

## A BIBLICAL CHURCH SPLIT WITH A HAPPY ENDING

A friend of mine, a pastor, was on vacation and visited his wife's family's church. The leaders asked him to be their pastor.

He agreed but under certain conditions. He told them that the only church he had ever pastored was the one he had started from a youth Bible study. He had served them as their pastor for 25 years. He let them know that as the founding pastor the people had adopted most of his ideas and that the church had thrived under his leadership. He didn't feel he was a dictator, but he was aware that he accustomed to getting his way most of the time.

He admitted that a number of his ideas might be new to their church and would the leadership of the church as well as the congregation be willing to adopt a new style of worship. He described some of these changes to them and they talked about it among themselves. They returned and told my friend that, yes, they were interested and eager to see how the Lord would use these changes to help their church grow. Yes, they were ready for change.

They accepted him warmly and within a few years the church added close to 100 people to the congregation.

Then one day the leadership asked my friend to come to a special meeting with the board. They told him that they had been honest when they said they were ready and willing for change . . . but . . .

And then they described their feelings about what was happening to the dynamics of the church. Only now they wanted to know what they should do. They loved the pastor but something just had to be done. They didn't want to start a fight.

Much discussion, prayer, and soul searching.

At the end the pastor suggested, "Why don't you send me away to plant a daughter church at the north part of town. I'm sure a crowd of people will join me who have started attending in part because of my ministry, but we can go quietly and peacefully."

And so the church split! Biblically. In love. The church leadership offered to continue to pay the pastor's salary as well as pay the rent for a new facility for several years while the infant church got on its feet. A church was born without dissension or scars. The new flock grew and became financially responsible much quicker than expected, and both lived happily ever after. I later had the privilege to speak in the new church. Delightful!