

BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

An Apostolic/Prophetic Model

DUDLEY DANIEL

Written by Gordon Hunkin

Biblical Leadership

An Apostolic/Prophetic Model

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Equipping For Apostolic Christianity

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Equipping For Apostolic Christianity

At the heart of **Apostolic Christianity** is a passion to be a Church that is determined to fulfil the commission given by Jesus to "make disciples of all nations." We do this by planting New Testament churches, training and releasing large-capacity leaders, and bringing the whole priesthood to a place of liberty and effectiveness.

Apostolic Christianity finds its expression through a Church that embraces the prophetic purposes of God in every age, a Church that has the ability to see the future as God sees it and prepares to become the future.

Apostolic Christianity has a God-inspired zeal to go and not to gather, to send and not to stay. This is a people who will give everything, without compromise, to be what God calls them to be and to do what God calls them to do.

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Introduction

The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: “After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name,” says the Lord, who does these things that have been known for ages.

Acts 15:15-18

The Church had already come to the place where it was in full motion when James spoke of this truth that Jesus is going to restore David’s fallen tabernacle. This is something that He is still doing today. The “restoration of all things” would include all that has been lost and is relevant to the Kingdom of God. There are four major aspects to this, most of which can be found in 1 Chronicles chapter 11 to 29:30:

- The restoration of government.
- Praise and worship, which is sometimes seen as the whole when it is only a part.
- Warfare – the purpose of which is the enlargement of God’s Kingdom. Many are involved in warfare that does not lead to enlargement because they are fighting the wrong battles.
- Settling the issue of who gets the glory. God alone must receive the glory.

In this book we will be focussing our attention chiefly on aspects that relate to the restoration of good government in the Church. This, then, is a book about ‘leadership’ in general and ‘leadership in the Church’ in particular. My belief is that leadership is, and always will be, one of the most significant keys in the Kingdom of God. The intention of this book is to help with the releasing of more leaders and to raise the standard of excellence of leadership as it is expressed in the Church.

We will not, however, focus so much on leadership structures and techniques. The reason being that the Church is organic and has the life of God in it. Leadership in the Church has to reflect that truth. God has ordained that everything that has His life will grow. So, when God’s life is in a church, it is going to grow, even if it only grows by two or three people a year. When God’s life is in it, though, it will generally grow a lot quicker than that.

Leadership is, and always will be, one of the most significant keys in the Kingdom of God.

When **God** grows a church, He also expects the leadership to grow. As God adds to the numbers, He wants to add to the leadership as well, both numerically and in terms of capacity and maturity. The result is that, in a healthy New Testament church, there should be a constant pool of ‘equipped and ready’ people who are available when they are needed. We should never have to scratch around looking for someone to lead.

Why then, when it is in God’s heart for there to be more leaders than are needed, are there too few leaders? Sometimes it is because those who are attempting to train and equip new

and potential leaders have only lectured and have not trained them. When the training has been done well, however, then it may be that those who have been trained are at fault. They may have viewed the training merely as information and not transformation and have not embraced those truths. They have not taken the training seriously enough, have not committed themselves to working it through, and have not unreservedly responded to the things that God is saying.

The Church is organic and has the life of God in it. Leadership in the Church has to reflect that truth.

Truth is something that has to be lived out every second of every minute, of every hour, of every day, of every week, of every month, of every year, for the rest of our lives. It is not merely information, it requires transformation.

If the cycle you have been in has been one that approaches training as information rather than transformation, then I hope that you break it today. From today, begin to take God seriously with regard to leadership training and tell Him that He can count you in. I do not mean that you are simply counted in for the excitement. Make a commitment, an irrevocable commitment, to be a leader because God has called you.

I came to Christ with no hope of ever being able to preach because I could not even communicate well. My English was tainted by the slang of the age and most people would not have understood it. The night of my conversion, however, I honestly and irrevocably committed myself to everything that God wanted for my life. It was not a process that took weeks or months or years. It happened at the point of my salvation experience and I have never turned back from that.

I am so grateful that there are many being saved today who do not have the kind of baggage that we had to deal with. They are generally starting younger, have perhaps even grown up in a church, or are saved into a church where there is liberty. There is not a whole lot that has to be undone or unlearned and they have a much better beginning than many who have gone before them. They will be able to go further than us and get there faster, which is a wonderful thing.

The church we were saved into never trained us. The sermons kept us alive, but there was no equipping and no impartation. Even the first Bible College we went to did not train us as pastors. We were trained as evangelists. To go out, win people to Jesus and then leave them to the shepherds. We were not told how to give them any ongoing caring and shepherding.

In spite of that, and by the grace of God, we did learn some of what we needed to. We have had heartaches, we have had major disappointments but we have also known ecstatic joy. We have seen victories and we have experienced defeats, but here we are now, more than thirty years later, and we still love what we are doing.

It all began with that irrevocable commitment to everything that God called us to and a determination never to turn back. Luke 9:62 says, *“No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”* Those are the words of Jesus Himself, and I trust that as you read this book you will respond with that kind of determination to be all that God wants you to be.

Both partners, for those who are married, have to make the same kind of commitment in response to His call. My wife, Ann, could more than likely preach my messages better than I can preach them. God has given us a whole volume of material and, wherever I go, I am basically preaching the same messages; they simply do not get old. If my wife were not called, she could send me off to the meetings and simply

turn the tape on because she knows more or less what I will say. It is not like that, though, because her commitment keeps her fresh, attentive and excited.

Fulfilling our destiny begins with an irrevocable commitment to everything that God calls us to, and a determination never to turn back.

I hear all the time of people who want guarantees before they will go and plant a church, or before they will become an elder. That is something that has to change. I once met with a leadership group to talk about a transition that was going to take place with a new leader taking over that church. One of the elders on that team said, “Well, all I hear about is us looking after this couple who are leaving. What about us? We gave up our jobs. Does anybody care about us?” He had entirely missed the point. We do not respond to God’s call because of any guarantees of a secure position. It is not about us. It is about God’s glory and the sheep He wants us to care for and equip.

I have heard of people saying, “I will plant a church if you give me fifty people.” Or, “I will plant a church if you guarantee me a salary for six months or a year or two years.” That is not the heart that God is looking for. The attitude He is looking for is one that is willing to go and do His will no matter what it costs. He is looking for people who are not so concerned with what they will get out of it, but who will respond because God has called them, even if they have to die in the process.

There is, however, too little of this willingness to pay the price in the Western church. Something has to change. We have to become a people who are totally committed to doing

what God is doing, regardless of the cost. Only then will we begin to see the kind of leadership emerge that God wants for the Church.

My hope is that in sharing with you what is in this book, you will be encouraged in your call to leadership and find the grace of God to make an irrevocable commitment to Him to embrace that call, and never turn back.

There is nothing more glorious than to do the will of God, whatever the cost of that may be.

Section One

An Administration of Leaders

Chapter 1

The Leadership Key

The only thing on the planet that Jesus died for is people. The only thing on the earth that Jesus is building is the Church, His people.

He is not building businesses, governments, political powers or armed forces. The Church is all that He is building. He is not even building families, good self-image, or fortunes, at least not outside of His plan for the Church.

God Himself is preparing people (including you and me) for works to be done here on earth, and He is providing cleansing and forgiveness and the equipping and empowering that will enable us to do those works. He is also preparing people for a place in heaven. He is redeeming people and preparing people to be the Bride for the Bridegroom, and the Church is His primary vehicle for accomplishing that.

There is nothing else on the planet in which God dwells but His people; His redeemed, Blood-washed people. He has a very clear picture of what His Church should be, and leadership plays a key role in His plan to make it what He designed it to be.

Leadership is the thing that has captivated me for years and years. In the last few years, as I have looked at what we, New Covenant Ministries International, are doing as a team, it looks as if we are being quite effective. I see groups that I think are more effective and I thank God for them, but I also thank Him for what we have been able to do.

People related to us are planting churches all the time. There are probably more than 10,000 churches in about 60 different countries that relate, through their leadership teams, to New Covenant Ministries International. We hear of people being saved somewhere every single day. We hear of miracles, marriages being redeemed and we hear of people coming off drugs and lives becoming effective for God. In one sense we could sit back and say, “We are doing well.”

The only thing on the planet that Jesus died for is people. The only thing on the earth that Jesus is building is the Church, His people.

But when I look at the Scripture, and I look at the Holy Spirit’s power and the creativity of God, and I look at the world that He created, I realise that we are not even ankle deep in our effectiveness. There is still far more to the potential effectiveness of the body of Christ that we have yet to enter into. Thank God there are other groups that are more effective than we are, but even those who are more effective are nowhere near as effective as they could be; the potential that is in us is still bigger than all of that.

My desire is to see us reach the maximum potential that is possible. I long to see us rise above whatever limitations and restrictions there may be (educational, racial, geographical, financial, etc.), to a level way beyond where we are currently. That is the cry of my heart. Everywhere I go that is what I want to pour my life into seeing happen. His way must be put in place for the Church to become all that it must be. **Raising up and releasing the right kind of leadership is one of the keys to implement that.** In all of what God is doing, the God-given gift of leadership is vital.

God's work cannot be done without building an administration of leaders that is based on the whole Bible – a truly Kingdom-minded leadership. We have to be whole-Bible (both Testament) Christians, and we have to interpret all of the Old through the New. We become legalistic if we interpret the Old without the New, and we can become licentious if we interpret the New without the Old. We need to devote ourselves to embrace the whole of the Bible – the Bible plus nothing and the Bible minus nothing. We need to build this administration of the Kingdom, including the key element of leadership, with that commitment.

There is much that has to change for us to get back to the Biblical pattern. The good news, however, is that there **is** a pattern for us to follow. It is all in the Scripture. The blueprint is there. If God could, under the Old Covenant, give men like Moses and David specific, detailed directions, dimensions, colours, and names of people who would administrate the design of the tabernacle and the temple, how much more will He not give us His pattern under the New Covenant?

God's work cannot be done without building an administration of leaders that is based on the whole Bible – a truly Kingdom minded leadership.

It is important to apply that pattern correctly, though, or else we simply end up turning it into dogmatic principles that are over-emphasised. That was part of the demise of the discipleship movement in the 1970s. Principles began to overshadow pattern and anointing and they would choose leaders to disciple other leaders who did not have anointing. The principle was to appoint 'faithful men', but faithful men

are not enough. You need faithful men with anointing, a call of God and the recognition of the people to do it.

In Paul's instruction to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:22 he says: *"Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure."* The reason that we should not be too quick to lay hands on people to ordain them into an office of leadership in the church is because leadership plays such a key role.

In the next section we are going to look at the awesomeness of ordination. Although people say that ordination is something that only happens with pastors, I believe that deacons are also ordained. Under the New Covenant, ordination really is a commissioning. It is a recognition, firstly, by the Holy Spirit, secondly by the people, and thirdly by the present leadership. It is a releasing of people into an 'office' within the body of Christ. Within the local church ordination is for both deacons and elders. When I talk about ordination, that is what I mean.

Paul says that we must not be hasty in this. We should take our time about it and be careful, without dragging it out unnecessarily. The point is to make sure that those we release are the right kind of people. In passages like 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9 we are given criteria for what leaders need to be. Most of those criteria actually refer to what they **are** rather than to what they **do**. In fact, at most, only one and a half of those criteria are about doing. One is that they are able to teach, and the other 'half' is that they manage their household well; which I think is more about what they are than what they do.

The early church released leadership in the fear of God. In Acts 13:1-3, we see that they were worshipping, fasting and praying when they placed their hands on those they were sending out. Too often today, many of the criteria outlined in 1 Timothy and Titus are left out when we release deacons or elders in the body of Christ. How much fasting

goes into it? How much worshipping goes into it? How much praying goes into it? Many times it is actually very little, and that has to change.

We need to restore an understanding of what the Bible tells us leaders are to be. When we see the awesome responsibility and the awesome privilege of being ordained, we will also see the need to change the way we release leaders and do it wisely.

The early church released leadership in the fear of God.

We must note, however, that even though we are exhorted to take seriously the characteristics, which are absolutely essential, as well as the responsibilities, Paul also encouraged people to willingly embrace leadership. He said that if any man desires the office of bishop (which is another word the New Testament uses to describe the role of the elders/pastors – see chapter 23) he desires a noble or a good thing.

He was not trying to put us off by listing the requirements. He was simply saying that we should be careful, to make sure and not to set people in place (or accept the responsibility ourselves) too quickly. We need to be careful, because to ‘unordain’ the ordained is a very, very difficult task. It often ends up shipwrecking the very people we try to encourage when we release them. At the same time, if we delay releasing them for too long, when they know and we know that they are called to lead, we run the risk of shipwrecking them anyway. So there really is a right timing involved in releasing leaders. We need to trust God to show us that timing.

The leadership we need to see released are deacons and elders, because those are the leaders in the local church. We also need trans-local leadership who bring the Ephesians 4

giftings to the Church. In all of these spheres of leadership we need a new breed of leadership to take the Church where God wants it to go.

A statement that I have repeated many times over the years is this: **the kind of leaders that we release will determine how effective we will become, and how long that effectiveness will last.** If we release the wrong kind of leaders we will not be effective and, even if we reach some kind of effectiveness, it will not last for long.

We need leaders that are of a different calibre to what we have known up until this point in time. I include those who are leaders right now, and I include myself. We need to be different leaders from what we are today if we are going to keep counting into the future, and if we are going to be as effective as God wants us to be, for as long as He wants us to be.

I hope that you understand that none of this is a criticism of anybody; it is simply the cry of my heart for all that God has for His Church. The right leadership is an essential key in realising this. It is my hope that we can all take hold of this challenge and say, “God, it has to change. I have to change.”

The kind of leaders that we release will determine how effective we will become, and how long that effectiveness will last.

Chapter 2

Organic Life

Everything about the Bible shows us that God, while He is organised, does not administrate an organisation. I believe that one of the things that God is doing in our time is to help us to get rid of anything organisational in the church. His life is organic, and that is what we should see in the Church. The symbols used in the Bible of Kingdom life and of the Church are organic. These include:

- The new birth. Conception and birth is organic, no matter how we try to organise it.
- New Testament symbols of the Holy Spirit: wind, water, breath, fire and oil.
- Reference to the Church as the Body of Christ.
- Vine and branches.
- Wine and wineskin. Old wineskins are inflexible.

It is very difficult to organise a birth. It is very difficult to organise the consuming fire that God is. It is very difficult to organise water or wind. The wind blows where it pleases. It can be experienced, but you do not know where it has come from and you do not know where it is going. The Holy Spirit administrates, but He is anything but organisational.

When we talk about organic life, we are talking about life that:

- Recognises organic team ministry.
- Recognises that some things are only for a season and are not permanent. People who resist this will struggle when the time comes for a change, or a moving on.

One example is when we move from one building to another. This is often a problem because the building has been ‘dedicated’ to God, even though we know that He does not inhabit buildings. This is unbiblical and entrenches the false idea that the building is a holy place. This is why so many people have a problem if it ever comes time to move out of that building, especially if the building is going to be used by a ‘secular’ group.

Another example is found in Paul’s teaching that for some it was better to remain single than get married. That was, however, not something that was meant to be a permanent institution. It related to a particular set of social circumstances, a context that was true for a season and that required this. It is a teaching that was relevant for that season.

- Recognises that some sow, others water but only God gives the increase. If we truly understood this, we would not have the problem that we do have with some people striving to be superstars in ministry.

One mistake that we make in this regard is that we often treat ‘prophets’ as if they were fortune tellers. I recognise the need for prophets, but it is only as God uses them that there is an impartation of life – only God can give growth. It is not they that do it, and we should stop treating them as if it were (Psalm 127:1).

- Is willing to deal with every subculture that we have developed in the church as something that must be both repented of and broken. There are subcultures

wherever something receives an emphasis it is not meant to have, even if it is a legitimate part of what God is doing. This includes things like: praise, prayer, the 'river', discipleship, speaking in a 'King James Version' English, positive confession, faith, deliverance, inner healing, intercession, the Charismatic, Pentecostal and para-church subcultures, Fundamentalism, etc.

