

BROTHERS,
NOT BOSSES

A photograph of a church service. In the foreground, two men are seen from behind, their hands raised in prayer. The man on the left has dark hair and is wearing a dark sweater. The man on the right has short dark hair and is wearing a light-colored, textured sweater. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in the congregation and a screen displaying colorful graphics. A semi-transparent blue box with white text is overlaid on the image.

“You are all brothers.”

Matthew 23:8b

Western Christianity Surrounded by Titles

Titles are
everywhere.
But where did
they come
from?

Senior Pastor.

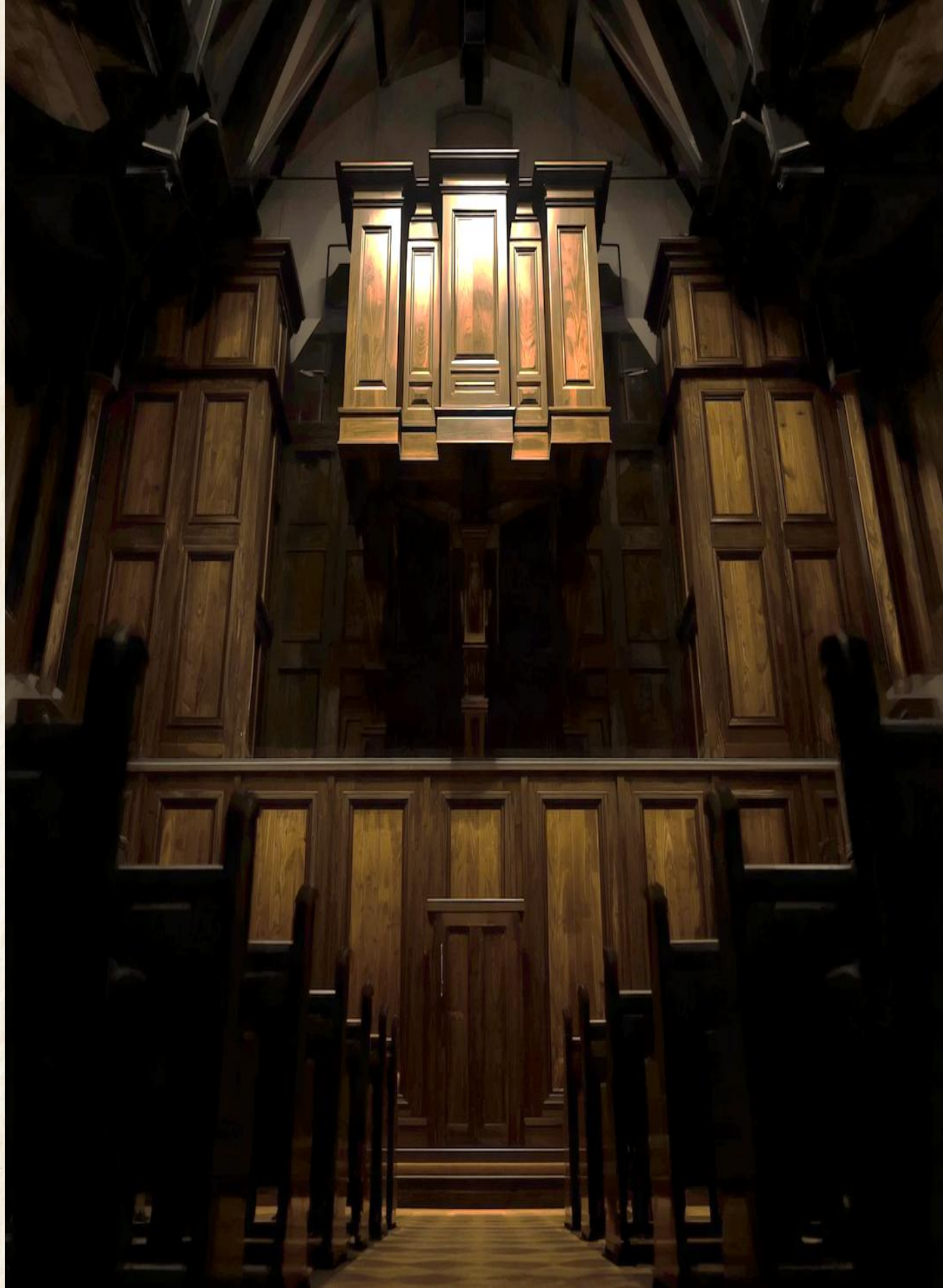
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Senior Pastor.

