! Then look at their **movements**: they pop up all over the place! Finally, think about their **ministry**. It has been nicely said that 'their home was a shelter for Paul (here), a school for Apollos (Acts 18: 26) and a sanctuary for the church (1 Cor. 16: 19)'. So far as we can judge, Aquila and Priscilla were believers before they reached Corinth. It can certainly be

said of them that "the steps of a good man (or woman) are ordered by the Lord" (Psalm 37: 23).

2) PAUL PREACHED THE GOSPEL, vv.4-11

Having arrived at Corinth, Paul "reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks" (v.4). We meet two familiar words here (see Acts 17: 2, 4): "reasoned" (*dialegomai*), giving rise to the English word 'dialogue' (it's the 'cut and thrust' of debate again), and "persuaded" (*peitho*) meaning "to apply persuasion, to prevail upon or win over, to persuade, bringing about a change of mind by the influence of reason or moral considerations" (W.E.Vine). The "Greeks" were God-fearing Gentiles.

There can be no doubt that when Luke tells us that Paul "reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath", he followed the pattern at Thessalonica where he "reasoned with them **out of the scriptures**" (Acts 17: 2). He did not 'reason with them' about politics, or the economy! As at Thessalonica, so at Corinth. At Thessalonica, we find him "opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead", and having established from the scriptures that Christ, the Messiah, must die and rise from the dead, then asserting "that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ" (Acts 17: 3). This should be compared with Acts 18: 4-5. Paul himself confirms that he "reasoned" at Corinth in this way: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins **according to the scriptures**; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day **according to the scriptures**" (1 Cor. 15: 1-4). See also 1 Corinthians 2: 1-2.

We should notice where Paul preached the Gospel. In accordance with his usual practice, he preached first of all in the synagogue. The word 'synagogue' means 'bringing together'. Paul therefore had a ready audience at Corinth. He preached where people were to be found! We should also bear in mind that the existence of a synagogue at Corinth accounts for the assembly's possession of the gift of tongues, which is specifically said to be a sign to the Jews: "In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto **this people**; and yet for all that they will not hear me, saith the Lord" (1 Cor. 14: 21).

We must draw attention to at least four things in these verses: **(a)** he preached with conviction (v.5); **(b)** he warned his hearers (vv.6-7); **(c)** he saw conversions (v.8); **(d)** he received encouragement (vv.9-11).

a) He preached with conviction, v.5

"And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ" (v.5). It was after Timothy's return from Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3: 6) that Paul evidently wrote 1 Thessalonians. Quite possibly, either Timothy or Silas, or both, brought him a gift from Macedonia. See 2 Corinthians 11: 9. It therefore appears that once his mind was settled in connection with his beloved brethren at Thessalonica and his fears allayed (1 Thess. 3: 7-9), he gave himself without distraction to the work at Corinth. There are some illuminating facts in the narrative, and one of them is that Paul was not some kind of superman who brushed aside problems and concerns. As we all know, it is far from easy to concentrate on even the Lord's work when we are distracted by fears and difficulties.

We mustn't forget either that fellowship is a tremendous encouragement in the Lord's work. Paul did not travel alone on his three 'missionary journeys'. He was emboldened and strengthened by fellowship. As he approached the end of his life, Paul sorely needed Timothy's fellowship: "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia...Do thy diligence to come before winter" (2 Tim. 4: 10, 21).

The words "Paul was pressed in the spirit (from *pneuma*, AV text)" are otherwise translated "constrained by the word" (from *logos*, RV text) or "pressed in respect of the word" (JND) with the footnote "or earnestly occupied with the word". Paul was gripped and galvanised into action by the word of God. The word "pressed" (*sunecho*) is translated 'constrained' in 2 Corinthians 5: 14. F.F.Bruce translates this, simply, as 'Paul devoted himself to preaching', but it does seem to be rather stronger than that. It wasn't just a lecture. He "testified (*diamarturomai*, 'to testify or protest solemnly') to the Jews that Jesus was Christ". Compare Acts 17: 3. He said in effect, with deep feeling, 'Jesus is our Messiah'. We must remember that he was "an Hebrew of the Hebrews" (Phil. 3: 5) with a deep love for his people. See Rom. 9: 1-3; 10: 1. Paul himself refers to his deep, Spirit-given conviction, whilst at Corinth: "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor. 2: 4). Compare 2 Corinthians 1: 19, "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us,

even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but ***in him was yea***".