Some of these (not all) are truly things that God was or is doing in the Church, but none of them was ever meant to receive an emphasis that made it a primary expression of the 'culture' of any church. The only culture that we should have is the culture of the Kingdom, and that will embrace everything that God does, without giving it any more emphasis than what we see the Holy Spirit give it in the Bible.

- Is flexible, and embraces God-inspired, Spirit-directed adjustments (Matthew 9:14-17). It seems to be in the nature of most human beings that we resist change, but change is required in order for us to become more like Jesus. We are going to be in the process of change until Jesus comes back, not only as individuals but also as the Church corporately.
- Is willing to be stretched outside of comfort zones. It can cope with what makes us uncomfortable in order to accommodate more of the Spirit of God.
- Captures, embraces and accommodates the momentum of the Holy Spirit. It does not give in to the preferences, preconceptions, prejudices, fears or comfort zones of the people. Organic life keeps in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25). In order to keep in step with someone we have to move when they move and stop when they stop. This is well illustrated by the Israelites in the desert, who were required to move with the cloud and the pillar of fire (Numbers 29:15-23, Isaiah 20:2-4, Hosea 1:2 - 3).

Organic life does not mean that we settle for confusion or chaos, or that anything goes, and we can arrive at meetings when we like, do what we like, or are sloppy in our way of life. God is a God of order, not confusion, even if He does not work organisationally.

We must be careful not to confuse administration with organisation. The word 'administration' is used four times in the New Testament, The word 'administrator/s' is used 15 times. 'Organisation' is never used in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. There is a Kingdom to administrate, but it has to be administrated organically, flexibly, catching what it is that God is doing and changing all the time.

Organic life implies that we make room to allow God to do what He wants to in the meetings. It is not always going to be what we planned, but we should always remain open and available to do it His way.

When we brought in overhead projectors instead of hymnbooks, we thought we were free. The irony now is that if we do not get through all the overheads that have been prepared, the worship leader sulks, "How dare they break in on that! I had fifteen songs and we spent four hours practising on Thursday night and they only gave me an opportunity for two songs." We completely miss the point, because it was actually God Who broke into what we were doing to bring in some of His organic life.

God is a God of order, not confusion, even if He does not work organisationally.

When the power of God and presence of God has been manifest in an awesome way, we sometimes think that if we sing the same songs and do the same things we can recreate

that event. Then, when God does not 'show up' according to our expectation, we go home feeling as if something was missing. The truth is that He will not always want to do things the same way at every meeting. We are the ones who want to keep things the same, and many times we do that, even if it means ignoring what God wants.

We must be careful not to confuse administration with organisation.

Most churches could, and many do, have church Sunday by Sunday without God. They get so used to doing the same things they always do that they do not even know that. If they did feel that something was missing, they would not know that the 'something' that was missing is God Himself. If God did actually show up, that would be a dilemma. So much preaching in churches on Sundays is by sincere men and women who have learned the truth of the Word and the 'tricks of the trade' but there is no presence of God.

Organic life places a strong emphasis on the necessity of the presence of God in every sphere of church life, including church government. I believe when there is a genuine sense of the presence of God, then the government of God does not hurt people. It builds, it helps and it catapults people and the work forward. The presence of God brings greatness. When there is no presence of God, even if we are doing the right (Biblical) thing, then we hurt others and we diminish in terms of our sphere of influence. It is also more probable that we will become dictatorial.

The whole point of David's bringing back the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem was about the presence of God. It was about being able to enquire of God governmentally, and about knowing how to exercise His Word and how to

implement it. We may have the Logos, but that will never become 'Rhema' without the presence of God. Rhema comes when God takes the Logos and gives revelation. There is a 'quickenings', an understanding that comes and the giving of life when God is there.

We have to be careful that, in church government, we are making sure that the presence of God is there. It is almost better (but only almost) not to exercise government at all than to do so without His presence, because when we do, we are going to ruin people's lives.

Making sure that God's presence is there is more than simply following a prescribed way. The Bible does give us that, but godly government is more of a heart attitude toward the presence of God than simply doing Bible things.

Organic life places a strong emphasis on the necessity on the presence of God in every sphere of church life, including church government.

Chapter 3

The Organic Nature of Leadership – Part 1

When it comes to leadership, many churches have an organisational chart that they use to represent the ‘structure’ of their church, and it may look something like this: Instead of the CEO at the top they have the Senior Pastor. Instead of Directors and Assistant Directors they have Associate and Assistant Pastors, Youth Pastors, Visitation Pastors, etc. Instead of Managers they have Deacons, and so we can go on to Department Heads and the like, until we get to the people at the bottom. As much as this is, for some, a useful way to go about organising structures, it is simply not Biblical to use this approach with the church.

Try to find the equivalent of a Youth Pastor or an Associate Pastor and Assistant Pastor in the Bible. Nowhere, from Genesis to Revelation, will you find anything like that. Neither do you find democratic church structures where, in effect, the people rule.

There are two problems with an organisational approach to church structure. The first we have already mentioned, which is that the Church is not an organisation, and to treat it as one severely hinders the flow of the organic church life that God intends for us to live in. The second problem is that organisational charts tend to be hierarchical. This too is an unbiblical depiction of Church. There is not meant to be any hierarchy at a human level in the Church. The closest that we

can come to that is to say that Jesus is the Head of the Church, which is His body, and even that is an organic picture rather than an organisational one.

There is not meant to be any hierarchy at a human level in the Church.

Organisational structures will always place those who lead in a different category to those who do not, with those who lead in a higher order hierarchically than those who do not.

What you find in the New Testament pattern for local church is that all believers are priests, not only those who are leaders. We are all on level ground, but some of the priests happen to be leaders who function as elders and deacons in the local church, and others are leaders who function in a trans-local context.

This type of non-hierarchical approach is what we find in 2 Samuel 23 and 1 Chronicles 12, where we read of some of the way in which David put together an administration of leaders. What we discover is that he did not follow a strict organisational structure. When we examine his approach, we cannot actually fit everything into neat boxes. We find recorded in 2 Samuel 23 the names of David's mighty men. The first one is Josheb-Basshebeth and he was chief of the Three. Next to him (verse 9) was Eleazar, son Dodai, the Ahohite. As one of three mighty men, he was with David when they taunted the Philistines gathered at Pas Dammim for battle. Next to him (verse 11) was Shammah, son of Agee the Hararite, and we read a little about him there.

During harvest time (verse 13 onwards), we read that three of the thirty chief men came to him. So David had 'the Three', and here we read that he also had 'the Thirty'. It would seem that 'the Three' were in 'the thirty', but as you read on we find

there seems to another three men who are called the ‘three mighty men’. In other words, David seemed to have two groups of three. In addition to that (verse 18), someone who was not mentioned amongst any of these is said to have been the leader of ‘the Three’. As we read through these verses we are not altogether sure about how it all fits together because that is exactly how the Holy Spirit wants it to be. There is an equality among these and yet there are also specific ‘functions’ that seem to set them apart.

David put one who was not part of the Three, or the Thirty, in one of the most influential roles that a king could put anyone in by giving him charge of his bodyguard. These men did not get there by climbing the ladder. This group of ‘mighty men’ is not organised in neat hierarchical order. There are thirty ‘mighty men’ but in verse 39 we read that there were thirty-seven in all. In other words, there were those who were given the honour of being included, but they were not part of the Thirty. Even though they were not ‘in’ the group, they were still a significant, functional ‘part’ of the group.

All believers are priests, not only those who are leaders.

So, where do we go with our organisational boxes now? We can try and put it all together but in the end we simply give up, and when we get there, the Holy Spirit is saying, “At last we are getting somewhere.”

The lesson we need to learn from this is that the administration of leadership in the Kingdom of God is not organisational. **We cannot ever make the Church an organisation and expect the Spirit of God to work through it as He wants to.** Once again we see that God wants the administration of His Church to be organic.

When it comes to church structure, we must never think hierarchically, even if we are on the eldership of a church. This is what I believe David's 'teams' illustrate. We should not have a structure that allows those whom we appoint into leadership to become demi-gods. Everyone should work with the understanding that everyone in the body is equal; we are all priests. We merely have different functions, and for some of us that is a leadership function.

We have tried to operate that way with the New Covenant Ministries International team as well. In the time I led this team, I tried to keep myself accountable and I tried to keep myself from being seen as **The** Leader, because that would create hierarchy. Do you see what I am saying? Lead elders are the leader but they are not **The** Leader.

In the same way that David had teams within teams, we have tried to work with that in New Covenant Ministries International. We also have teams within teams, one of those teams being a Life Team. This is the team (the members of which are all part of the broader New Covenant Ministries International team) that I contact about almost everything that we are going to do in our corporateness, and even my own life.

For instance, if I am going to buy a house, I contact some of those team members and tell them what I am thinking and what it is going to cost. I ask some of them to come and have a look at it and tell me whether they think it could be an offence or a stumbling block to others. I do the same when it comes to New Covenant Ministries International corporate events, like our Leadership Training Times. I ask them what they think, and in that way, we are working together.

This is not in any way a hierarchy, even though in our own ranks there are some who still think hierarchically in that they see the Life Team as an executive. Even other team members see the Life Team as an executive. It is not that at all; it is simply a team within the NCMI team that has a specific

function. If we ever allow a hierarchy to develop we are going down the denominational route, which we never want to do. The members of the Life Team are no more spiritual than other team members. These are simply people I have chosen, based on what I see in David's life, Moses' life, and Jesus' life. Even Jesus had three who were closer to Him.

Hear my heart. 1 Chronicles 11 and 12 and 2 Samuel 23 portray organic leadership. Organic life is at the very heart of Biblical leadership. As we saw earlier, there are possibly two groups of three, and then there is Abishai who was captain or commander of one group of Three, and was more famous than the Three, but was not part of the Three. How does that work? Organisational mindsets cannot make sense of this. It seems to me that God wants to blow our hierarchical mentality apart.

Organic life is at the very heart of Biblical leadership.

We are simply trying to stick with the Bible. Another pattern pertaining to the lack of hierarchy that we see there is local church autonomy. In other words, each local church has its own identity in God and its own governmental leadership. In the same way that there is no hierarchy within the church, neither is there an institutional hierarchy that each local church is 'under'.

Churches are not to be independent, though; they are to be interdependent. That is achieved through the leadership of the church seeking an accountable relationship with a trans-local team, like Paul's team. There are a number of churches that relate to New Covenant Ministries International in this way, but we do not have authority over those local churches, because they remain autonomous. We may carry an authority

in the Kingdom of God, but these local churches invite that authority when they need the benefits of that authority.

That is what God is trying to do in the Church so that we do not have superintendents, presidents, popes, archbishops, senior pastors, assistant pastors and youth pastors. God has been trying to remove this, at least from the time spoken of in Acts 15, and yet so much of what the church has embraced over the ages has simply re-established what He is trying to remove. Even when we do away with the titles, but do not follow through and change our hearts, we continue to think hierarchically. Only once we realise that this is not God's way, and dismantle all forms of hierarchy in the church, we will be able to build a leadership culture that is truly organic.

Chapter 4

The Organic Nature of Leadership – Part 2

Is all this talk about organic leadership anything more than semantics? Are we not simply playing language games? It would seem so at times because, no matter how much we play it down, the team leader is still seen to be ‘the big shot’. For me this is not true. The Bible does not play linguistic gymnastics. Scripture unquestionably teaches that leadership is organic and that church government is not hierarchical. That is why we see those with great authority in the early Church referring to themselves as “Paul, an apostle,” or, “Peter, a fellow elder.” We do not see anyone using a title like ‘Apostle Peter’.

It seems to me, though, that this organisational way is the last thing to die with leaders. We give verbal assent to the truth of ‘organic life’ but we do not practise it because it is not in our hearts yet.

This becomes evident when there is a transition of leadership in a team. Those who see it in organisational terms may feel fearful because they cannot see how the team or church can carry on without that leader. Many even want to leave because they think that it cannot work without that leader. He is seen as God’s anointed in some exclusive or elitist sense, and they feel that if he goes then the work cannot survive without him.

All over the world, pastors have built hierarchically (with themselves at the top), and as a result, they are locked into their churches. God may have called them to do something else, but because the church really would fall apart if they left, they cannot go.

We have to build differently from that, and we cannot do that only by ‘talking’ organic language. People will catch what we **are**, not what we say. We have to allow God to deal a deathblow to this organisational, hierarchical way of leadership and be free in our own leadership teams. Until we do that, we will be bound and the people will be bound. Even then, if we were to become free today as leaders, it could still take five years before our people are there.

Consider this: there is nothing in Scripture that infers that Paul was ever a pastor, or that Timothy was. They were based in churches, but Paul was one of the ‘teachers and prophets’, and Timothy stayed in the base church that Paul asked him to and helped the pastor. They were ‘apostolic’ and not ‘pastoral’ in their role. Some would struggle to understand that because it does not fit into their way of thinking about how authority works in the church. Yet these men were significant, functional members in the church without holding the ‘position’ that many strive for.

I see God’s organic pattern in this, and I see it as His directing us simply to get on with the job and to stop fighting for position or recognition. We need to drop all competition and the worries about which event, whose team or what training time we are part of or are invited to. God’s way is for us simply to be who we are and to do what He has called us to do.

We need to listen to what is in our hearts and make sure that we are not being organisational by feeling left out when others are given opportunities that we are not. What difference does it make who recognises us? We can still get on with the job.

This is what the restoration of David's fallen Tabernacle is about with respect to church government. There are no titles or positions that we need in order to exercise the authority we have in God and be who He has called us to be. The Kingdom of God grows because He causes it to, not because of what we achieve or the position and title we have. The best thing we can do is to co-operate with Him and do things His way.

Sometimes we hold onto our thing when we need to move aside and allow others to come through in ministry and leadership. We are afraid to give them opportunity because we feel threatened. We need to see that moving aside does not mean that we stop being who we are in God. We still have a job to do. As others come through, we are actually enlarging the Kingdom and our corporate sphere of influence.

If we hold onto a position or title then we diminish. In fact, one of the things that can happen when we do not make room for others to come through is that we can be sidelined and lose our own place of effectiveness. If we simply make room for others, then we can grow as God desires us to. Good leaders always give opportunity for others to grow, and this is done organically and not hierarchically.

The Kingdom of God grows because He causes it to, not because of what we achieve or the position and title we have.

All of this means that those of us who are leaders should not only look to our own hearts, but should also consider carefully those that we want to bring through. A wise leader does not simply look for those who are influential to include on his team, he looks for certain characteristics and traits.

There are a few of those that I want to mention that are drawn from 1 Chronicles 11 and 12 and 2 Samuel 23.

Organic leadership is motivated to give the work strong support. We see this in 1 Chronicles 11:10:

These were the chiefs of David's mighty men – they, together with all Israel, gave his kingship strong support to extend it over the whole land, as the LORD had promised

No matter what part we play, we are all in this together and we give it our strong support. That means that we do not try to compete with, resist or fight with what the team is doing, but that we wholeheartedly give it our strong support. This requires that those with us have no sense of hierarchy in their hearts, no executive mentality.

The support we give the team leader and the team is given at a heart level and is not dependent on recognition. If we can understand that, we will not struggle if there is ever a need that we step aside. Paul modelled this in that he had permanent team members and temporary team members who worked with him. When we take our inclusion on a team as permanent, when it is not, we can be hurt.

When we are organic in our mindset we will not struggle with this at all. We have to understand that we are in it to give our strong support and there may be times that we are 'officially' in the team and others that we are not. That can be true for our eldership teams.

We quote that "*the gifts of God are without repentance,*" and think that means that a pastor will always be a pastor. That is not altogether true. In fact, 'pastor' and 'deacon' are more verbs than they are nouns. As long as someone is doing the job they are a pastor (or a deacon), but they cannot consider themselves to be a pastor if they are not doing the

job. Deacons are to serve, but no one is a servant if they do not serve.

