

## **Broken?**

By Bob Young

In the United States today, many are questioning whether our political system is broken. That conversation suggests to me a similar question concerning the church. I am not suggesting that God's eternal, biblical plan for the church is flawed. The problem is not one of theory but of practice. A broken political system is one that is unable to function or is not functioning. A broken church is likewise one that is not functioning. A first question is: "Are some local congregations broken?" The follow-up questions: "What causes the brokenness, and how could such churches become functional again?"

### **Are some of our congregations broken?**

→An affirmative response is suggested when one observes or hears concerns expressed that many of our local congregations are not functioning as they could or should. Many are incapable of maintaining themselves financially, organically, spiritually or numerically. A large number are failing to reach out locally with the saving gospel message. Even more are not involved in taking the gospel to the nations of the world. A vast majority is plateaued or declining; a few are being bolstered by member transfers, very few are growing evangelistically.

### **What are the causes of brokenness?**

→Ministers are not ministering and church leaders are not leading in biblical ways. This is evident in a comparison of the teachings of Scripture with the way ministry and leadership is often done in the churches. This is evident in a lack of biblical activity and work among those who are primarily charged with overseeing the planning and implementation of the work of the local congregation. This is evident in a lack of involvement of the members, given that ministry and leadership includes equipping the members for the work of ministry, helping them become active.

→When leaders are not leading, churches experience lack of leadership, lack of shepherding, lack of accountability, and lack of maintaining faithful members.

→In some places, the church is broken theologically. It does not understand itself. It has lost sight of its purpose in God's eternal scheme.

→In some cases the church is broken organically, failing to function as a living organism with interacting parts. Such churches fail to connect effectively in meaningful spiritual fellowship. Fellowship may occur at some level, but it fails the test in being meaningful and spiritual.

### **How could such churches become functional again?**

Restoring a focus on the mission of the church

Ministers that minister externally as much as internally, ministry in the world to the world

Church leaders that lead biblically rather than according to secular models

Biblical preaching that consistently opens and exposes the text contextually

Church members that see and accept the purpose of the church to functionally organically—interacting, connecting, growing, and expanding.