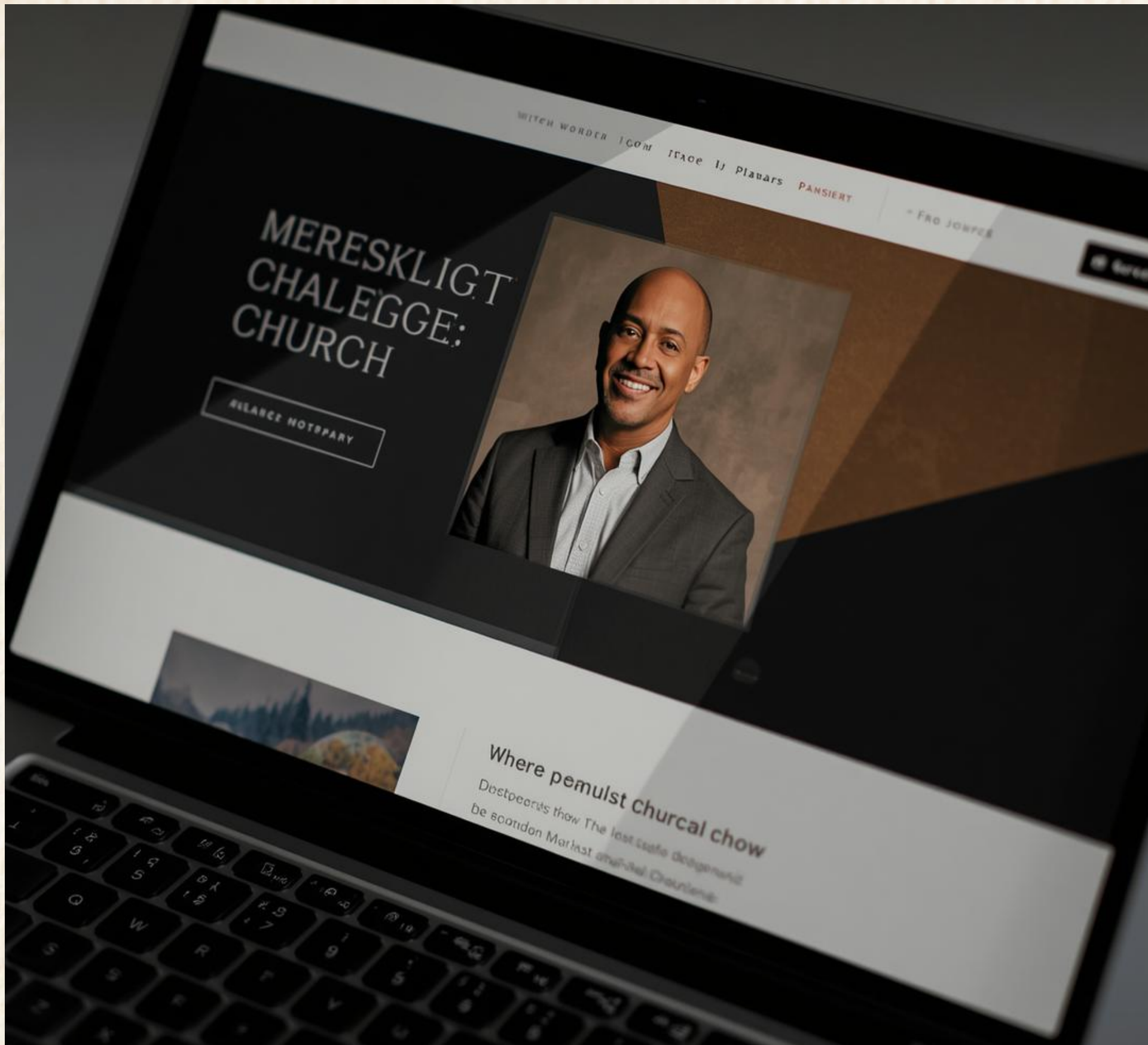
PASCBIAN VLEE. P.OIRETY

Bishop.

