

The following are three excerpts from a discussion we had about the subject of what to call a Pastor who is not presently pastoring a local church...

Mike Sweitzer wrote...

"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Romans 11:29. As you know Pastor Bob, Romans 11:29 is still in the book, and therefore; if God has equipped you with "gifts" and has given you His "calling," you can be sure He didn't change His mind and take it back. Thirty-two years ago this coming December the Lord lead me to the metropolitan Philadelphia area, and I started Trinity Baptist Church, by His grace. Now God called me to Preach on 6-2-72 while I was in Vietnam. After a number of early Ministries, God called me to found and Pastor Trinity Baptist Church in December 1982. Last Saturday, October 18th I became 65 years old. I know that it will not be too far in the future, if it is God's will, I will become Pastor Emeritus of Trinity Baptist Church. Question: Will I be any less of a Pastor at that time than I am now? Obviously not, because "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." It is true that I would not be the Senior Pastor, but I will still be Pastor Mike Sweitzer. God will not take back His calling on my life. To be sure; you are still Pastor Bob, and always will be, because God has not changed His mind concerning His calling you to be a "Pastor." Besides it is a "calling" and not a "position." For the life of me I don't know why anyone would want to deny you the honor of being called Pastor Bob. And moreover; I have followed you on Facebook for quite some time now, and I have made this observation, there are many other Preachers and Pastors that follow your posts as well. Now this is just my personal opinion (I am sure some will not agree) but I can see God allowing you to continue to use the "gifts" that come with His "calling" on the Boaz Baptist Church Chronicles, etc. I know that some of the posts are just for "fun." To be sure, however; especially when it comes to serious Bible doctrines, your posts are very edifying to many Pastors, Preachers and their wives, as well as many others. You have become a "Pastor" to many Preachers and Pastors. Your post are a great source of encouragement and edification for this Pastor, and no doubt many other people as well. I wrote this to hopefully be an encouragement to you to help you to "keep on keeping on" Pastor Bob. We need your help! Amen!

Brother Mike

Dan Leidy wrote...

I do have something to say concerning this thread. God gives the call for a position he wants you to fill. Please allow me to narrow this down to pastor of I may (since I am one). When a man is called of God to be a pastor, God gives him a pastors heart. There many filling pulpits today who may be called to preach, but not pastor, so they do not have God's leadership to lead the flock properly. As one who God called to Pastor, I would make a lousy evangelist or missionary as that is not my calling. Now in defense of Pastor Bob, when one takes a break or retires (which I have) God does NOT remove or change the heart. If called and whether you fill a pulpit or not, you are, will and always be a pastor. That my friend is where the heart is and I believe should be recognized as such. No one has to agree with me as it has no affect as to my standing with God. Love you Pastor Bob. :)>

My response...

Thank You, Brother Mike ...("Pastor" Mike). That's exactly how I feel about it. Having my name on my books and tracts as "Pastor" has caused no small stir. Even though I have an honorary Doctorate, I put the word "Pastor" on there, not to lord it over anyone, but because God made me into a pastor. That's His business and not mine. Even though I am in a situation where I am not pastoring today (by the way, your "Pastor Emeritus" example is perfect), I still *started* and pastored two churches ...and more. Believe me, I've asked more than one person the question, "Now that I'm not pastoring, what do I call myself?"

I think that I've had so much trouble/opposition today because my tracts and books are ALREADY in print and I've through the years used this designation on the group, where people know me as Boaz Baptist and Pastor Bob. If someone would just think this through, though, and realize that I started the group >>>WHILE<<< I was still pastoring that calling myself "Pastor" is a carry over.

I am NOT asking anyone to call me or refer to me as a pastor, nor am I forcing them. By the way, while I am right here at this juncture, let me say it again...

You cannot have a local New Testament church on-line. It's impossible. At best the Facebook group, "Boaz Baptist Church Chronicles," is a quasi church. It and our website, Boaz Baptist Chronicles, is here to be a blessing to other churches and ministries, NOT replace them.

Pastor Bob Leib