Organic team does not get caught up with hierarchy, titles and position. It does not become heavily structured. It changes when the need arises. It simply gets the job done. That job is to make disciples, not get converts.

The support we give the team leader and the team is given at a heart level and is not dependent on recognition.

Organic leadership want to refresh one another (2 Samuel 23:15-17):

David longed for water and said, “Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!” So the three mighty men broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the LORD. “Far be it from me, O LORD, to do this!” he said. “Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?” And David would not drink it. Such were the exploits of the three mighty men.

Look for this when you build team. Self-promoters, even with all their gifting and talents, are insecure people. Insecure people drain you; they do not refresh. You will find that they always want you to pander to their needs, and you always need to explain yourself and qualify what you say. Surround

yourself with people who refresh you. That does not mean that you surround yourself with ‘yes men’ because that is unhealthy and unhelpful, but with people who refresh you and can disagree without draining you.

Organic leaders take risks related to the Kingdom of God, even if it puts their life in danger. They are not people who are always protecting themselves or looking to see what is in it for them. Even though they may take risks, they do not do stupid things. They risk for the sake of the King and His Kingdom.

David’s heart toward those who took risks for him teaches us that **organic leaders do not take advantage of people**. The account in 1 Chronicles 11:17-19 of the same story quoted above illustrates this. They knew the heart of their leader and knew from David’s refusal to drink the water that they brought him that he was honouring them, and was determined not to abuse them. David knew that they were actually not there to serve him but to serve God. In the course of serving God they did serve David, but he never abused that. Remember that the people who follow us are not there to make us look good.

Organic leaders stand their ground in the face of the enemy. They do not abandon you at the first sign of trouble. This is illustrated in 2 Samuel 23:11-12:

Next to him was Shammah son of Agee the Hararite. When the Philistines banded together at a place where there was a field full of lentils, Israel’s troops fled from them. But Shammah took his stand in the middle of the field. He defended it and struck the Philistines down, and the LORD brought about a great victory.

One final point that I want to make here about organic leaders is that they **build towards the whole team and not toward one individual**. We have over sixty couples on team with us, and yet I often hear of church leaders who only want to relate to one team member, because they say they want someone that they can get to know and trust.

That sounds great to insecure, organisational people, but we have had to say ‘no’ to that and ask them to build with the whole team. This is not only a healthier, organic, way to work, but that person may not always be around. Who will they relate to when that person has moved on?

When you build toward an individual it provides you with short-term comfort and short-term assurance, but it results in problems in the long-term. The same principle applies to eldership teams and the relationship between them and their people. Never encourage this type of ‘exclusivity’ in the local church context.

Another aspect of this that we have to break is their insistence that they can only relate to someone that they feel that they can identify with. For example, older people only wanting to relate with older people, or people feeling that they want to relate to a church leader or team member with a similar background because they will ‘understand’ them better. Those are not valid in terms of the Kingdom. Paul was not married and yet he did not hesitate to write in detail about marriage.

We need to teach both those that we are bringing through into leadership, and those that they lead, to build toward the whole team. This will help us to avoid some of the organisational pitfalls related to team and leadership.

Chapter 5

Servant-Hearted Leadership

As we continue to examine Kingdom culture with specific reference to leadership, let us look now at some of the last words of David from 2 Samuel 23, picking up in the first verse:

These are the last words of David: The oracle of David son of Jesse, the oracle of the man exalted by the Most High, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, Israel's singer of songs: "The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue. The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me: [now notice what he says here] 'When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God, he is like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that brings the grass from the earth.'"

This is a vivid picture that he is painting. He is saying that when leaders govern righteously, when they rule in the fear of God, then there are tremendous benefits for those they lead. Such a ruler is like the light at sunrise on a cloudless morning. That is a beautiful picture.

He is like the brightness after rain. There is a freshness and beauty when rain has come down and everything looks bright and clean again, when there are still little drops of rain

caught on the grass or the trees and you see the sparkle as the sunlight catches it. These are the pictures that David paints. He is saying that this is what it is going to be like for our people when we rule in righteousness.

David is talking about an administration, the government that God puts in place for the benefit of the people. Government is something that is often misunderstood and badly abused in the body of Christ. Even though leadership is something that God Himself has given to the Church, some have embraced a way of rulership that is worldly, instead of one that is Biblical. The result is that when they are in leadership, they lead like a despot or a dictator. There is no room for this in Biblical leadership.

Jesus said that if we really want to be great, then we have to become a servant (Mark 9:35). Peter tells leaders that they are not to lord it over God's people (1 Peter 5:3). In the story of the Centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant (Matthew 8:5-13), we see the Centurion acknowledge that he only has authority because he is under authority. He does not say that he is in authority; he says that he is 'under' authority.

Jesus approved of that man, which implies that as far as Jesus was concerned, he knew how to serve those he led or ruled over well. Jesus would not endorse something that violates the rest of His Word. Jesus actually said he had not found such great faith anywhere. It is important to see that even faith comes from being under authority. That is God's way. Often men and women who start out as 'faith' people get into worldly authority and consequently lose their faith.

So often we find that the word 'rule' has become distorted in the body of Christ because we do not apply the principles contained in the Bible. Leaders act like the 'head honcho', and whatever they say goes. They think that they have authority because when they tell people to do things, they obey them. In reality, most of them obey because they know that, if they do not, they are out.

We will have a closer look at what ruling entails in Section Four. **What we need to understand at this point about Biblical leadership is that it is always servant-hearted.** A wonderful Psalm, with wonderful words in it that relate to this, is Psalm 78. It is a powerful, prophetic Psalm that speaks of some of God's heart towards David's leadership. Look at verses 70-72:

He chose David his servant and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep he brought him to be the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel his inheritance. And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.

David was a servant king and through his life and leadership God has given us a wonderful example for leadership in His Kingdom. Two basic essentials for all leadership, if it is to be true servant leadership, that are found in David's life are: integrity of heart and skilful hands, and I have written about these in a previous book, *A Servant's Heart and Skilful Hands*.

Biblical leadership is always servant hearted.

Integrity of heart speaks of what you are, and skilful hands speak of what you do. Having a 'righteous' servant-heartedness with regard to these two ingredients is absolutely essential for any form of leadership within the body of Christ, the redeemed of God. Please bear this in mind in all that we have to say about leadership in these chapters. In this chapter I want to look at one way in which this servant-heartedness

is illustrated in David's leadership. To begin with, look at 1 Chronicles 13:1:

David conferred with each of his officers, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds.

One of the things I love about David, and we see this throughout 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Chronicles, is that he conferred with his leaders and with his officials. At times he even consulted the people he led.

When you were the king in those times, you had great authority. If a woman, even your own wife, walked into your presence while you were seated on the throne, and you did not extend your sceptre to her, her head would have to be cut off. Ladies, please do not let this offend you, because this certainly does not happen today and I would not endorse it if it did. I mention it only in order to illustrate the extent of the authority and power that a king carried in the time of David.

David had this incredible power, this incredible authority, and yet he still wanted to hear what the people had to say. He did not feel that he had to make all his decisions on his own and he did not use the authority he had to rule dictatorially. Instead, he had an open heart to hear what those who led with him had to say. He asked them what they thought and what they felt about the decisions that had to be made.

That is the type of administration that God is looking for; not dictators, not despots, not presidents, not executives. He is looking for leaders who can talk to each other and to the people, and together find and fashion a vision. While one man may be the leader of the team, as David was as the king, they lead together as a team.

Consider too David's heart toward the people he led as it is expressed in 1 Chronicles 13:2-4:

He then said to the whole assembly of Israel, "If it seems good to you and if it is the will of the LORD our God, let us send word far and wide to the rest of our brothers throughout the territories of Israel, and also to the priests and Levites who are with them in their towns and pasturelands, to come and join us. Let us bring the ark of our God back to us, for we did not inquire of it during the reign of Saul." The whole assembly agreed to do this, because it seemed right to all the people.

Unfortunately they made the wrong decision, but the same truth comes through here that David did not only confer with his leaders; at times he also wanted to hear what the people felt. He was never led by the bleating of the sheep, but he did involve them in certain decisions.

If God is clearly telling us to do something, we cannot be led by people who are resisting that. At the same time, however, to think that only the leaders are ever right, and the people are not, is wrong. There is nothing wrong with getting their perspective. That is often good, but we never ask for their permission to lead because the Church of Jesus is **not** run democratically.

Remember, though, that all the people are priests and they can hear from God. They can hear from God in the same way leaders can hear from God. And if they cannot hear from God then something is wrong and we need to help them with that. There may be sin in their lives, or they may have been so crushed that they cannot release faith anymore. Get them healed.

The church does things this way in Acts 15. When a difficult decision has to be made, they refer to the apostles, to the

elders, to the deacons, and they also refer to the congregation. They were not asking for permission, but they did want to get their perspective – the same thing that was evident in David's administration of leadership.

As leaders we have to be accessible, we must be willing to hear the people and to spend time with them.

David was also a person who was willing to mix with the people; he was accessible. He was not like so many big name preachers who have their henchmen around them the moment they finish preaching. There was an incident in Taiwan some time ago where some people wanted to get close to a well-known preacher, but his bodyguards pushed them away, beat them up and smashed car windows. These were the bodyguards of the preachers. That is wrong! Yes, unfortunately I am talking about Christian preachers. I am not talking about some other religion.

As leaders we have to be accessible. We must be willing to hear the people and to spend time with them. This is a part of David's 'tabernacle'. As this is restored, God is going to bring about a wineskin in which leadership is approachable and available to the highest degree that we can be without being unwise. This is a leadership that is different and who do not feel that they are the only ones who can hear from God. They realise that others hear from God. We really are all priests. The leadership that God is restoring does not only teach that we are all priests, it actually lives out that truth and releases the priesthood.

Does that happen in your church? Some of you are saying it does not, and perhaps you are feeling critical, perhaps even a little angry. Please do not go down that road. Deal with what

is in your heart, because God will never be able to deal with the leader's heart while your heart is like that. It is a fertile ground for division and hatred and grief.

If, however there is a genuine cry to God in your heart for this kind of leadership, He can start to do something. He **is** raising up that kind of leadership, a leadership that does not think it knows everything, that does not exalt itself and that does not take, but gives out of a servant-heartedness. Choose to work with God in that.

Chapter 6

Large-Capacity Leaders – Part 1

In the next few chapters I want to speak about the need to raise up leaders who have a large capacity. I also wrote briefly of this in *A Servant's Heart And Skilful Hands*, and some of that is repeated here. In these next few chapters I want to look at a number of reasons that we fail to raise up large-capacity leaders. By that I do not mean people who have great anointing or a high 'wattage' in terms of the power of God. I think that it is possible to have that and still have a small capacity because we make the wrong choices.

We need large-capacity leaders around us, and we ourselves need to become large-capacity leaders. I believe that God is looking for big-capacity people as leaders. He therefore initiates the kind of growth in us that will make us big-hearted people. Our capacity for truth and for God increases as we embrace His adjustments. As we develop our ability to adjust, we become bigger people. If we resist change and refuse adjustment, however, we will remain small, and small-capacity leaders simply cannot raise up others who are large capacity leaders.

One of the reasons we remain small is because our theology is too small. **We need a larger theology in order to enlarge our capacity.** Our concept of God is, for the most part, far too small, and so we need to develop a larger concept

of God. We place such limitations on Him, and we have shrunk Him down in our minds.

The truth is that He is so huge that the whole of the heavens cannot contain Him, and yet we often want our theology to contain Him. We need a theology that not only embraces the 'largeness' of God, but one that can also cope with things we do not understand about God. In becoming larger capacity people, we have to somehow enlarge our theology and our capacity for God.

One of the reasons we remain small is because of our theology is too small. We need a larger theology in order to enlarge our capacity.

We also need to enlarge our capacity for people that are different to us. Why is it that we are so threatened by people that are different to us, or who do things differently to the way we do? Most of the time, those who do things differently to the way we do, will not be violating Scripture or have done anything wrong. They simply do not do things the way we do. The fact that this is something we may be a little (or even very) uncomfortable with does not necessarily make it wrong.

In the same way, **we need to enlarge our capacity for people who do things better than we do.** Why is it that those who are leading churches often struggle to bring people through who can do things better than they can? Sometimes leaders struggle so much with this that they make it difficult for those individuals to stay in their church.

If someone can preach better than we can, can prophesy better than us, can win more people to Jesus than we can or can release power and signs and wonders and miracles more than we can, why is it that we will not let them stay? Often it is because we have a small capacity ourselves. When we have a small capacity, then these people cause us to feel threatened and we feel we have to get them out. What we should do is become large-capacity people who are able to handle being surrounded by those who can do things better than we can, without being threatened.

Large-capacity leaders are people who can cope with change. Our ability to embrace change also impacts on the capacity we have as people and as leaders. We should ask ourselves this question: “Am I really willing to let God enlarge me?” We can study and work with the best leaders, but if we cannot develop our own capacity in and for God, we will go nowhere. Leaders must trust God to enlarge them so that they are big enough to cope with whatever comes their way.

Big-capacity people are neither insecure nor threatened by these issues. They are able to open their hearts to all types of people and are not shattered when their comfort zones are stretched. They find God’s way when faced with change and make the adjustments that are required of them, and they prosper even when circumstances are not favourable. These are the kind of people who make skilful leaders, leaders who are worthy of the King.

If we have a small capacity as leaders, we will most probably have small-capacity people who follow us. Any big-capacity people who come into our midst are likely to leave and find big-capacity leadership elsewhere. They sit in the church and immediately they discern, without any spiritual discernment, that the leader is insecure. The only

reason someone like that will stay in our church is because they want a holiday, or they want to take control of the church, and so they look for small-capacity leaders that they can control.

Another reason that so few of us raise up large capacity leaders is that we are unfocused, and there are a number of causes of that. We become unfocused when we are involved in too many things other than what God has called us to, even when they have some legitimacy in themselves. 2 Timothy 2:2-7 says:

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs – he wants to please his commanding officer. Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor’s crown unless he competes according to the rules. The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

If only we could grasp that! Once God has ‘recruited’ us we should not be constantly involved in ‘civilian affairs’. There are all sorts of things that are not evil and that are even legitimate in themselves, but which we simply should not be preoccupied with. When we are, we give far too much time to them and lose our focus on the things that God wants us to do.

There were some things that were important or legitimate that Jesus would not allow to distract Him from what He was called to be and to do. When we find ourselves with a

crowd that loves us and wants to honour us, most of us want to stay there. Jesus would not allow that. He moved on when it was time to move on. He would not allow their adoration to distract Him.

He would not allow people's needs to distract Him either, not even legitimate needs. In every single church there are legitimate needs, and pastors often allow themselves to be unnecessarily distracted by legitimate needs. They are distracted from what God has called them to focus on doing.

In a previous book, *Choosing Your Battles*, I wrote about how we can become unfocused by fighting battles that God never called us to fight. Most of my ministry is to leaders in corporate meetings, in small groups or one-on-one times of sitting with them and talking. My experience has been that the majority of leaders are fighting battles that God never called them to fight. All of their time and all of their energy are being dissipated because they are caught up with fighting the wrong battles. We have to choose carefully the battles we fight, just as Jesus did. There were some battles He simply did not get involved in.

Another reason we become unfocused is that we chase every new thing, each new 'move of God' that comes through the Church. When we do, each new thing becomes our current focus, and we shift that as soon as the next new thing comes along. Someone arrives and tells us that this is the 'in' thing, and we get everybody to do that. Someone else comes in a few weeks later with something new, and we simply drop the last thing and make that the new emphasis – and so it goes on. Eventually our people begin to think that we are schizophrenic.

Sheep are not stupid. Sometimes they may act that way, but in fact they are not stupid. They can think and they can see what is going on. They can see that we are abandoning the very things we fired them about last month because this

month there is another new thing. Sooner or later they will react against this.