Racorbive wIReu ColinsetY



Pulpits Tower
Above
congregations



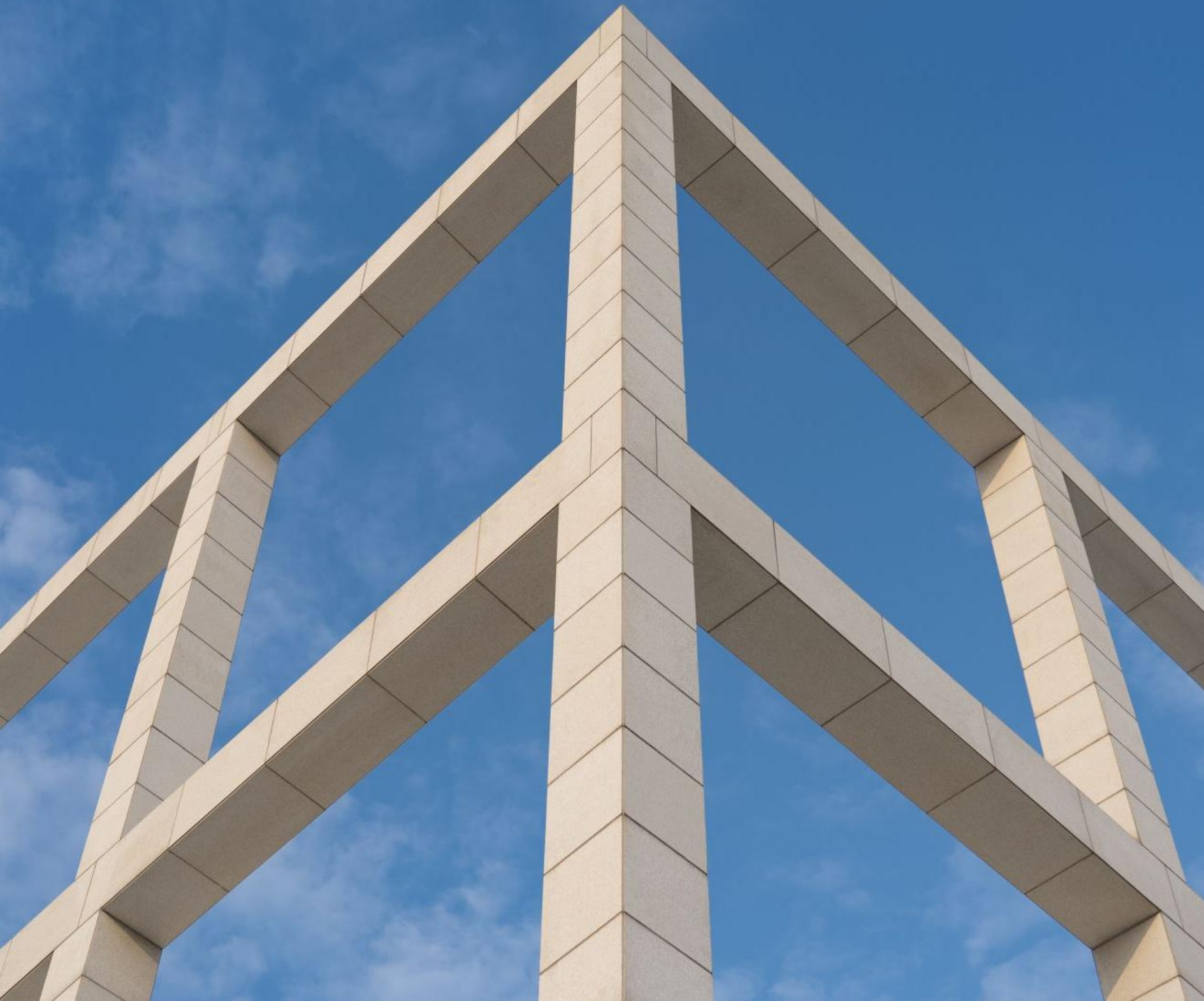
Church Websites Feature One Face



Scripture
or the
World?