How earnest are ***we*** in the Lord's service, particularly in our concern for the salvation of our fellow men and women? Paul said, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor. 9: 16). He certainly didn't 'play to the gallery' in the synagogue at Corinth, or anywhere else for that matter, and, in consequence, he had good reason to write, "we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock..." (1 Cor. 1: 23). This follows:

b) He warned his hearers, vv.6-7

"And when they opposed themselves (we would say 'set themselves in opposition') and blasphemed ('as they opposed and spoke injuriously', JND), he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be on your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles" (v6). Compare Acts 20: 26-27). He had discharged ***his*** duty by preaching the Gospel to them. The responsibility now lay with ***them***. To find out what Paul meant by saying, "I am clean", read Ezekiel 3: 17-21; 33: 1-9, particularly 3: 19, "if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul". See also Ezekiel 33: 9. Compare Acts 20: 26. The words, "Your blood be on your own heads" recall the cry of the Lord's accusers, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. 27: 25). (Compare this with Acts 2: 39, "for the ***promise*** is unto you, and to your children": what grace!).

In shaking his raiment (compare Luke 9: 5; Acts 13: 51), dramatically "shaking out his cloak so that not a speck of dust from the synagogue might adhere to it", Paul signified that he would have nothing in common with those who rejected "The One whom he proclaimed as Messiah and Lord" (F.F.Bruce). This suffices to remind us that ***we*** have a debt to discharge in telling others about the Lord Jesus. Paul wrote: "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also" (Rom. 1: 14-15).

If one door closed, then another door opened, and it was the house next door! "And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God (*sebomai*, meaning 'to revere', 'to be filled with awe'), whose house joined hard by the synagogue" (v.7). This took no small courage in view of the opposition from 'the people next door!' According to the RV his name was 'Titus

Justus'. This does not necessarily mean that Paul took up residence in the house of Justus, but rather that Justus made his house available for Paul's use in preaching the gospel. Justus was a God-fearing Gentile (he has a Roman name) who was evidently amongst those who had been 'persuaded' by Paul's arguments (v.4). Some commentators suggest that Titus Justus (a Roman *nomen* and *cognomen*) was none other than Gaius (which, it is argued, could be his *praenomen*). See 1 Corinthians 1: 14 and Romans 16: 23. Whatever his full name, the important thing to notice is that his house was used in the Lord's service, just like the home of Aquila and Priscilla (v.3).

c) He saw conversions, v.8

"And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (v.8). In Paul's own words, "So we preach, and so ye believed" (1 Cor. 15: 11). We must notice the order of events:

i) They heard. Well, what did they hear? We have to look no further than 1 Corinthians 15: 3-4, "For I delivered unto you first of all (that is, 'first of all' in relation to importance) that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures; and that he was seen..."

ii) They believed. The word (*pisteuo*) means "to place confidence in, to trust" and therefore "reliance upon, not mere credence" (W.E.Vine). Believing in the Lord Jesus is defined as 'receiving' Him. See John 1: 12.

iii) They were baptised. Crispus and Gaius, were baptised by Paul (1 Cor. 1: 14). As J. Anderson points out, apart from the rather special case in 19: 5, this is the last mention of baptism following conversion in the book of Acts. "From now on we can take for granted the baptism of new converts".