I am not saying that we should not take notice of these things at all, but we do need to develop the ability to determine what is of God and what is not. Then we need to develop the ability to take the last thing that God legitimately brought back into the Church and **sustain** that, even as we embrace the next thing He restores. We do not simply dump the last thing that was legitimate when He restores the next thing. He does not want us to lose any of what He is doing in the Church.

We become unfocussed when:

- **We are involved in things God did not call us to.**
- **We are fighting the wrong battles.**
- **We chase after every new thing that comes along.**
- **We are striving to be with the ‘in’ crowd.**

For example, in the 1970s there was what was called the Discipleship movement. We embraced some of that but not the movement. There were some good things that came out of that movement that are legitimate. When that was past there was a faith/positive confession movement and there were some legitimate elements there as well. Those we need to embrace, but we still need to hold onto that which was good that came through the Discipleship movement. That principle

needs to be applied to every thing that God is restoring to the Church, even those that become an overemphasis for some.

That is why I do not want to be labelled as being part of any one movement. I try to embrace what is genuinely something that God is restoring with each movement, but still maintain all that He restored through the previous movements. I believe that is necessary if we are going to be leaders that bring people through who have a large capacity.

Have a good, honest look at every new thing that breaks. Examine it in the light of the Scriptures. If there is something that is good and is Biblically sound, take that and throw out anything that is not. Combine that which is legitimate with what you already have, and move on with God.

Finally, leaders become unfocused when they want to be in with the ‘in’ crowd. They want to be famous and they want to be friends with the famous. Often when you listen to these leaders you find that they love to drop names so that you know that they know people who carry some profile. That only betrays their hearts. As leaders they take the focus in the minds of the people off Jesus. That will never produce large-capacity leaders. The only legitimate focus is Jesus. If we focus on anything less than Him we will remain small.

Chapter 7

Large-Capacity Leaders – Part 2

Another reason that we do not bring large-capacity leaders through is the fear of failure. So many of us who are leaders are continually covering our tracks so that we can blame someone else if things go wrong. We minimise risk because we are scared of failing and of taking the blame when something does not work out. Please hear me. There are times when we simply have to go out on a limb. There are times that we have to let people know where we stand and, if we foul up, to take the blame. Mark Twain put it something like this: “Get out on a limb; that is where all the fruit is.”

There is a story of an old Scottish Presbyterian minister, a godly man, who was preaching on one occasion when a large man, an alcoholic, walked into the service and started screaming and shouting. The preacher had given instructions to some of the men in the church in the event of any distractions of that kind from people coming in from the pub next door. They were to pick them up and take them out. So, when this alcoholic man was screaming and shouting, the preacher told them to throw him out the door.

A woman stood up and said, “Sir, you are supposed to be a man of God. How can you throw a drunk out of the meeting?” He said, “Well, I want to cast the demon out but I do not know that I have the authority to, so I get the man out and that way I can make sure the demon goes with the man.” A practical

approach perhaps, but in actual fact there is something in his actions that is a fear of failure. He was covering his tracks.

Please think about this as leaders. Be honest with yourselves. How often have you made sure that every little thing is covered so that, at the end of the day, whether it works or not, you are not going to come out looking stupid. Someone else may be blamed, but you will still look good.

There have been times when, for me, the singing part of the worship has been terrible. I could stand up and say that the musicians are really useless and blame them. In actual fact, if that part of the worship is atrocious it is my fault, because I allowed it to continue. Sometimes I listen to the songs we are singing at our own conferences and I think, “Goodness, I wonder if anyone is actually listening to what they are singing. That is heresy!” Well, who is to blame though? I am. I should have checked those songs out before they were sung.

One more reason we do not bring through large-capacity leaders is because we are unavailable to mentor one-on-one or in small groups. In Mark 3:13-15 we read the following:

Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve – designating them apostles – that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.

That is very interesting to me. This is the Leader of all leaders showing us how He did it, and one of the first things He did is that He wanted those He chose to be with Him. This is so unlike the way most leaders work today. They do not have any time to be with those they lead. They have plenty of

time to preach, but no time to simply be with people. We will come back to this topic in Section Four.

I often look at some of the great men who are preaching in big tent meetings and revivals around the world. I look at the way they are living and leading and I think, “When they die, the work that they are involved in is likely to disappear.” To me, that is failure.

If only they would take a week out from pitching the tent somewhere, and, instead of doing that, spend time with some people that long to be with them. They could take time to listen to their hopes, their fears, and their dreams, and then work with them to encourage, mould, shape and help them to live out those dreams. If they did that, more of what is in them would live on once they are gone.

One more reason we do not bring through large capacity leaders is because we are unavailable to mentor one-on-one or in small groups.

I have only been to one Benny Hinn meeting in my life. One of the things that amazed me about that meeting, which you do not see on the TV, is that most of the healings do not take place up at the front where Benny Hinn prays for people. We were sitting fifty rows back and we were watching nondescript, ordinary people walking up and taking people out of their wheelchairs. While Benny Hinn carried on preaching, they were holding these people and saying, “Take a step forward,” and they would take one. For a while they would still have to be held up, but then some of them would start walking on their own. The camera never zoomed in on this and Benny Hinn did not even know it had happened. To me, it looks as if he has spent some time mentoring.

We will never bring through large-capacity people if we are not prepared to give people time. I am not talking about idle time. Some people have an hour to kill and they want to kill it with us, and too much of that will eventually kill us. I am talking about spending time with those whose potential we can see. We answer their questions, encourage them, correct them, love them, and assure them of our commitment and our confidence in them.

A further reason that we do not raise up large-capacity leaders is because we are too afraid to hold people accountable, to confront or challenge them. This is an important part of mentoring.

We should not let those we are mentoring get away with things, but correct them whenever necessary. We are not to make fools out of them, but we need to confront them at times. Sometimes we may even need to do that publicly, but we should still do it from a father's heart and continue to mentor them until they have grown to the extent that they have gone beyond us.

Chapter 8

Large-Capacity Leaders – Part 3

Another reason we fail to raise up large-capacity leaders is because **we try to make them all think, act, speak, preach, dress, etc. the way we do.** This type of leadership reveals false motives for being in ministry. If we want everyone to be like us, we will generally become controlling and manipulative and dictatorial.

The next reason that we do not raise up large-capacity leaders is that, **in the context of church leadership, we delegate the wrong things to the wrong people.** There are certain functions that cannot be delegated to other elders. For instance, the man who leads the church should be the one who confronts certain sins and problems in the life of the church. There are also some meetings the lead elder cannot delegate to other people.

If you are the visionary elder of the church, you need to meet with your elders regularly. There is simply no way around that. You cannot ask another one of the elders on the eldership team to keep meeting with them. You have to do it. If you travel a lot, you have to make time to be with them when you are there.

You also need to meet with your deacons regularly. Please hear me out on this. In the New Testament pattern for the Church, both elders and deacons are given to the Church as significant governmental functions in the life of a local

church. For that reason, you need to meet with deacons as much as you need to meet with the elders.

When we look at Acts 6, and if we assume that those who were appointed there were deacons, then it is clear that these were not simply practical people; they were spiritual people with spiritual ministries. That is why they had to be full of the Holy Spirit and full of wisdom. That would not have been required if all they were going to do was take care of the practical tasks.

These men were appointed to take care of maintaining godly relationships in the body, not only to feed the poor or feed the widows or, as we so often think today, to put up the overhead projector, make sure the chairs are put out, etc.

For that reason (because it is a spiritual ministry) you need to be meeting with the deacons regularly. You need to ask them what is happening in the life of the church, how the people are doing. They are the ones who are in contact with the people all the time.

Another reason we do not raise up large-capacity leaders is because **our life does not match our message**. We want sacrifice from the people, but we protect ourselves. We encourage them to trust God for their finances, for their needs to be met, etc., but we ensure that we are first in line with available church finances. In other words, our life does not match our message.

We tell them it is important to be available and vulnerable, but we protect ourselves and we are not available or vulnerable ourselves. We justify our wife's or our children's behaviour (their attitudes, their sin and their failure) from the pulpit. We get up and say, "My wife has been under too much pressure. That is why she cries all the time or why she screams at people." When we start preaching to cover up the sins of our family, our life does not match our message.

When **we attack perceived opposition from the pulpit or in a small group setting**, we will also fail to raise up large-capacity leaders. Imagine the scenario where there are two hundred people in a meeting and two people are resisting me. It would be wrong if, in my preaching, I attacked the one hundred and ninety-eight people who are not resisting, as well as the two who are. Instead of doing that I should confront the two who are, if I think it is warranted, and ask them what is wrong.

We cannot raise up large-capacity leaders when **we try to be a one-man show instead of being a genuine part of a team**. When the lead elder does all the praying and all the preaching it makes everyone else feel inadequate and insecure, and it stops them from rising up. I have been preaching this as I travel, and do you know what I have found men doing in response? They agree that they have to change things, but they make insignificant adjustments in response.

One man had his wife begin to give the announcements and he thought that he was no longer a one-man show because he did that. The problem was not only that his wife did not know how to give the announcements, but also that this was not a real solution. There was no real change. It is simply not real team ministry when the wife gives the announcements, but the pastor still does everything else.

We do not raise up large-capacity leaders because of **an inability to discern the true spiritual stature of those we release or do not release**. So often in a time of need (or our spouse's or our children's need) we choose certain people to come onto an eldership or the deacon team because of those needs, without any true discernment as to whether they can actually carry the office.

There are churches that relate to us that have elders who are never going to be real elders. They are simply not called

by God to that office, and they do not have the anointing. They were appointed because the pastor brought them on as friends at a time when he needed friends. How do you ‘de-elder’ friends without hurting them badly?

We need to learn not to make decisions under pressure that are going to have negative long-term ramifications. We need an ability to discern whether a person truly is a leader or not. Enjoy friendships, but do not give those people an office that God has not given them.

The last reason we will look at for why we do not raise up large-capacity leaders is that **we overstate, over-promise, over-project or over-emphasise what God is going to do**. One of the men I love very, very dearly will often overstate when he stands up to speak. He will say something like, “We are going to have revival soon,” or talk of some great thing that is going to happen. I listen and I see him painting himself into a corner. To get out the door again he is going to have to make a real mess.

There are many preachers who, when things are looking a little unsure, or people are looking a little discouraged, will jump up and start ‘prophesying’ about what God is going to do, or what the church is going to become. The large-capacity people are sitting there saying “I have heard that for five years now. It has never happened once. I am out of here.”

Do not overstate and do not over-emphasise. Do you know how many people told me that the Discipleship movement was the revival, that the Faith/Rhema move was the revival, that the Renewal movement was the revival, that the Toronto Blessing was the revival, or that the Brownsville thing was the revival? All of these were significant in themselves, but none of these moves were truly revival. We must thank God for what happened in these moves, but we must not overstate what they were.

These are some of the reasons that I have encountered for why we do not raise up large-capacity leaders and there are more than likely others. If we will begin by addressing those we have discussed here, however, we will go a long way to becoming large-capacity leaders ourselves. Once we make adjustments to our own lives and our own way of doing things, and God has had the opportunity to cause our capacity to grow, we can then begin to raise up other leaders who also have a large capacity.

Section Two

The Awesomeness Of Ordination

Chapter 9

The Pattern

The LORD said to Moses, “Bring Aaron and his sons, their garments, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams and the basket containing bread made without yeast, and gather the entire assembly at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.” Moses did as the LORD commanded him, and the assembly gathered at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

Moses said to the assembly, “This is what the LORD has commanded to be done.” Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water. He put the tunic on Aaron, tied the sash around him, clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him. He also tied the ephod to him by its skillfully woven waistband; so it was fastened on him. He placed the breastpiece on him and put the Urim and Thummim in the breastpiece. Then he placed the turban on Aaron’s head and set the gold plate, the sacred diadem, on the front of it, as the LORD commanded Moses. Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and everything in it, and so consecrated them. He sprinkled some of the oil on the altar seven times, anointing the altar and all its utensils and the basin with its stand, to consecrate them. He poured some

of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him. Then he brought Aaron's sons forward, put tunics on them, tied sashes around them and put headbands on them, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Leviticus 8:1-13

He then presented the other ram, the ram for the ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head. Moses slaughtered the ram and took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot.

Leviticus 8:22-23

What we see in these passages is the pattern for ordination in the Old Testament. This was a pattern that the leaders in the New Testament were familiar with. When we read of the laying on of hands under the New Covenant, we have to be aware of the fact that those men knew what the significance of this was under the Old Covenant. They knew that some of this was no longer relevant because Jesus had been crucified, that they no longer needed to slaughter lambs, rams, bulls, calves or anything else, but the essence of this ordination was still relevant. It is this that we need to be laying hold of, taking into our hearts and living out on a day-by-day basis, minute-by-minute, second-by-second.

While all believers are equal as priests, God needs leaders in and amongst the priests. There was a time when, in church culture, the office of leadership was elevated to a place that almost replaced God, but I think that around the world that is being corrected. There are still some who build with structures that elevate leadership, but fortunately, many are making adjustments to correct this error.

The danger now, however, is that we have all become so 'equal' that many feel they can do anything to God's leaders. They feel that the leaders are actually irrelevant. Since we are all equal and all priests, they feel that we can all do whatever is required in the life of the church. The fact is, however, that not everyone is called to governmental leadership in the church.

It is true that many of the priests who are not leaders actually carry a bigger anointing than many who are leaders but, because we do not understand that there is nothing unusual about this, it has been taken as a further reason to downplay the role of leadership in the Church. As a result, some have reduced leadership to the point that it has no real authority at all. This is not God's pattern.

While all believers are equal as priests, God needs leaders in and amongst the priests.

I am not trying to re-establish a 'throne' for leadership, or to promote any type of hierarchy. What I do want us to grasp is that without God-ordained leaders, we are in trouble. Without leadership, the Church is like a river without banks and will eventually become a marsh. I have already seen that happen in many of the places that I go to around the world.

Leaders are ordained by God to give direction and also to enable that river to become a powerful force to fulfil the purposes of God. Leaders are the ones who God puts in place to enable that. While the priests are all to be involved in that, they cannot do it without God-ordained leaders.

I have often said that I believe that there is a sense in which every believer is a leader, because we all have some context in which we have to lead, but I am talking here about those who

are called to an office of leadership in the church. Those who God has called to function in this office are indispensable to the church, and these leaders are released into their task through ordination. Without them we cannot go anywhere.

Since raising up and releasing the right kind of leadership is one of the most important keys to the Church becoming all that God intends it to be, the ordination of leaders is a very serious issue. As an Apostolic/Prophetic team, New Covenant Ministries International is often in the situation where we are asked by eldership teams to come and ordain elders in the churches that relate to us. I have taught the men on team with me that when we lay hands on those people, we are guilty with those eldership teams if they are the wrong people.

If we are not sure that they should be ordained, but do it anyway because we do not want to be responsible for offending or disappointing anyone, we are deceiving them. When someone has been promised that he was going to be ordained, but is then told that it is not going to happen, he is bound to be unhappy. The blame is then usually laid on those who are supposed to be doing the ordaining, but we cannot let that stop us from speaking out when we are not sure that he should be ordained.

A man once phoned me and asked who I thought I was because I had refused to ordain him. He had been told that he was going to be ordained and he said that I owed him an explanation. I told him that I was not the problem. The problem was actually his pastor. His pastor had promised him things and then thought I was going to come and simply endorse them. If I had responded that way to those requests, I would stand guilty before God by laying my hands on everyone I am asked to. There must be an agreement in my heart that it is right.

That man hated me for a while and had to work through all of that. Years later, when he was ready, he was ordained and

now has a great church that is growing and growing. I felt he would have settled with thirty or forty people for the rest of his life if I had laid hands on him prematurely.

What I want to illustrate is that the ordination of elders is a very serious issue. The responsibility for elders who lay hands on deacons is equally as serious, because ordination is the pattern that God gives us for releasing leaders that He has chosen, into office.