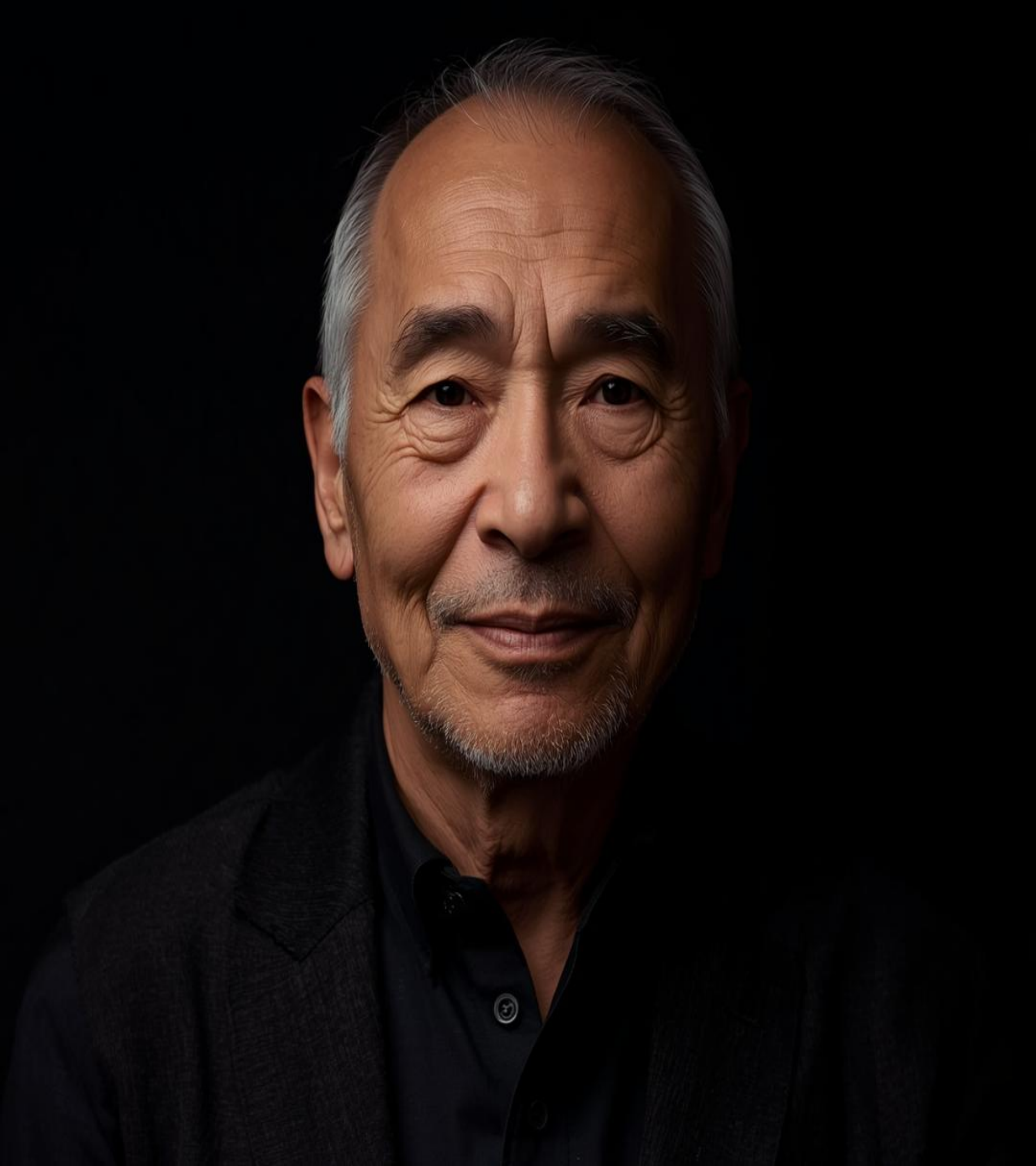
One or Many?

