

## Reverends, Pastors And Bishops

The January 12 edition of *The Lufkin Daily News* carried an article titled "Increasing number of pastors are giving themselves titles." The article explained how denominational preachers are no longer satisfied with their designation of "pastor" or "reverend," but are now appointing themselves as "doctor," "bishop" and "apostle." One man was quoted as saying, "In order to compete, a reverend is not enough for their status...Even calling themselves doctors doesn't do enough. We have to find other titles that have more of a mystical appeal." This is no surprise. Men have been seeking to elevate themselves above others and the Scripture for centuries.

his attitude among denominational preachers was also present among the Jews of the first century. Jesus, in condemning them, said, "They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi'" (Matthew 23:6-7).

The title "reverend" has always been erroneously applied to man. The Bible says, "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name" (Psalm 111:9, KJV). Whenever "reverend" is used as a title for man, it either elevates man to God's level or it brings God down to man's. Either way, it is blasphemy.

The designation of "pastor" has long been used in reference to a preacher. The Bible draws a distinction between the two (Ephesians 4:11). A "pastor" (shepherd) is the same as a "bishop" or "elder" (1 Peter 5:1-2; Titus 1:5, 7; Acts 20:17, 28). These are men who must meet specific qualifications in order to be appointed as a "pastor" (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). And, there is always a plurality of them in a congregation (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Philippians 1:1). These facts are ignored by denominations.

In changing their title from "pastor" to "bishop," men further reveal their ignorance of the Bible.

Steven F. Deaton