Leaders are released into their task through ordination.

As important as it is to see this pattern of ordination in the Scriptures, there is one thing that we must not lose sight of and that is this: it may be human hands that are laid on us, but those who are being ordained always need to remember that it is not the hands of the men that were laid on us that validate our ministry.

There is no valid ordination on the planet if the nail-pierced hands of Jesus are not laid on our heads before the hands of apostles, prophets, or whoever it may be. They will never be able to validate our ministry; only the nail-scarred hands of Jesus do that, and nothing else.

Chapter 10

The Purpose Of Ordination

The Old Testament priests were ordained into a very important function and were as indispensable to the outworking of God's plan as leadership is today. God went to great lengths to establish a pattern for ordination, and in the next few chapters I want to examine that pattern. To begin with, there is a six-fold **purpose** of ordination that I see in the Old Testament pattern. Most of these are found in Exodus 29:42-43:

For the generations to come this burnt offering is to be made regularly at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting before the LORD. There I will meet you and speak to you; there also I will meet with the Israelites, and the place will be consecrated by my glory.

Firstly, God intends to meet corporately with ordained leaders: *“There I will meet with them”* (verse 42). When God meets with us, it means that **He presences Himself with us**. There is a sense in this passage of this being the abiding presence of God, not only relatively brief visitations of God. The Church has had visitations in the past and some of them have lasted as long as three years. Most of them last half an hour to an hour. I believe, however, that as

God meets with the leaders He ordains, there is going to be an increasing sense of His abiding presence.

Wherever the presence of God is, the transforming power of God is also there. There may be different manifestations, different evidences and different types of meetings, but whenever God's presence is there, we will know that we have been changed by God.

When God meets with us, we are assured of His continuous partnership as well. When, as leaders, we take ordination seriously, and we know for sure that this is not simply an academic or theological concept, we will be partners with God. We will be co-labourers with Him, with a continuous reality of the Holy Spirit being with us all the time, working with us in what we are doing in response to His call.

God intends to meet corporately with ordained leaders. Wherever the presence of God is, the transforming power of God is also there.

Secondly, God meets with leaders in order to speak to us. He is going to speak words of encouragement, words of warning, vision and He is going to give us specific direction about the very things we need to know about.

If we are going to lead a team, or anyone else, or if we are going to be part of a leadership team, we had better be hearing God. We can and should hear Him all the time. Taking seriously the purposes for which He laid His hands on us, through ordination, is one important way we can position ourselves to hear God more effectively.

We all need encouragement. I know that I do, but I do not only need to receive that from people. It is fine to have that,

but I need to continually be living in the encouragement that comes when God speaks directly to me, through His Word, into my spirit, my mind, my imagination, and my vision.

Do you live encouraged? Do you hear God giving you specific direction and vision? We cannot have leaders who have no vision. Scripture speaks the following to all people, “*Where there is no vision the people perish,*” or they “*cast off restraint*” (Proverbs 29:18).

If we are going to lead a team, or anyone else, or if we are going to be part of a leadership team, we had better be hearing God.

God also gives us warnings, because every now and then you and I are prone to move off course, or go down a track that is going to lead us into serious trouble. We need leaders who can hear God’s warnings. Most of us can remember situations where we wish we had not done or said a particular thing. If we look back on those times, then either we were not being warned because God was not speaking to us, or He was speaking and we ignored the warnings.

We also need leaders who can hear specific direction from God. A team leader should be able to come to the team he leads and know that they are also hearing God. When he tells them that he feels that God has said they need to do a certain thing, and shares the specifics of that, it will resonate within their hearts if it is right and if they are hearing from God. When they are not hearing, they will want weeks to think about it. In that time, God may have moved on so much that they cannot catch up.

Thirdly, it is God's intent to meet with all the people of God. Exodus 29:42 says, "*There I will also meet with the Israelites.*" Under the New Covenant, that means all of the redeemed. When we, as leaders, take ordination seriously and we understand what it is about, then God can meet with the people because He knows that their leaders will help them to apply what He has said.

Fourthly, ordination enables leaders to serve Him more effectively. Exodus 28:1 and Exodus 29:1, both have this phrase: "*So that they may serve Me.*" He wants to meet with leaders so that they may serve Him effectively.

Fifthly, ordination is there to give us dignity. Exodus 28:2 and 28:40 say that the means by which the priest was ordained was intended "*to give him dignity and honour.*" We who are ordained into an office of leadership must be sure that both honour and dignity are a real part of our lives and our leadership.

Leaders should never be slapdash, haphazard, or look like tramps. I am alarmed when I see people with no shoes on standing up on the platform leading in the 'worship team'. With their hair all over the place and dirty clothes, they often look as if they have just crawled out of bed. Where is the dignity in that?

Would you go and meet with George W. Bush looking like that? If the leader of your country invited you to speak to him or her, would you really consider going with no shoes on, a torn, crumpled shirt, hair all over the place, unshaven and with bad breath? There is no dignity in that. Even if you differed with their policy you would not do that.

I am not calling for three-piece suits. I do not wear them myself. What I am saying is that we cannot behave like ill-bred, undisciplined, undignified, rebellious teenagers. There is a dignity and honour that God intends leaders to carry and

we have to live in that. On some people, some shirts look good hanging out, but do not dress that way simply because you are too lazy to tuck your shirt in.

That style does not look good on everyone. Have a look at yourself before you go out and consider whether the way you are dressed represents the King and His Kingdom. Are you a good ambassador for King Jesus?

When we are trying to be ‘Gary Glitter’ with slicked back hair, that does not represent Him well either. Some leaders look so worldly with their flashy dressing that it is as bad as being unshaven. One really is as bad as the other. At least one is cleaner, but it is still a bad representation of the King. Jesus never dressed in the equivalent of a three-piece suit. He dressed the same way that ordinary people dressed.

The sixth purpose of ordination is to usher in God’s glory. Exodus 29:43 says, “**And the place will be consecrated by My glory.**” We see the same in Leviticus 9:23-24, where the glory of the Lord came in once those who were ordained began to minister. I believe that when ordination and all of its requirements are fulfilled, the fire of Leviticus 9, the fire of God, will fall. The glory will come, firstly upon the individual being ordained, and secondly, in a sustained manner, on the whole ordained team, and thirdly on all the people of God.

Chapter 11

The Promise Of Ordination

The promise of ordination is found in Exodus 29:45, *“Then I will dwell among the Israelites and be their God.”* I believe that this refers to His ongoing, abiding presence. He is Jehovah Shammah – the Lord Who is there. We need this because it is His presence that assures success. This is a principle that is taught throughout the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation.

Regardless of what we face, we are guaranteed victory when we have God’s presence. Even in the most trying times, the people of God can still enjoy great grace and see the working of many signs, wonders and miracles in their midst.

Where the people of God live with His presence among them the standard of righteousness is raised up. For instance, wherever the gospel has influenced a community and produced righteousness in people, women have been elevated, families have been elevated and rights have been elevated; without anyone having to fight for their rights. There has been a correct emphasis on responsibility and legitimate ‘rights’ have been met.

The world is consumed by rights – worker’s rights; women’s rights; men’s rights; children’s rights; family rights, and so on. You never find that as an emphasis in Scripture. Jesus never told His disciples to make banners and go into the streets to protest. Not even the early Protestants did it that way. Yet, today, Christians join the crowds who stand

around with their protest flags. We are not to get involved in that kind of activity as Christians, and especially not as leaders.

Where the people of God live with this presence of God among them, the standard of righteousness is raised up.

Are we to take a stand against unrighteousness? Yes! Very, very strongly! But we do not do it in a manner that results in our becoming no better than rabble-rousers.

When we accept leadership responsibility there is much that we have to make sure we do not participate in. When we seek to honour the awesomeness of ordination it may even mean that we are misunderstood at times, but it is worth it. We have to live in a manner that releases the promise of ordination – the presence of God.

The presence of God is like the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night that the Israelites followed in the desert. When God is with us He protects us, He encourages us, He corrects us, He convicts us, He leads us, He guides us and He sustains us. These are promises related to ordination.

My own testimony is that, by the grace of God, I honestly know these things to be true. In the thirty years I have been in ministry, I know them to be true. There have been some very trying times in those thirty years. People have vindictively attacked. Some were determined to undermine me and pull me down.

In some parts of the world people have done things that did remove the very ground from underneath me. At one point, I was left with no hope, in my natural strength, of being able to provide financially and to find food to feed my family, but

God came through. In South Africa, every house in our street was robbed regularly, and yet ours was the only house in the whole street that was not touched, not once. We saw this year, after year, after year in South Africa.

I do not think that makes me special and I know that there have been genuinely godly people who have been attacked, but what I know beyond a doubt is that *“in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose”* (Romans 8:28). I am not saying that I am more righteous. I am merely being real. God has honoured His promises. He knows what we can take and He knows when we have had enough.

Every day when I get up I thank God for another night that I have passed through and that I am still alive. I thank Him that I am still breathing. I thank Him for the opportunities to serve Him, to have Him work through this weak vessel to do what He wants to, and to sustain me. I thank Him that He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. That is not something I do parrot fashion, but that is the gist of how I start out almost every day of my life, before I start thanking Him for Who He is and worshipping Him.

He is the first word and the final word and nothing can come my way today except if He intends it to, or if I am in disobedience. Nothing! If He allows it, then I know that it is for my good and His glory. We have to be fully persuaded of that truth. That is the effect of his abiding presence.

Nothing comes my way that the devil can get the victory in. God determines how far the devil can go. This is one of the messages of Job. The devil admitted that he could not get at Job because God had put a fence around him. He challenged God to remove the fence and then see if Job would still rejoice and be as righteous as God said he was. God did, but He knew what He was doing and He determined exactly how far the devil could go.

The same is true today; the devil can do nothing in our lives unless God allows it. I doubt, however, whether God is going to let the devil have the same opportunity with us that He did with Job. Those who are saved have an imputed righteousness, but there are not many who have the same level of imparted and impacting righteousness that Job had.

The lesson we learn here is that the devil knows that he is beaten. He can do nothing about the restrictions that God puts on him. Everyone thinks he is so powerful, but he knows the truth. He cannot do a single thing except what God allows him to. We have to live in that from the moment we wake up every day.

God will not allow anything to come our way except that which is for our good and His glory. That is the effect of his abiding presence.

How do you respond when your job is in jeopardy? Do you get before God, acknowledge that the devil cannot get you fired, that he cannot close the factory down, except if it is for your good? Believe God!

That is not only good Bible theology, it is excellent theology. Not because I said it, but because that is what the Bible teaches. Romans 8:28, which we quoted above, says that God works for our good in **all** things. All things! We also have this amazing promise in Romans 8:38-39:

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able

*to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ
Jesus our Lord.*

Nothing can separate us from the love of God! Neither principalities, nor powers, nor anything we can name. That promise is all-inclusive. We need leaders who live in the reality of these promises that accompany God's abiding presence. This is what God says will happen, within the leadership of the Church, when we see and embrace the awesomeness of this call.

Chapter 12

The Prerequisites Of Ordination – The Ephod

As we move on now to look at the prerequisites of ordination, I want to look at some lessons that we can learn from the garments that were made for the priesthood. We find the description of these in Exodus chapters 25 to 30 where the detail of the tabernacle is given to Moses. Two of those chapters are occupied with the priestly garments and the consecration of the priests. They speak of their life of tabernacle service and provide a very useful picture of the prerequisites for priesthood.

Let me start with this comment. The quality of the garments, whether it was in the texture of the material or in the workmanship, was of the very best kind. We read in Exodus 28:2 that these garments were sacred and that they were put together by skilled men. They were made of fine linen and were gold, purple, blue and scarlet. The quality of those garments was the best there was. That is symbolic of the nature of God that we need to reflect as His priesthood. He wants the best. He wants the ‘best quality’ people as leaders, and He wants the best from them.

There are some, however, who are in ‘full-time’ ministry because they could not make a success of anything in life and thought that they would give ministry a try. The picture of the priestly garments leaves no room for anyone to be in

ministry with this type of motivation. It would be far better if they were not.

God wants the best from us, not only the time and effort that we think we can squeeze in. Anyone who agrees to be an elder, but makes it clear that he can only give two hours a week, is not motivated to give God his best. Leadership is something we do 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. That does not mean that we cannot hold down a job. We can still do that well, but leadership is something that we embrace as a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week responsibility.

God wants the best. He wants the best people as leaders, and He wants the best from them.

The Ephod

The first garment to be described in Exodus 28 is the Ephod, with its “*skilfully woven waistband*,” and the breastplate that was fastened to the front of the ephod. These formed a unit as the ephod. The waistband and the breastplate were joined to each other in a way that they became inseparable. Although there were three different elements here, they were one. Think about that with the Trinity in mind. Think about that bearing in mind that we are made up of body, soul and spirit.

Inside the ephod were deposited the Urim and Thummim – the means for making decisions. In 1 Samuel 30:7-8, David told the priest to bring the ephod in order that he may enquire of God as to what he should do. This was how God instructed him. We will come back to the breastplate and the Urim and

Thummim later, but notice that when David asked for the ephod, that included the waistband and the breastplate.

The ephod itself was a part of the garment that was put over the shoulders, with six stones set on either side that had the names of the twelve tribes of Israel engraved on them. These represented the people of God and symbolise the role of leadership to bear the weight of responsibility for the people. This garment rested on the shoulders, representing the governmental role of leadership, and also their priestly role of bringing the people of God before Him in prayer.

The waistband was made of gold, blue, purple and scarlet yarn with finely twisted linen (Exodus 28:8). Its purpose was to strengthen the loins. In other words, it enabled a man to walk strenuously.

Those colours (gold, blue, purple and scarlet) are mentioned twenty-five times in the book of Exodus in exactly the same order. Everything that the Holy Spirit puts in the Bible has some significance and relevance, which is what we see in each of these colours. They all represent something to do with the priesthood.

Gold

Gold is the emblem of eternal deity. In other words, it is an emblem of the Godhead. One of the things about gold is that it is a metal that always remains the same, unaltered, through many adverse conditions. You can subject it to fire, to ice, and leave it out in the open exposed to all the elements and conditions that can corrode other metals, but gold remains gold and it remains untarnished. It is not affected by exposure to air and it will not deteriorate, even if it is buried for thousands of years. Acid does not destroy it and fire will not burn it up. As an emblem of the Godhead, gold speaks of the immutability of God.

We read the following about God in Hebrews 1:11-12

They [speaking of the heavens, etc.] will perish, but you [speaking of God] remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

Everything else will change, everything else will perish, everything else will deteriorate, but He remains the same. While that speaks of God, I believe that there is also a lesson there for us who stand as His representatives, His ambassadors, in a leadership capacity. Are we not to be like this? Not fickle, indecisive, uncertain or unstable?

This should actually to be true for all believers, but even more so for those who are in leadership. In spite of our imperfect humanity, we are to reflect the nature of who God is in our lives. This does not mean that we never fail, but it does mean that we handle everything, including failure, in a way that responds to God and honours Him.

For example, one of the reasons we are indecisive is often that we are afraid to fail. There is, however, a beautiful thing about being a child of God, especially in leadership. If you make the wrong decision, the peace of God will leave you, and you can step back and say, “I made a mistake. Forgive me, this was a blunder on my side.” You can then move on and make the right decision, because the peace of God is acts as an ‘umpire’.

Often we may not have a perfectly clear picture of what to do, but we do have something that God has given and we can begin by responding to that. We do not need to be paralysed or too scared to act. In those times, we can say something like, “The best way I can discern God’s will is the following, and so we will do this or that.”

Sometimes, as we say something like that, the peace of God leaves and we can make the adjustment. That is simply being human. There should be enough times when we make the right decisions for people to know that we do hear God.

Every wrong decision we make, except one that I will refer to in a moment, can be rectified; many times with relatively few long-term consequences. The point that I want to make here is that we do not have to be scared to make decisions, even if we sometimes make the wrong one. In God we can rectify those and move on.