Did God design the church to be led by a single titled executive or by a plurality of brothers serving together?





**What the
Bible calls
Church
Leaders**



Presbuteros

— Elders

Acts

20:17

From Miletus he sent
to Ephesus and called
the elders
(presbuterous) of the
church.



Presbuteros Defined





Episkopos

—

Overseers

(Bishops)

Acts 20:28

The Holy Spirit has made you overseers (episkopous), to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.





**Poimen —
Shepherd
(Pastor)**

Ephesians 4:11

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds (poimenas) and teachers...





These are not three separate offices.

Titus 1:7

For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money.



1 Peter

5:1-2

The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly.



**God's Design:
A Plurality of
Leaders**

A scene from a film depicting Paul and Timothy writing a letter in a room with other people. Paul, an older man with a long grey beard, is seated on the left, writing on a scroll with a quill. Timothy, a younger man with dark hair, sits next to him, looking on. Other men are seated around them, some looking at the scroll. The room has a rustic, stone-walled appearance with a window in the background showing a view of a town on a hillside.

Philippians 1:1

*Paul and Timothy,
bondservants of Jesus
Christ, to all the
saints in Christ Jesus
who are in Philippi,
with the bishops and
deacons.*

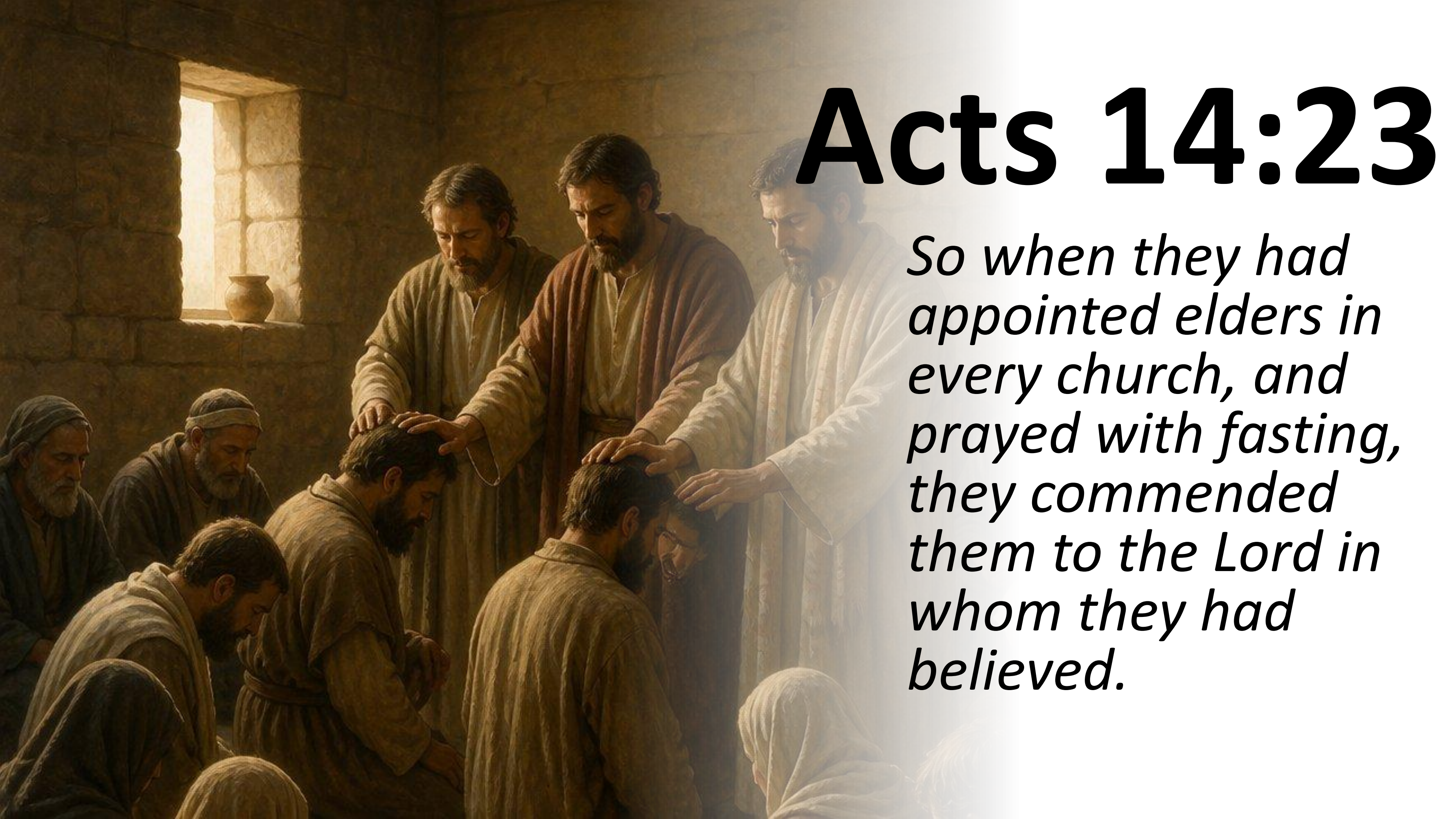
An illustration depicting a scene from the Bible. In the center, Jesus, with long hair and a beard, is anointing a man lying down with oil. Several church elders, also with beards and wearing robes, are gathered around, some with their hands on the man's head, suggesting prayer. The background shows a wooden interior with columns. The overall tone is solemn and caring.

