

specific such as to assist in training the youth or to help out in disasters. Others are varied in their activities but all assist the churches in one way or several ways to help build the Kingdom of God.

NO NEED FOR CENTRAL HEADQUARTERS

There is no need for the churches to have a central purse, a central headquarters nor a head leadership to direct them. What is needed is dedicated Christians who are committed to building the Kingdom of God and an attitude of love and cooperation. The Holy Spirit will guide such men in doing what is needed and what is right.

There will be occasional times when a person will take advantage of the voluntary system to bless himself instead of the Lord's Kingdom. It has been my experience that such men are quickly found out and their voluntary support is withdrawn. It has also been my experience that a denomination with a system of government where one leader or a group of leaders pass down rules and collect fees has a tendency to become both corrupt and political rather than spiritual in its focus. Once the leadership is corrupt and political, there is little that the churches can do to stop it. However, with para-church organizations which depend on voluntary support, the corruption and politicizing can easily be stopped by withdrawing financial support. This is what we call church autonomy. I believe autonomy is what keeps the Christian Church strong and growing today.

Christian Leadership Training Institute
Box DD168
Dodowa, Accra
GHANA

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH HAS NO BISHOPS

This may sound like a strange name for a tract, so let me explain it. I am talking about the Christian Church in west Africa, the United States and all over the world which uses the New Testament only as its guide for doctrine and practice. The title **Bishop** refers to a title used in many Christian denominations for an administrator over several churches. With this tract I want to say that the Christian Church does not have administrators over several churches. Let me explain.

The first problem with having a bishop over many churches is that this is an abuse of the biblical use of the title. The title of Bishop or Overseer was one of three titles used in the New Testament for the same office of leadership in a local church. The other two titles are Elder and Shepherd (1 Peter 5:1-3). Take your Bible and read the qualifications for this office in Titus 1:5-9. The Apostle Paul sent Titus to appoint elders in every town on the Island of Crete. In verse seven (7) Paul called the elder a bishop or overseer depending on what translation you are using. The NIV Bible has a footnote telling you that the word is traditionally translated as bishop. The fact is that, throughout the New Testament, the title of bishop was used only for the position of elder in the local church. And, there were always several elders or bishops in every church.

The second problem with having a bishop over several churches is that there was never a leader appointed over several churches during the time that the Apostles established the church. Neither the Apostle Paul nor any New Testament church planter, nor any group of churches in the New Testament times appointed a leader over several churches. This was not a practice recorded in the New Testament, therefore the Christian Church does not appoint leaders (bishops) over several churches.