There is one wrong decision that cannot be rectified that easily, and that is the decision to marry the wrong partner. The ramifications of that decision take a long time to work out. Most other wrong decisions do not need to take a long time to rectify.

We can still make mistakes when we have pure motives, and that is one reason why God tells us not to judge motives. Yes, we do 'know' people by their fruit and we have to come to some conclusions and judgements in that respect, but not eternal ones. Not ones that judge motives. I have fouled up badly with the purest of intentions, and so have all of us.

In America, in particular, and increasingly in other parts of the world, we find a different kind of circumstance that gives rise to hesitation. There is a terrible situation there where Christians are so scared to counsel or give advice in case they are sued. This has got to the point where many leaders have been paralysed. This is a trend that is, unfortunately, spreading to other parts of the world. We have to learn to be like God and act decisively in these situations as well.

Sometimes we are indecisive because we do not want to offend anyone's cultural preferences. Or else it is something like feminism, or other 'human rights' issues, that paralyse us. These are all real challenges, but we always have to stand as representatives of God who are unafraid to make

decisions. The garments with gold in them remind us of that. **We cannot help people when we are indecisive.**

What am I trying to say? Simply this: do not be indecisive and do not be paralysed. Make decisions with grace and the people will appreciate it. Represent the Godhead honestly and faithfully.

Blue

Blue stands for divinity or the heavenly realm. It represents the eternal as opposed to the temporal. All Christians should live with eternity in mind, but leaders carry a particular responsibility to be an example in this in a life lived with an eternal perspective.

My wife and I love Adelaide. Of all the cities in the world, Adelaide is the one I want to live in the most. There are many other places that are beautiful, perhaps even more beautiful, but there is no other place on the earth I would rather live than in Adelaide. Even so, as much as I like and love it, it is not my abiding city.

We have no abiding city here on earth (Hebrews 13:14). We live for eternity. Nothing that is temporal should bind us or hold us down. We have to become heavenly-minded without being so heavenly-minded that we are of no earthly use.

God always works out His plans for us with eternity in mind. He has always planned to take us on to the heavenly Jerusalem. What He did through Israel, and what He is doing now through the Church is all leading toward that. That is why we must never think of the Church as God's second option. It was not 'plan B' that He put into action only because Israel fouled up.

The Church is God's plan in this age, just as Israel was His plan in the former age. The Church is made up of both the

Gentiles and the Jews, because there is one Messiah and one way of salvation. The Church is not an afterthought that only came into being because Israel did not rise to the occasion. God always had the Church in mind and has always planned that the Gentiles would be brought in, and that the two would be one.

Jerusalem was important in the former age, but now we have a New Jerusalem to look forward to. In this age the Church is Mount Zion, but there is also an eternal Mount Zion that is still to come. You and I have to live with eternity in view, not the things of this world. Whether we are Jew or Gentile, we have no abiding city on this earth.

Leaders who have caught the responsibility of ordination live with this in their hearts. One day a nail-pierced hand was placed on my head and has never been taken off. Therefore, I had better get on with the job, no matter what the circumstances. I live for eternity.

Scarlet

The next colour I want to look at is scarlet. The reason I am reversing the order here is because scarlet (or red) has to do with our humanity. The word ‘Adam’ comes from the root ‘A dham’ and it means ‘red earth’, which is what he was made from. Esau was a man of the earth with carnal desires and earthly appetites; he even sold his birthright. Genesis 25:25 tells us that at his birth he came out red and hairy. So red has to do with our humanity and we understand that in the context of the next colour – purple.

Purple

Finally we have purple. The two colours that make up purple are blue and red, or blue and scarlet. These two are contrasting colours. They can clash if put together and so God puts purple in the middle. This is representative of Jesus Christ who was both human and divine. Between the divinity and humanity is the Divine Man, the God-Man – Jesus. His name is Emmanuel, “*God with us*” (Matthew 1:23).

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). The intermediate colour, placed between divinity and humanity, which would otherwise have clashed, represents the one Who dwells among us and is full of truth and grace.

I hope you are catching what God wants for leadership because these are all pictures of what you and I have to be like. Without God we are carnal, with carnal appetites, but now we have been made, through Christ, partakers of the divine nature. We are human, but **in Christ** we do not hide behind our humanity. At the same time, we are not so heavenly-minded that we are of no earthly use.

We stand representing Him as leaders saying, *“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ”* (1 Corinthians 10:33). *“Come do what I am doing. Do not only do what I am saying; come do what I am doing.”* What we do not want to hear from leaders is, *“I am only a human being. I am useless. What can you expect from me? I sin in word, thought and deed every day. What can you expect? I am only human.”*

Yes, we have this treasure in earthen vessels, and some of the earthen vessels are a little cracked. That is true, but it is not an excuse, because inside of us the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. We are complete in Him. We have no excuses. In Christ we have the confidence to be leaders who will stand up and say, *“Come, follow me!”*

Chapter 13

Prerequisites – The Breastplate

We turn now to consider the breastplate that was attached to the front of the ephod. Exodus 28:15-30 tells us a number of things about that breastplate. One of its chief functions was to carry the Urim and the Thummim, and these were the means by which God was to give His judgement, or His decisions on matters not covered by the Law, to the people.

We find reference to that in Exodus 28:30 and elsewhere in the Scriptures. The Urim and the Thummim were given to make the will of God known. If the people of God wanted to know what God said about a particular issue they went to the priests, who enquired of God using the Urim and the Thummim. If there were decisions to be made concerning the nation, they consulted the Urim and the Thummim.

I believe that if there is anything of a typology in the Urim and the Thummim, then they represent the Bible as the logos Word of God, and the rhema; the voice of the prophetic or revealed word of God. We need both of these (and they will always be in agreement) in order to know the decisions, the judgements and the will of God.

Although the logos is always true, to only have the logos without it becoming rhema is not always enough when it comes to making decisions about direction. We often also need His rhema word. Sometimes God takes the logos, which is contained in the written Word, and makes it a rhema word for a specific situation.

God, in His grace, is always willing to give us the prophetic word that comes to reveal the mind and heart of God. It is not always a portion of the logos that becomes rhema. It can simply be the revelation of God to our hearts and minds, but it will always line up with the logos.

I believe that there is often so little that is genuinely prophetic in leadership because the devil is seeking to undermine the effectiveness of ordained men and women. We also see far too much that is merely froth and bubble-type prophecy that comes with dramatic, unreal language, but is immature and does not say much at all.

We need a maturing of the prophetic in our midst that comes to tell us what God says is going to happen and what He requires from His people. In the time that we are living in right now, we should be hearing the prophets giving us insight and perspective into what God's agenda is in what we see happening around us.

Unfortunately, the prophetic voice is silenced at times because of fear. We are sometimes scared to prophesy in case we are wrong. As a result, there is a dearth of the true prophetic flow and those that do dare to prophesy are apologising while they are doing it.

I do not believe, however, that it is only the prophets who prophesy. There needs to be a prophetic element in the leadership and in the preaching of every leader. That does not mean that every leader is going to be a prophet, but we do need to be receiving revelation from God. Without this element of the prophetic in our leadership we become quite useless. We are like blind leaders of the blind and can end up leading people down a path to oblivion.

Besides the Urim and the Thummim, there were also twelve stones on the outside of the breastplate with the names of the twelve tribes engraved on them. These stones had a few symbolisms or significances. First of all, the breastplate, which carried the twelve precious stones, was worn over

the heart. The heart is a symbol of love and acceptance. It represents a willingness to die for others, to do anything in order to keep them alive and to see them grow and become all that they can be. What this teaches us is that **leaders need to love the people, which is one of the most important prerequisites of ordination.**

There needs to be a prophetic element in the leadership and in the preaching of every leader.

Secondly, the breastplate rested on the shoulders of the priest, which indicated that the people were to be not to be left on their own or to their own devices. They were to be ‘carried’, or taken care of, by the leadership.

The precious stones also signified how precious God’s people are in His sight. God shows us through this that if we are in leadership, then we too must count His people as precious. We are to be careful what we do with them, how we speak to them, how we speak about them and how we take care of them.

There are too many leaders in the body of Christ today who follow the world’s pattern and abuse the redeemed, blood-washed people of God. We must never be found guilty of that. The sheep are not there for leaders. Leaders are there for the sheep. Leadership is not about what they can do for us, it is about what we can do for them.

When I moved across to Australia for the first time, there was a period in which I was trying to fashion and form a team; a local church team. One of the things I had to say to the team at that point was, “Would you be willing to serve me?” There was a very dangerous aspect to that, but I hope that I was able to qualify what I meant by that. What I was

trying to say was that if they were there to serve their own ambitions, their own desires and to seek personal gain, I did not want them on the team. If they had their own agendas, they could not be in leadership, which is why I asked them to come and serve me.

What further qualified that for me was that I went there to serve those people, which meant that if the leaders were going to serve me they would be serving the people. They were not actually serving me, they were serving the people. With that in place, they would be available to them 24 hours a day.

I also went there still carrying the responsibility for what we (New Covenant Ministries International) were doing worldwide, something that never stopped while I was in leadership there. I knew I would be away a lot and I knew I would not always be in contact with the day-to-day, nitty gritty aspects of people's lives. I could not be available 24 hours a day, because I did not go there only to pastor the church.

Since I could not always be as available as I wanted to, I needed to make sure that there were others who were standing alongside me who were available. Their circumstances did not demand that they travel and so they could be there for the people. That was the reason that I asked them to serve me. If they could do that, we could do the work together.

That did not mean they would be running around doing things I wanted them to do for me, such as ironing my clothes or working in my garden. That was not what I was talking about. They served me by serving the people. So, although there was a potential for abuse in asking what I did, I was careful to avoid that by qualifying what I meant Scripturally. I did not want to abuse them because they were precious to God.

We must never abuse people or take advantage of the people through the things that they want to do for us. If someone from the church comes to fix something in my home, I want

to pay them what they would have charged others. We must not expect them to do these things for us as a favour.

If somebody is going to come and dig a hole in my garden, or cut my lawn, I want to know what ‘Jim’s Gardening Service’ would charge me, because that is what I want to pay. There are times when they may simply want to bless me, but I must never take advantage of them and expect them to do that.

We are here to serve the people. That way we serve God. We cannot serve God if we will not serve people. Although we can never pay the penalty or the price for sin, we can give our lives for them. Not as a ransom, but we certainly have to be willing to lay down our lives. Otherwise we are not fit for leadership.

**God’s people are precious in His sight.
If we are in leadership, then we too
must count His people as precious.**

That is why we must also be sure never to use leadership or prominence as a stepping-stone towards something higher, something better, with more prominence or influence. Jesus said if we want to be great we must become a servant (Matthew 23:11, Luke 22:26). In our physical bodies, the most hidden parts of our bodies are often the most essential organs. I can live without a nose, eyes, ears, mouth, tongue, arms, legs or toes, but I cannot live without a heart or a liver. You cannot see these vital organs, though, which illustrates the fact that it is not always prominence that is important.

Unfortunately, many leaders have used leadership as a stepping-stone to get something that they want, and that is why we have some of the mess that there is in the Church today. We cannot keep lamenting that. We must simply

make sure that we lead well and undo the damage wherever we have the opportunity to do so.

We are talking about how precious God's people are to Him, as signified by the precious stones on the breastplate. The other thing we see with the stones is that no two stones were exactly the same. We should therefore recognise that no two believers are the same and no two ministries are alike. I can be an evangelist and someone else can also be an evangelist, and yet we will be totally different. Or, I can be a pastor and yet find that another person who is a pastor is totally different. The point of this is that we should not 'ape' each other. We need to be ourselves in that which God has called us to.

When people are simply themselves, they are far more effective. I have watched people stutter and stammer, but when they asked people who wanted to give their lives to Jesus to come forward, the people poured out. They were effective because they were being themselves with the evangelistic anointing that was on them.

Another important lesson for leaders in the fact that no two stones were alike is that we must not try to make the people like us. God could have made everyone look like you or me but He did not. He made us all different. Leadership does require that we set an example that others can imitate, but leadership does not make people into clones who give up the essence of who God made them because we want them to be like us.

Chapter 14

Prerequisites – The Robe

The third article we see described in Exodus 28:31-35 is the robe that went underneath the ephod. A robe is worn as sign of an office and symbolises the authority and dignity of that office. I believe that this is partly why David was so convicted after he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe while he was relieving himself in the cave (1 Samuel 24:1-7).

David saw that act as 'touching God's anointed'. He had dishonoured the office, the authority and the dignity of the man. It was not simply a piece of material he had cut off, because the robe was a symbol of Saul's office.

David was already anointed to be the king, but because he knew that God had not yet removed the previous king, he realised that what he had done was dishonouring to God. He had challenged the authority and the office that God had put in place and was jumping ahead of God.

Likewise, we ought to respect the office that others carry, and we should also be respected because of our office when we are ordained. That is not something we demand, but there is a dignity that we should walk in with regard to the office God gives us.

We may therefore need to teach people, without pride and without threatening them or creating hierarchy, not to touch God's anointed and to respect the office carried by those who are ordained. We should do that chiefly by the way that we live. Through our lifestyle we must show them that there is

honour, dignity and authority in the office that those who are ordained carry.

Remember, though, that all those who are born again are God's anointed. This principle does not only apply to leaders. In the New Covenant we must be careful not to touch **any** of the anointed of God, not only the leaders.

Leaders have often used the fact that they are 'God's anointed' to coerce, manipulate and threaten believers about the seriousness of touching God's anointed leaders. Well, if that is so, how dare they touch them either? They are also God's anointed. They are also anointed priests. We dare not touch any child of God.

I am, of course, not talking about physically touching them. I mean that we dare not even discuss negative things about them unless we have to. The 'necessity' of doing so must not be because we have an 'inner compulsion' to do it, or because we enjoy criticising others. It must be because of the ongoing ramifications of certain behavioural patterns or trends that are developing, that need to be addressed, and because we carry some God-given responsibility to play a part in addressing it.

It is significant that the robe was worn **underneath** the ephod, which represented the will of God. In other words, respect, authority and dignity are not things that we parade; they are not things we put on display. They must come from below the surface.

About twenty years ago I faced a dilemma because I dared to tell people to stop calling me 'Pastor' and to call me 'Dudley' instead. People were saying that they could not do it because they had too much respect for the office. Some of these were the same people who had criticised their own pastor and who had no real respect for the man, and so I believe that their resistance came from religiosity, rather than from respect.

I was even told that children would lose respect for me if I allowed them to call me ‘Dudley’. My reply was that they could not lose respect for me if they never had it in the first place. Respect was not something that would happen simply because I had a title. You see, these things come from underneath. It is essentially what I am below the surface that produces real respect.

There is honour, dignity and authority in the office that those who are ordained carry.

You may not know all that you are, but you know enough to know whether there is honour, dignity and authority in who you are, and whether you should be respected. Husbands, if what you have below the surface is worthy of respect then your wives will respect you, even though they criticise you or get angry with you. Even when you frustrate them, there will be respect; and vice versa for the wives.

If you have honour and dignity as a wife, then your husband can swear and curse God, but there will still be respect, a growing one, that will eventually wear him down, even if it takes years. Respect is earned by what comes from below the surface; what we really are.

Another noteworthy fact about the robe the priests wore was that on the hem of the robe there were pomegranates and bells. To me the pomegranates speak of fruitfulness. Have you even opened a pomegranate and seen all those rich red seeds and the juice that pours out? This is a wonderful picture of fruitfulness.

The issue of authority can be settled so quickly through fruitfulness. Remember the budding of Aaron’s rod (Numbers 17), when there was a challenge against the leadership?

Instead of allowing an argument or debate, God told them to put a branch representing each ‘contender’ in the Tent of Meeting. The one that budded was the leader He had chosen. It is as simple as that. At the end of the day, it is fruitfulness that carries you through, not an ability to win arguments or good debating skills. We simply need to get on with the job and be fruitful.