James 5:14

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

Acts 14:23

So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.



Hebrews 13:17

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account.



Reason 1: Protection From Abuse





Reason 2: Protection from Error



Reason 3: Mutual Accountability



Depth of Care



Reason 5: Humility Modelled

1 Corinthians 12:21

And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'; nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'



The body
needs
many parts.
So does its
leadership.

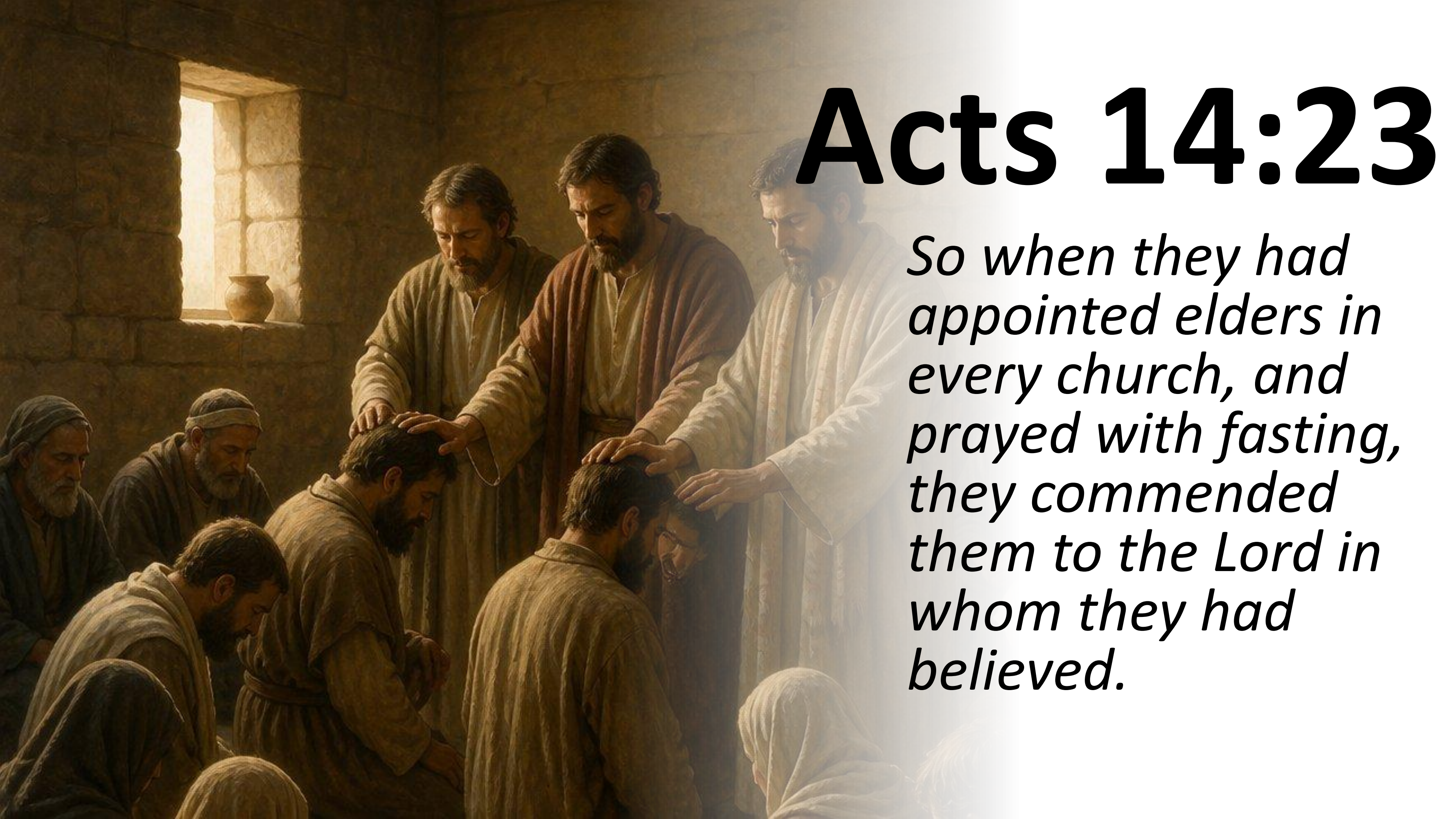


1st Century: Plurality in Practice



Acts 14:23

So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.



CHURCHES

Jerusalem – Elders led the church together

Galatia – Elders appointed in every church

Ephesus – Paul called for the elders (plural)

Philippi – Overseers and deacons present

Crete – Titus to appoint elders in every town

MEDITERRANEAN CHURCH

RASH

2nd Century: Rise of the Single Bishop



**Ignatius of Antioch (c. 107 AD)
urged churches to submit to 'the
bishop' (singular).**



3rd & 4th Centuries: Imperial Structure



**Cyprian of Carthage
(~250 AD)**

**Constantine
converted in 312 A.D.**



Medieval & Reformation Period



The "senior pastor" emerged as the commanding figure at the centre of congregational life.



THE MODERN ERA: THE PASTOR- CEO



**The one-pastor model
is not ancient or
biblical**

1 Corinthians

1:12–13

Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?



1 Corinthians

3:3–4

For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?



1 Corinthians

3:5–7

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.