As usual, antagonism proved no hindrance to the progress of the Gospel, reminding us of events in Egypt: "But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew" (Exodus 1:12).

d) He received encouragement, vv.9-11

"Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man

shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city" (vv.9-10). Some years later, Paul said, "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great" (Acts 26: 22). In serving God, we can be certain of His presence and help. Read Hebrews 13: 5-6. Opposition and difficulty were accompanied by a special sense of the Lord's presence. Compare the way in which He saw His disciples "toiling in rowing" and went to them with the words, "Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid" (Mark 6: 48-50). Paul was about to be brought before the Roman "judgment seat" (the *bema*) at Corinth, but **before** this the Lord, who knew exactly what was going to happen, assures him of His presence and help. We should notice the following:

i) He ministers His peace. "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace" (v.9). Do remember that he said, "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling" (1 Cor. 2: 3). Opposition did not mean that Paul was unmoved and unafraid.

ii) He pledges His presence. "I am with thee" (v.10). As we have noticed, it would seem that the arrival of Silas and Timothy helped to put fresh heart in Paul, but this was even better!

iii) He promises His protection. "No man shall set on thee to hurt thee" (v.10). J.H.Large has the following to say about this: "Paul's gracious Master, who had experienced all the same trials, understood His over-wrought servant and sympathising with his natural apprehensions, assured him that at Corinth, at least, he would have some respite from ill usage". He had already encountered opposition (v.6) and would do so again (vv.12-17), but he was not to leave the city.

iv) He speaks about His people. "I have much people in this city" - rather like the assurance given to Elijah (1 Kings 19: 18) - but in this case it is "much people" in prospect. Paul was the channel through which the Gospel would reach them. As Alfred Barnes observes, "God has a purpose in regard to the salvation of sinners" and "that purpose is so fixed in the mind of God that *He* can say that those in relation to whom it is formed are *His*. There is no chance; no hap-hazard; no doubt in regard to His gathering them to Himself".

Paul **was** encouraged by this: "he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them" (v.11).

3) THE JEWS PROVOKED TROUBLE, vv.12-17

True to His promise, “no man shall set on thee to hurt thee”, Paul was preserved from harm when the Jews seized the opportunity to accuse him before Gallio, the Roman “deputy” or proconsul. “And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul (‘the Jews with one consent rose against Paul’, JND), and brought him to the judgment seat, saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law” (vv.12-13). As our contributor Justin Waldron observes, the believers at Corinth would have had no difficulty in understanding Paul’s reference to the “judgment seat (*bema*) of Christ” (2 Cor. 5: 10) since they would have been familiar with Gallio’s “judgment seat” (*bema*).

According to F.F.Bruce, “The charge which was preferred against Paul before Gallio was that of propagating a religion, and on that basis forming a society not countenanced by Roman law...Paul’s accusers maintained that the gospel he preached had nothing to do with their ancestral faith: it was no true form of Judaism, and therefore should not share in the protection extended to Judaism by Roman law”.

But it didn’t get them anywhere! When Paul was “about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wicked lewdness (‘criminality’, JND, or ‘villany’, RV), O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you; but if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters. And he drave them from the judgment seat” (vv.14-16). Gallio “quickly decided that the dispute was internal to the Jewish community, that it concerned conflicting interpretations of Jewish religious law. Paul was obviously as much a Jew as his accusers were. What Paul was propagating, Gallio reckoned, was simply a variety of Judaism which did not happen to commend itself to the leaders of the local Jewish community...they must settle it themselves. So he bade them begone from his tribunal” (F.F.Bruce).

What then followed illustrates how quickly Gentiles seized the opportunity to vent their hatred of the Jews. “Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of these things” (v.17). Sosthenes, the new “chief ruler of the synagogue”, got a thrashing in an anti-Jewish demonstration, and Gallio ‘couldn’t have cared less’ about it. His predecessor, Crispus, obviously didn’t last long in the synagogue after he became a Christian (v.8), which isn’t surprising! It

is tempting to think that Sosthenes also became a believer and that Paul refers to him in 1 Corinthians 1: 1, but we have no means of knowing if this was the case.

