

A Look At Local Autonomy

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

1 Corinthians 1:10

In the controversy surrounding Romans 14 and the fellowshiping of sinful teaching and practices, the argument has been made that the above passage only applied to the local, divided church at Corinth; it contains no principle that can be universally applied. Therefore, we are not under a mandate *"to speak the same thing and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."* Can you believe it? If this is correct exegesis, then no one today is obligated to partake of the Lord's supper on the Lord's day because Acts 20:7 was spoken in reference to the church at Troas.

The reason this argument is made in the first place is to condemn good, truth-loving men who are doing their best to stem the tide of error being preached on Romans 14 and the fellowshiping of sinful teaching and practices. Brethren who are determined to defend a false position are like a drowning man grabbing at weeds in a vain attempt to save his life. We are commanded to handle the word of truth correctly (2 Timothy 2:15). If we *"wrest the scriptures"* it is to our own destruction (2 Peter 3:16).

Peter said, *"Love the brotherhood"* (1 Peter 2:17). First Peter was written *"... to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia"* (1:1), not to a single church. Those receiving it were commanded to *"love the brotherhood."* How can one do this without looking out for the best interest of the brotherhood? How can one claim to love the brotherhood when he refuses to warn it of impending dangers that have the potential of condemning souls? To say that such action is a violation of congregational autonomy essentially makes it possible for teachers of error to go unchallenged. If those promoting this concept think it will be generally accepted and allowed, they are mistaken. Brethren who love the truth and the brotherhood see through this ruse and will not allow falsehood to go unchallenged.

These kinds of arguments concerning congregational autonomy and independence show a lack of true understanding. Let us all renew our love for God and His truth and keep ourselves informed of the lurking dangers. Ignorance is Satan's greatest ally. During the institutional controversy, most

brethren agreed with the more liberal doctrine. We hope that it will not be that way in this controversy, but always remember that God and one man adhering to the truth make a majority.

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