

A New Era

With the events that transpire this day, the Buford Church of Christ moves into a new era of its history. Five men have "risen to the top" in the minds of those in the congregation as suitable prospects for the service role of shepherd. Each of these men have demonstrated by their lives and actions, by their understandings and commitments to the word of God, and their love for their brethren, a worthiness for such a task as this. God be praised!

Looking into the mind of God as revealed in Scripture the church is seen from many different perspectives. Jesus said the church was something He would build, Matthew 16:18, a work in which shepherds are interested. The church was something the Lord would add the saved to, Acts 2:47, individuals whose purity, shepherds are interested in helping to preserve. The church is a place where people take seriously the commands and teachings of the Lord, Acts 2:42, 5:11; something elders are committed to maintain. The church is not always treated fairly by outsiders, Acts 8:1, yet shepherds are set on protecting her with every fiber of their being. The church was God's force in sending out the gospel to the entire world, Acts 11:22, work elders are committed to see that is done. The church was taught, Acts 11:26, an effort determinately carried out by elders already trained by the word of God, Acts 20:17,27,31. The church communed with God about serious issues in prayer, Acts 12:5, something the elders lead in by example.

When elders were appointed in the church they were "committed," or as other translations render it, "commended" to the Lord, Acts 14:23. The word "committed" is "to place along side," or "set beside" the Lord. An elder was put to the work of living and working along side the Lord. Imagine that! The Son of God! My Co-worker! The word "committed" also has the idea of being "set before" like placing delicious food on the table before those who are to partake. Elders of the church of Christ are to be men who work beside the Lord as servants, placing God's word before Christian people to be consumed like a feast. Another closely related idea behind the word "committed" is to "place down in," or "to deposit," or "to entrust." Like placing precious family heirlooms in a safety deposit box, elders were entrusted with the work of the Lord. Elders are God's "safety deposit box." Imagine the security measures that should be taken to protect God's family heirlooms!

What are shepherds to protect? What are God's jewels? His church! His Saved Ones! His Word! Neither Brinks, ADT, nor the president's Secret Service, have ever been given the duty, nor have the means to protect such wealth, such precious and priceless inheritance. Yet elders, simple faith-filled men, God has set before Himself to carry out this humble task.

Today this church is blessed to have Wade Cowart, David Wheeler, Gene Cloer, Stan Quinn, and Earl Nichols begin their work as shepherds. Add to these, Steve Smith, Jim Freeman, Jimmy Miller, Bob Conolty, Rich Berdan and Bob Hogan. These eleven are to be your shepherds. Pray for them, their wives, and families. Submit to their leadership and exert all effort possible to help them do

their duty. May God richly bless this church with development, growth and strength!

—Scott