I would like to put this challenge before you when you, as a leader, are being criticised, attacked, or when people undermine your authority. Do not get caught up fighting with them. Simply get on with the job. If there is no fruitfulness then they were right. If there is fruitfulness then they were wrong. It really is as simple as that. You may say that is too simple, but that is often the problem for us. God’s ways sound too simple.

There are a number of areas that need to be fruitful in our lives. First of all, we need to have the fruit of the Spirit. These we find in Galatians 5:22 onwards, and they are in stark contrast with the fruit of the sinful nature. Secondly, there is the fruit of righteousness which is spoken of in Philippians 1:11 and James 3:18. This fruit needs to come through my life and your life. People should be able to see that we are living a righteous lifestyle. We may not be able to live a perfect life, but we can live a righteous lifestyle where our motives are pure.

Then there also has to be the fruit of our own labour. One aspect of this is those we have influenced for Jesus. How can we be in leadership if we never lead people to Christ? How can we be in leadership if we do not ever influence people to come closer to Jesus? As I said earlier, fruitfulness is the best evidence of a divine call.

Another significant fact about these pomegranates is that they acted as pads between each of the bells that were also worn on the edge of the garment. These were arranged so that there was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate.

Without the pads, the bells would have been like loud clanging cymbals as they hit against each other. For me, this speaks of the need for the gifts of the Spirit (represented by the bells), to be exercised correctly. They should always be exercised in love, which is a fruit of the Spirit.

When leaders are challenged or criticised, it is fruitfulness that carries them through, not an ability to win arguments or good debating skills. They simply need to get on with the job and be fruitful.

The High Priest would go into the Most Holy Place once a year, wearing this robe. One of the things that many theologians and commentators agree on is that while the bells were ringing they knew that the High Priest was still alive. To go into the presence of God was to take your life in your own hands. This is something that we need to understand with regard to what we say are the manifestations of the Spirit of God today.

If the high Priest acted in any disorderly manner at all, he would be killed in the presence of God. When I think of some of what has been called ‘the manifestation of the Spirit of God’ and ‘the presence of God’ in recent times, then I wonder if we would have survived had the presence of God really been there.

I am not criticising anything or anyone in particular. I am only saying that some of the behaviour that we have seen could possibly have brought death if the ‘the presence of God’ had been there as it was in the Most Holy Place. When the bells stopped tinkling, they had to open the curtains, put in

a rod and pull the dead body out. They could not go in there, because of the presence of God.

While it is important to make sure that we do things correctly, this should never suppress the manifestation of God's presence in our midst. We need so much more of the manifestation of the Spirit than what we do see, and we need leaders who have these operating in their lives.

If you never prophesy, never speak in tongues (have a message with an interpretation), never have a word of knowledge, a word of wisdom, great faith, gifts of healings, the discerning of spirits, or any of the other gifts of the Spirit, then how can you lead? If none of those things are operative in your life on a regular basis, how can you lead?

Leaders should be able to usher in the sense that 'God is here' and to administrate that, which is one of the effects of the fruit and the gifts of the Spirit that are represented by the pomegranates and the bells.

Chapter 15

Prerequisites – The Gold Plate and the Turban

The next article described in Exodus 28 is the gold plate worn on Aaron's forehead as a reminder that God is holy, and that His priests must be holy. The word translated as 'plate' is the word 'tsits'. It also means 'flower' or 'blossom'. It is the same word that is used in Psalm 103:15: "*As for man his days are like the grass, he flourishes like a 'tsits' of the field.*" Isaiah 28:1 also talks of a fading *tsits*, a fading flower.

What I see in this imagery of the flower is that our lives need to give off a fragrance; a holiness to the Lord. That was what was engraved on the plate that was worn on the High Priest's forehead – "*Holy to the Lord.*" Our whole lives, our thinking patterns, our intentions, our desires, and our ambitions all need to declare, "Holy to the Lord." Most of these things have to do with the mind, and it is there that many of our battles are fought.

I am utterly convinced that no one simply drifts into sin. They fall, by deliberate decision, into sin. You may ask how I can say that? Well, it is because the Bible says that there will be a still small voice, saying, "*This is the way; walk in it*" (Isaiah 30:21). It also tells us that the peace of God will be the umpire in our hearts (Philippians 4:7), and that we are kept by the power of God. Jude 24 reads as follows:

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

All of this tells me that we do not slip unknowingly into sin. There is a deliberateness about sin. No one can say that he suddenly found himself in another woman's bed. It does not happen that way. There is first an enticement that he began to think about. There is no mere slipping into that sin. He has to make a series of deliberate decisions in order to end up in that bed.

God wants leaders who will never even entertain sinful enticements. Leaders whose whole lives declare, "Holy to the Lord," because they are a holy fragrance that pleases God.

There is a true story that I have often told of a Salvation Army officer: He went to his senior officer and said, "I feel condemned. I am in trouble." When he was asked why he replied, "I have all these evil, wicked thoughts passing through my mind." The senior officer started to jump around and praise God. The young officer said, "You do not seem to understand. I said evil thoughts." The senior officer replied, "Yes, I know. What I am praising God for is that they are passing through." As the saying goes, you cannot stop the birds from flying over your head, but you can stop them from making a nest in your hair.

The mind is where many battles are won or lost. This is why Aaron had the plate on his forehead saying, "Holy to the Lord." That is why Paul writes in Philippians 4:8, "...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such

things.” You **can** control your thought patterns; it is simply a matter of disciplining your thoughts, starting right now.

Our whole lives, our thinking patterns, our intentions, our desires, our ambitions need to give off a fragrance; a holiness to the Lord.

The Turban

The next article of priestly clothing to consider is the turban to which the plate was fixed. It is a sign of submission to headship, another essential prerequisite for leadership. Leaders themselves should always be in submission, at least to the headship of Jesus, and then, as appropriate, to other leaders.

We spoke in an earlier chapter about the need to be servant-hearted leaders and this aspect of being under authority is an essential element of servant leadership. The turban reminds us this so that we will remember to take the responsibilities of ordination seriously.

I actually do not believe leaders in the Church are in any way a ‘head’ in the church. There is only headship in family life, where God has made the husband to be the head of the home. However, He never made the pastor to be head of the Church. Jesus is the only Head of the Church. God may have made me a leader, but He did not make me a head in the church. As a leader I am out in front of the people, not above them.

If we know that we are not above the people then they can still speak into our lives, which is a good thing. We actually have to be willing for the youngest Christian to speak into our lives and challenge us if need be. We should not respond in pride or by ‘pulling rank’, because, in truth, we are all equal. Even if it is a child who comes to speak to us, we must respond in humility. We should tell them if it is something that we have never seen in our life before and thank them.

If there are occasions when you are on the receiving end of this and you feel that what the person has to say is not true, then tell him or her that you appreciate him or her speaking to you about it, but that you do not think that what he or she has said is accurate. Tell him or her, however, that although you are not going to respond at that point, you will take it before the Lord. Commit to get back to him or her if, after praying about it, you feel there is any truth in it at all. I say that because I think it is good for those who take the trouble to share something with us to know if they were right. It is not necessary, but it is good to do that as a part of bringing people through into maturity.

Chapter 16

Prerequisites – The Tunic

Finally, there is the tunic (Exodus 28:39) for us to think about. The High Priest wore this garment as an undergarment, and then he wore all the other garments over that. For every other priest, this was their only garment. The word used here is the Hebrew word *kethoneth*, which comes from a root word that means **both** ‘to cover’ **and** ‘to hide’.

The tunic is a picture of what Christ has done for us, and of His righteousness that is imputed to us who are in Him. The result of this is that when God looks at us He sees His Son and what the Son has done. That is enough for Him to regard us as being as if we had never sinned. God looks at us through Jesus. It is as if Jesus is a cover over His eyes and, although He sees what we did wrong, He can declare us innocent because of the Son.

That is what the tunic represents, the imputed righteousness of God that we can never earn. It is not an excuse for our sin, and repentance is a necessary part of receiving this grace, but it is what actually sets us free from the power of sin. We do not do that by our own strength. It is a gift we have because of what Jesus has done for us.

When Adam sinned he took leaves and tried to cover himself with them. Then, when God came to walk in the cool of the evening, he hid himself. Both the covering and the hiding were unacceptable to God. He therefore makes a ‘kethoneth’, a covering, for Adam and Eve that symbolically

covers over and hides their sin. What that speaks of was, of course, eventually accomplished through the death of another. Blood had to be shed, and so the Lamb of God was slain to cover and to hide all our sins.

The tunic is a picture of Christ, what He has done for us, and of His righteousness that is imputed to us who are in Him.

There is also a sense in which we cover and hide one another's sins. Once again, while this applies to all Christians, leaders need to set the example. 1 Peter 4:8 says, **“Love covers over a multitude of sins.”** In other words, we are to protect others rather than expose them. **Those who love to expose the failures of others exclude themselves from being used in leadership by God.**

When someone comes to you with a negative story about another Christian, do you ‘cover and hide’ in order to protect him or her, or do you ask for all the gory detail? We must get back to what the Word says on this issue because, by and large, we are failing miserably. We are so skilled at gossip and criticism that we are even able to sound as if we are praising someone while we subtly put a negative connotation to what we say. The result is that we actually communicate a negative message, even though we sound as if we are praising him or her.

We have to tell people who come to us with negative stories that we do not want to hear what they have to say. Thankfully, this has almost stopped happening in my life because, when people come to me with a negative story, I tell them I do not want to hear. If I am not able to prevent them from telling me because they are determined to tell me, then what I do,

almost without exception now, is to say, “You have 24 hours to call that person and tell them what you told me and sort it out with them. In 24 hours’ time I am calling that person and I am giving him or her your name, and I am going to tell him or her what you told me.”

I do this because the Bible says that if we have anything against a brother we are first to go to our brother alone and talk to him about it. When we gossip we are violating that Biblical requirement. My commitment is that if anyone has any gossip that they insist on telling me, I am going to give them 24 hours to go and tell the person and then I am going to call that person. This way they have to get back to doing what the Bible says they must.

All of these things we have looked at, regarding the awesomeness of ordination, teach us something about what it is that we accept responsibility for when we agree to be a deacon or an elder. Please do not be scared off, though. Do not play into the hand of the devil by thinking that it is too big a job. None of us could do it except by the grace of God. *“It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose”* (Philippians 2:13).

He puts the desire in our hearts and He gives us the empowering. All He wants is a heart that says, “Yes, Lord. I believe this is from You, therefore I dare to say yes.”

Section Three

**What Is Required To
Be A Leader?**

Chapter 17

The Call Of God

In this section of this book we are going to look at some of the prerequisites of pastoral leadership in particular. Much of this would, however, also be applicable to leadership in general.

The first essential requirement for leadership to make sure of, if you are going to pastor a church, is the call of God. It is not enough for people to think that you are a great shepherd, a great carer, that you are great in counsel, in preaching, are available, etc. You need to know, beyond a shadow of doubt in your own heart, that God has called you.

When Ann and I were in the first Bible College we attended, where we were trained to be evangelists, we were the only two, out of the whole student body who were graduating that year, who did not know what God wanted us to do at the end of our two-year course. Everyone else seemed to know what God wanted them to do, but Ann and I did not have a clue. We had known we should be at that college and train and we had done the two years, but we did not know what to do with our lives afterwards.

Students would stand up in testimony times and say, “God has called me to South West Africa,” or “God has called me to this place, or to that place.” Everyone would look at Ann and me and ask us what God had called us to do, but we simply did not know. Eventually, we went to talk to the principal of the Bible College about the movement that was training us,

the Africa Evangelistic Band. We really loved the people and we loved what they were doing – winning people to Jesus. We could not say for sure that God had called us to work with them, but we asked them to allow us to give it a try. To give us a year to go out and see whether we felt comfortable there, and whether God confirmed the call. They were very gracious and gave us the year.

The sequel to that story, is that a number of those who had said that they ‘knew’ what God had called them to do are out of ministry today, because they were being presumptuous. It was spiritual to know what God was going to do with your life, and so they came up with something that sounded as if it was a call.

You need to know, beyond a shadow of doubt, that God has called you.

We need more than that when it comes to leading a church, though. We need something that is unshakable, no matter what comes our way. By God’s grace, that is what I have today, and that is what I have had for nearly 30 years, an absolute conviction of the call of God on my life.

I used to be able to make money. I used to be able to run a business. I used to be able to teach Karate (I even had two Karate clubs of my own), but today there is nothing else I can do but minister. I suppose I could still try to make money, but inside me the motivation for that is all gone. I have no desire for those things, no ambition for them, and I also have no regrets about the path we chose. I am utterly convinced of the call of God.

Paul repeatedly said things like, “Paul, called to be an apostle...” (Romans 1:1 and 1 Corinthians 1:1). He starts some of his other letters with, “Paul, an apostle by the will

of God...”, or, “Paul, called by the will of God...” You have to be able to say that, whatever your name is. “Dave, called to be a pastor by the will of God.” You have to be able to say that with such genuine conviction that whatever the world can offer (monetary benefit, prestige, popularity, etc.) has no attraction.

Many who have been called have not settled that issue yet, and they are open to temptation. When we do settle it and live with the conviction that Jesus Christ has called us personally, face to face, then nothing is going to ever tempt us away, no matter what people offer us.

Businessmen made me very ‘attractive’ offers in the time when I was a pastor, and I have also received similar offers since I stopped pastoring and began to focus completely on my role in New Covenant Ministries International. They would make ‘business’ offers where I would not have to put a cent in. There were offers of ten percent of the profits in return for simply being there to pray and give them counsel. I could never accept those offers. If I had started to mix those two things together there would be trouble. Right now I have no other motive. Money is not a motive for me.

If you are in it for money, do not pastor a church. I am not saying that we should be poor, and I am not saying that I am poor. All I am saying is that those things have no attraction. If you want to make money, get out there in the marketplace. You can do it far quicker there.

There are too few people who know beyond a doubt that they are called, and there are too few people who go through Bible College, or similar training, who last in ministry. It is estimated that within three years of graduating less than ten percent of the students from most of the Bible Colleges worldwide are still in ministry. Why? I would say that it is because, if they were called, they did not settle other issues, or else they were not called to begin with. When you are called, though, it is very difficult to be happy with anything else.

Chapter 18

Character And Personality Traits

Secondly, to pastor a church we do not only need to be sure of our calling, we also need to have our character sorted out and develop a number of the personality traits required. One of the results of that will be that we become secure in who we are and what we are in the church. That is vital if we are going to pastor a church.

I am Dudley, with my weaknesses and with my own personality. I may not be as good-looking as many others. I do not communicate as well as some of the other preachers around. I would like to improve on my communication skills, but I never try to imitate anyone else but Jesus. In fact, I do not want to be anyone else. I do not want to be Billy Graham. I do not want to be Oral Roberts. I do not want to be Benny Hinn. I do not want to be whoever the latest spiritual hero is. I simply want to be me, because God made me who I am and I am secure in that. That is where we all have to be.

I know that God made me the team leader of New Covenant Ministries International for a season. Without a shadow of a doubt God made me that. Therefore I did not ever worry when people tried to steal it from me or began to slander us and promote themselves. I would be concerned for the sheep, but never for myself or my role in the team.

I do not need to have any qualms or fears when I am secure in what I am. Not just in who I am but also in what I am. We need pastors like that, and not pastors who are always

insecure because someone can sing better than they can, can preach better than they do, or because it seems that the people like someone else more than them.

There are those on the New Covenant Ministries International team with us today who the people like much more than they like me. I can honestly say that that does not worry me one bit. The only thing that ever concerns me is if they are building towards themselves. If that is the case, then they are going to hurt the sheep and, because I love the sheep, I do not want to see the sheep hurt.

The point we are making is be secure in who and what you are. Let me say this as we move on: You are the only person who can sort that out. Your leaders cannot sort it out for you. Even God cannot sort it out for you. He can help you, but you are the only person who can sort out whether you are secure or not. No one else can do it for you.