After remaining in Corinth for "a good while", Paul returned to Syria (Antioch) via Ephesus (vv.18-22). He was next in Corinth in Acts 20: 2-3, by which time 1 & 2 Corinthians had been written. There was no time for an intervening visit, as some infer from 2 Corinthians 13: 1. However, we must now notice that

4) PAUL SPENT FURTHER TIME AT CORINTH, v.18

We know that he was in Corinth for eighteen months before the "Jews made insurrection with one accord" against him, and that this time was spent in "teaching the word of God" (v.11). We now learn that his visit was extended further, in Luke's words, for "a good while" or "yet many days" (RV). F.F.Bruce suggests that this refers to the winter following Gallio's decision (vv.14-16), which was probably made "in the summer or early fall of A.D.51". It would be most surprising if Paul did not continue "teaching the word of God" during this additional period, and we are indebted to him for giving us further information, particularly in 1 Corinthians ch.3, in connection with the way in which the assembly there was founded.

But, before this, we should notice that when Paul ultimately left Corinth, Luke tells us that he "took his leave of **the brethren**". Having "testified to the Jews" and gone "unto the Gentiles", he "took his leave of the brethren!" (vv.5, 6, 18). Compare Acts 16: 40 where, before leaving Philippi, Paul and Silas "entered into the house of Lydia and when they had seen **the brethren**, they comforted them and departed". All this reminds us that the human race is divided into three sections: "the Jews...the Gentiles...the church of God" (1 Cor. 10: 32), and that in "the church of God" (referring to the *local* assembly) there are no ethnic distinctions: Christ has "broken down the middle wall of partition...to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace" (Eph. 2: 14-15).

We should also notice, that Paul evidently left the newly-established assembly at Corinth in good health: "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you; so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor .1: 4-7). As we have noticed, this was not

accomplished overnight: it involved time (vv.11, 18). Compare the time spent at Antioch: "a whole year they (Barnabas and Saul) assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people" (Acts 11: 26). Newly-planted assemblies - and well-established assemblies for that matter - need Bible teaching at length. At Corinth, this involved the following:

i) *It involved fellowship with others.* "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3: 6). Planting and building an assembly involves different servants of God. In saying that "Apollos watered", Paul does not mean that he 'watered the work with his prayers' (a frequently-heard expression). The way in which he "watered" is defined elsewhere: "And when he (Apollos) was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace..." (Acts 18: 27-28).

ii) *It involved fellowship with God.* In no way did Paul claim ownership of the assembly at Corinth.

- He recognised that the assembly belonged to God: "ye are **God's husbandry** (cultivated field)", suggesting developing life and fruitfulness: "ye are **God's building** (a temple)" (1 Cor. 3: 9). David defines the purpose of a temple as follows: "in his temple doth every one speak of his glory" (Psalm 29: 9).

- He recognised, in view of the above, that Apollos and himself were simply servants, claiming nothing for themselves and recognising that all ability and authority came from God: "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" (1 Cor. 3: 5).

- He recognised that since "the Lord gave to every man", there could be no suggestion of rivalry between servants: "he that planteth and he that watereth are one... for we are labourers together with God (God's fellow-labourers)".

iii) *It involved laying a foundation.* "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation" (1 Cor. 3: 10). The word "masterbuilder" (*architekton*) refers to "a principle artificer" rather than to an architect. To quote W.E.Vine, "The examples from the papyri and from inscriptions, as illustrated by Moulton and Milligan, show that the word had a wider application than our 'architect', and confirm the rendering

'masterbuilder' in this passage, which is of course, borne out by the context". Paul, as a builder, worked to a plan, beginning with the foundation. The "foundation" truth in assembly-building is doctrine concerning the Lord Jesus: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3: 11). The "wise masterbuilder" laid this foundation at Corinth. All 'assembly teaching' takes its character from "the foundation". Following on from this:

iv) It involved local builders. "But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon...Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood hay stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Cor. 3: 10, 12, 13). The 'builders' here are the assembly teachers. This is confirmed by the Lord's reference to the religious leadership in saying "The stone which **the builders** rejected is become the head of the corner" (Mark. 12: 10). The very people who taught the nation, the "builders", had lamentably failed. It would be equally tragic if assembly teachers failed in their ministry to give pre-eminence in their teaching to the Lord Jesus.

An assembly cannot be properly established, and an assembly cannot be expected to flourish, unless "in all things", Christ has "the pre-eminence" (Col. 1: 18).

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