The Devastating Fungi





Moral Collapse



Spiritual Abuse

Congregation Collapse



Consumerism Replacing Community



False Doctrine Shielded by Celebrity



Named Without Fear: A Pattern of Fallen Towers



1 Peter 5:2–3

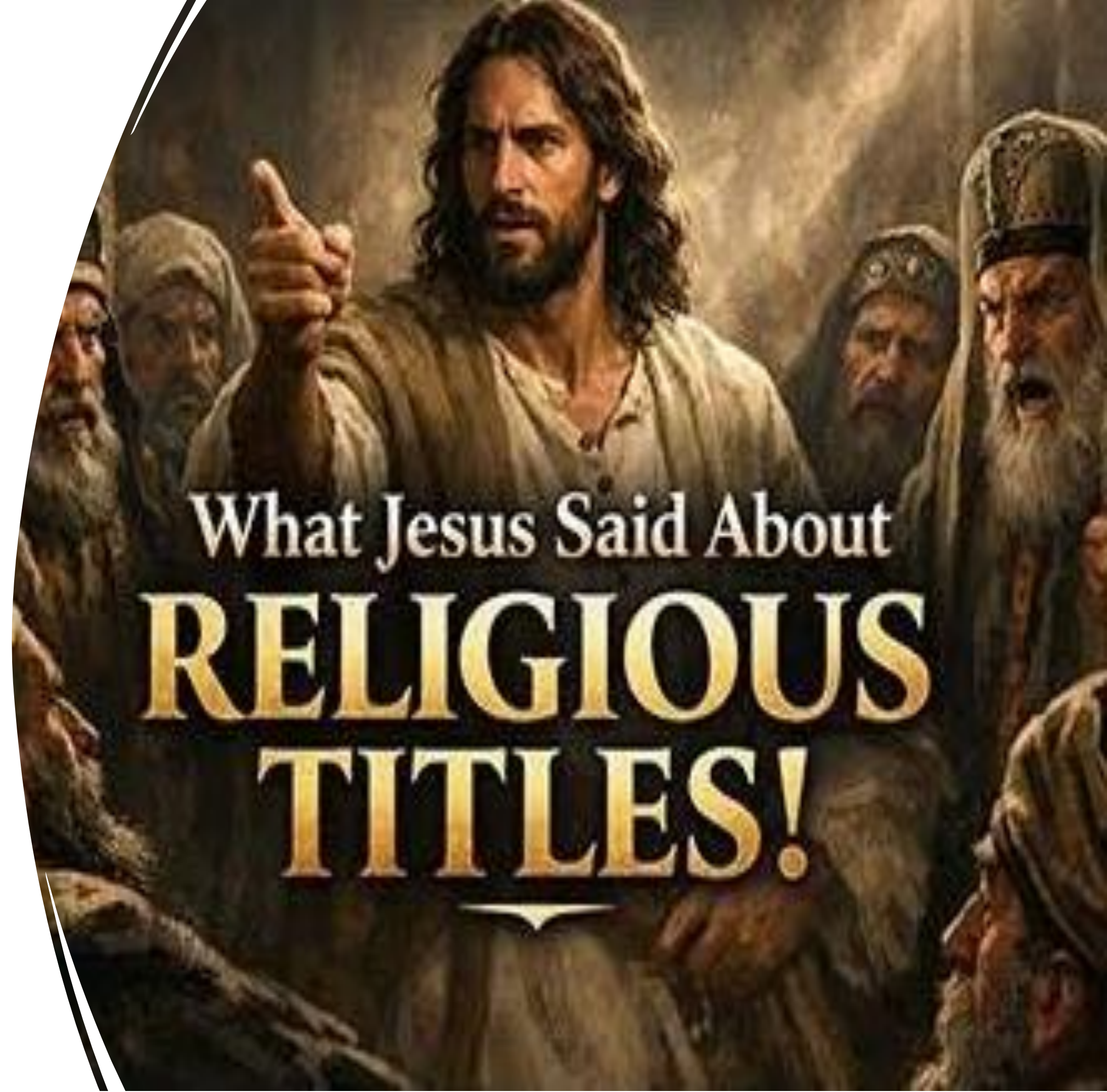
Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.



The Antidote Is Already in Scripture



**What
Jesus said
about
Titles?**



Matthew

23:8–12

But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.





Why we call each other brothers?

Mark 10:42-45

But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."



The Village Elder and --- Stranger



Soli Deo Gloria



**Personal:
Have I
elevated
any pastor
or teacher**



Community:
How do I
treat the
brothers
who lead
among us?



Culture:
What does
my
language
reveal?



**Prayer:
Pray for
the
elders
among
us**



1 Corinthians 1:12–13

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Ezekiel 34:1–6

And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel... Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?... But you have not strengthened the weak, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost..."



Matthew

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