At this point I want to mention briefly a few of the characteristics related to leadership that it is important to cultivate. This is not intended to be a detailed discussion, it is merely a list that is intended to spark some thought around this. These are not exhaustive, simply a few character issues that are vital if you want to be a leader:

- **Are you honest?** If you aspire to leadership, or are in leadership, are you honest? Looking back over the last week, two weeks, two months, two years, twenty years, how many lies have you told? There is no such thing as a white lie. Any distortion of truth is a lie, no matter what the motive.
- **Integrity** is another characteristic that is an essential requirement for leadership.
- **Faithfulness** in the small things and the big things. Faithfulness related to your partner in marriage, your partners in ministry and in the tasks that you have

agreed to do. Is there anything left undone that you said you would do?

- **Transparency.** Do people only see one you? Is what they see on the outside really what you are inside, or are there two faces (or more) to who you are?
- **Are you consistent?** In other words, are you the same today that you will be tomorrow. Even though God is changing you, you are not up and down emotionally. Neither are you chasing after one thing one minute, and another thing the next. Be consistent.
- **Are you disciplined?** Of course, most people think they are disciplined spiritually, but if you want to know if you are disciplined, go and have a look at your bedroom. Go and have a look at yourself in the mirror. Examine your eating habits. Do you know when to say no, enough is enough? Can you, as Kenneth Hagin said, do push-ups from the table? That is the exercise he said that he did. Before he was full he pushed himself up from the table. Are you disciplined? Do you train? Do you bath or shower every day?
- **Are you sacrificial?** Are you willing to pay the price?

Next, here are a number of the personality traits that we need to develop and mature in.

- **Are you flexible and yet stable?** We must banish the statement, “I do not want to do this because I have not done it like this before.” Most often that is only a resistance to change. That is not to say that we are always ready to try something simply because it sounds like a good idea. Our approach should be to hear what God says and, even though we have not gone that way before, to do it because of what He says.

- **Are you confident and yet vulnerable?**
- **Are you passionate and yet sensitive?** Make sure that you do not only have a lot of passion and no sensitivity. Without sensitivity we will not care about who gets hurt. That is not godly passion; that is zeal without knowledge.
- **Perseverance.** “No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the Kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). There are too many who give up too quickly. We mentioned previously the statistic that suggests that many of those who go through Bible Colleges and Theological Training institutions do so with the express purpose of going ‘full-time’. Of those who do go into ‘full-time’ ministry, less than ten percent are still in it three years later.
- **Are you ‘wild’ and yet not weird?** We need to be wild for Jesus but not weird. When we are weird, we are simply giving expression to our own ideas and it is not really an authentic expression of what God is saying or doing. There is, however, value in having a ‘wildness’ in God that is always ready to respond to Him in everything and that combats conservatism. Conservatism cripples people.
- **Are you authentic?** Are you the real thing or do you know how to put on the appropriate act when the world is around, when tongue-speaking Christians are around, or when non-tongue-speaking Christians are around. Is it really the authentic you that is seen, no matter who is around?

Something that relates to this is the need to do away with the unreal (unauthentic) distinction between the secular and the sacred. I listen to some ‘secular’ songs and they are great. I would not be ashamed if Jesus came and sat next to me while I listened to them,

because I know they are clean, even though they do not have Christian lyrics. There are, however, other songs that do have Christian lyrics, but the beat is diabolical. It comes from voodooism and occultically influenced music. I would say it is actually witchcraft with Christian lyrics.

- **Are you a self-starter?** In other words, you do not have to be chased to do something, or checked up on to see if you have done what you said you would. It is wonderful to be surrounded by people who do what they say they will. It is wonderful, too, when they see where God is going with something and they do it before they are even asked.

Chapter 19

Coached And Commissioned

Thirdly, to pastor a church we need to be coached. First is the call, second is character, the third is coached. I use the word ‘coach’ in order to keep the Cs there, but what we are referring to is the need to be equipped. That is what coaches, or mentors, do.

In order to be a successful pastor, we have to be trained and equipped. A very important aspect of that is one-on-one theological training. We need to have an adequate grasp of theology in order to lead a church effectively. If I may use some slang here, we cannot simply ‘operate’. We cannot simply be a ‘crazy charismatic’ or ‘cruisomatic’ operating out of what we feel rather than a sound theology.

I read a telling account that illustrates this in a book that recounts the life story of Hannah Whithall Smith. She grew up in the Quaker movement in the 1800s. I never really understood this about the Quakers, but the Quakers of those days, I do not know what it is like today, put more emphasis on what was felt than on what was in Scripture. They said that Scripture was historical and that there is a ‘now’ word of God that we need to respond to. What we feel inside us is the real issue.

A story is told in that book of an incident in which a preacher brought what he said was “the word of God” for a particular church. In that word he proceeded to attack the people. He rebuked them because they were wearing brooches, had

watches hanging around their necks, and were not wearing “the bonnet”, which they used to wear in those days. His whole message was about outward appearance, and he then went on to say that God was going to judge them.

When he was challenged he simply said that that was what he had ‘felt’ was God’s word. He made no reference to the Scripture and neither did his message line up with the Word. He simply preached what he felt, without judging that by the standard and truth of God’s Word.

We may feel that we would never function in this manner, but are we really any different if we do not make sure that we have a sound theology? It is a sound theology that will enable us to judge what we deliver accurately and make sure that what we preach agrees with the Word. If we do not make sure of this, we are likely to tear people apart because of our own opinions or insecurities.

Without a sound theology the potential is far greater for us to preach unbalanced messages or to become distracted from a focus on God and the truth of His Word. For instance, we can easily become overly focused on one thing that we may consider to be wrong. Perhaps we see one woman on the platform with a bare midriff while she is contributing in the ‘worship team’, and then that becomes all that we concentrate on, or the ‘wrongness’ of that.

We become so focused on the way that one woman is dressed that when we come up to the platform we proceed to attack everyone on the issue of dress, when in fact there is no one else that has a bare midriff. That is not the way to handle these issues. A good theology will help us to avoid this, and even more serious mistakes, when we preach.

There was, however, a time when theology was almost a curse or a swear word in the body of Christ, especially amongst Charismatics and Pentecostals. We considered theology to be something that brought death when, in fact, good, sound theology brings life and keeps life. For that reason,

we all need to study the Word. That is why New Covenant Ministries International have the International Theological Correspondence College, to help people to study the Word of God, to get to know the Word of God and to apply that to all that we say and do.

A sound theology will enable us to judge what we deliver accurately, and make sure that what we preach agrees with the Word.

One of the most significant benefits of being well grounded theologically in the Word of God is that we will not be easily shaken by crisis. Nor will we be easily moved to follow every passing fad that sweeps through the church. With a sound theology comes a conviction that there is a whole Bible to be lived out, the whole Bible to be taught and that the whole Bible is the food for the 'sheep', not only one aspect.

Theological training is absolutely essential. There is no way around that. We can flow on anointing for a little while, but anointing without theology will end up in disaster. It will eventually destroy people.

Fourthly, in order to pastor a church, we need to be commissioned. There must be a time when we rise up into the call and get on with the job. Some people start off down that road but become sidetracked and never get to this point. I have watched some, especially in America and South Africa, who started off doing a correspondence course, and then became obsessed with more and more study. Now, 7, 9 or 12 years later they are still looking for more training.

I have already said that I believe that theological training is vital and so you know that I am not speaking against that.

The point that I am making is that while the world is going to hell, some have missed the call and all they want is more degrees. They want to be able to put a PhD or MD after their name and so they go on studying for degree after degree after degree, when that is not what God called them to.

Somewhere we have to answer the call of God and actually begin to do the work. If we can squeeze in a little more study that will be great, but not at the expense of getting on with the call of God; the task that we have been called to do. We need to get free, get commissioned, get out there, and do a good job.

Chapter 20

An Anointing

In order to pastor a church we do need an anointing, but let us be clear about what that means. The anointing is not 'goosebumps'. It is not simply a 'spiritual feeling' that comes on us or on the people when we preach. In the Old Testament, we find the word 'mashack' used for anointing. It means, 'to anoint, to smear or to consecrate', and it carries with it a sense of a special act of 'setting apart' for an office or a function. Some verses that refer to this are: 1 Kings 19:16, 1 Samuel 6:12 and 1 Samuel 13:9. In the New Testament we find the words 'creo' and 'chrisma' are used, an example of which is found in 1 John 2:27. The idea expressed here is again 'to make holy, to separate to God'.

The most important aspect of anointing that comes through here is that if we are to minister under the anointing, we must be 'set apart' (mashack) for God. In other words, if we are going to honour the anointing, we cannot have other agendas. When there is any other motivation in our life, like the lust for power, pennies or petticoats, the wrong thing is released when we minister.

Since anointing carries with it the sense of 'being made holy', we have to make sure that we are clean. There is no excuse for our humanity when it comes to sin. We have to make sure that there is a pure intention in what we are preaching.

For instance, we may hear the statement, which I believe to be true, that our prayer meetings are the powerhouse or generator of the church. As such, they are an indicator of the strength of the church because the real members of a church are actually those who get involved in prayer meetings. We can decide to preach on prayer and get the people to come to the prayer meetings because we want to look good, and not because we truly believe in prayer.

In other words, we have an impure intention, which is that we, or our church, would look successful to others. Our motive should rather come from a conviction about prayer and a realisation of how vital the involvement of the people in the prayer times really is. If they are not there, we are sunk. Purity of heart and anointing go together.

If we are to minister under the anointing, we must be set apart for God. We cannot have other agendas.

The anointing oil used in the Old Testament was prepared from oil and aromatic herbs. It was a sweet perfume. The symbolism in that is that when we stand up under the anointing, even when we are preaching heavy truth, it is attractive. That is why, even when we are not preaching a salvation message, the anointing saves sinners. We can preach on tithing, and people can get saved. How does that happen? It is because of the sweet release of God that goes beyond us, our personality, and what we are saying.

One result of that 'sweet fragrance' should be that people walk away encouraged from our meetings. When we preach, we need to ask ourselves this kind of question: "What would I need to get up and keep going for another week if I were

where they are? What would encourage and strengthen me if I were going to plant a church, or if I were leading a church or home group, or if I were struggling with the issues that those I am ministering to are struggling with?”

Is the answer to those questions in the message we are preaching? It should be and we should deliver it under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. People should ever walk away condemned from a message unless they are fighting against God. Do our people walk away encouraged, even from our home group meetings?

There is also a sense of imbuement – the power of God coming – in the anointing. Even though we need to make a decision to do what God says and to minister to others, it is the anointing that brings the power of God. If the only thing that is happening is as a result of the decision we make, then we can do nothing that has eternal value. There must also be an anointing.

The choice we make is still important though. Philippians 2:13 says, “...it is God that works in you both to will and to do according to His good pleasure.” He gives desire and the ‘dunamis’ (the power) but between these two is a little thing called choice! He wants us to be like Jesus, and if we say, “yes” to Him, then He brings the power.

While we are speaking about the anointing, I would like to bring some correction, because an unbiblical approach to the anointing has done more damage in the last ten years than any other thing I know. It has done more damage than New Age teaching, and it has done more damage to the people of God than drugs and alcohol put together, because the way it was handled had no theological roots.

There have been many different things that have been called the anointing that have swept through the church in recent years. I have not fought them, but I have never promoted them either. As a result, I have been judged and I

have had articles written against me that say that I resist the Spirit.

That is not what I was trying to do. I love God passionately and I do not know what else to do to love Him more, but I will not be seduced in the name of loving God. When we know what the Word of God teaches, then we are not seduced. It is when we do not know it that we are open to 'every wind of doctrine'.

I am convinced that the anointing means something totally different to most of the things that many think are the anointing. If we will only be honest with ourselves about the things that people say are the anointing, and truthfully evaluate what those things have done for us and for others in the long-term, we will be able to discern what was truly God and what was not.

Was it something that really grounded us in God, made us love Him more, count more for Him, made our faith relevant, made us effective, and helped us to cope with the realities of life? Were the effects lasting, without us needing to run back time and time again for another booster? Who or what did it make us dependent on? Only that which points us to God and enables us to draw from Him is truly anointed.

Much of what was called anointing in recent times did not do that. It was more of a spiritual 'kick', like a caffeine kick, that lasted for a day to two, or perhaps only an hour or two, and then we had to go back for another 'shot'. God does not want leaders who are dependent on spiritual 'shots' from someone who 'has the anointing'. We should personally be drawing consistently from the presence and the power of God, and be flowing in the anointing of God for each meeting.

The anointing teaches and if the people are not taught, then what was called the anointing was, in fact, not the anointing. When the anointing is present we will not have to continually teach the same messages over and over again. We learn, and apply what we learn, because we are taught by the anointing.

If that is not happening, then there is doubt whether it was the real thing.

The anointing is the presence of God that breaks yokes. If the people of God do not have things broken that stay broken, then what was called the anointing was not the anointing.

If there is no ongoing, sustained, lifestyle adjustment to our living in the world after what happens in the meeting, then something is missing. Something does not line up with the Word.

The anointing is the presence of God that breaks yokes.

I know that these are hard words, but I am addressing these issues in the context of leadership in the Church and we need to tackle them without any compromise at this level. I do want to say what I am saying with grace, because I say it from a heart that has been broken for God's people. I have seen them being deceived and seduced and taken by the nose and carried this way and that, and I feel that pain.

Another thing that we need to be completely honest about is what we call revival. Many churches have claimed to be in revival, but, if we are theologically grounded and evaluate what was happening honestly, then we know that was not revival. It was a move of God, but it was not revival. It was a refreshing or a renewal of God, but it was not revival. I have never been able to stand up and agree with what was called revival. It simply did not look like it to me.

What does the Bible say happens when God is present? In Acts 2:14 and following, we are given a clear picture of what should happen. Peter preaches and quotes the prophet Joel. He says, "*In the last days I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh,*" and then he tells us some of the things that will happen

as a result of that outpouring. These are valid manifestations of the Spirit, but you do not see much of these flowing in some of the moves that are called revival.

Let me take a step back here and say that I have fallen prostrate and I have laughed under the power of the Spirit of God. When it is genuinely God who does that I have no problem with it. When we get back to what the Bible says are the manifestations of the Spirit, however, we read in Acts 2:17 that when God pours out His Spirit then, “...*Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.*” In other words, there will be a release of the priesthood as a natural, ongoing outflow that is a result of the presence of God in our midst.

In most of the moves that claim that God is present, we do not see that. All the ministry comes from the pulpit. They do the praying, they do the delivering, they lay hands on people; they do everything. Often one person does it all. The Bible says that, “*your sons and your daughters will prophesy.*” Not only male and not only female; both male and female.

When God came down in the book of Acts there was a sound as of a mighty rushing wind. There was power, there were cloven tongues of fire on their heads, there was purity, a cleansing of the heart, a renewing of their minds, and there was a release of the priesthood. How many of the moves of God that have been administered by a few ‘anointed’ individuals have produced that?

Chapter 21

People Skills And Pastoral Skills

If we are going to pastor a church we have to develop some people skills. It is an unfortunate fact that some of the best communicators on the earth have no real people skills. People are attracted to them publicly, but are put off by them as soon as they get to know them. They can often be abrasive, or may even reject people because of their own insecurities. In interpersonal contexts they often end up rubbing people up the wrong way, because they simply do not know how to relate well.

I am not referring to the times that people are offended because what is said is communicated out of their commitment to the truth of the Bible. That is an entirely different matter. This Gospel, while it is an attractive Gospel, is also an offensive Gospel. It offends people who resist the truth. Jesus is the Rock of offence. He offended people, but not because of His character, or His personality, or because He lacked people skills. He offended them because of the truth. Jesus is a wonderful example of someone who had great people skills, even though he often offended people.

Many wanted to be with Him, and children in particular wanted to be with Him. The people who were offended by Jesus were the people who resisted truth. In the same way, we are going to offend people who resist truth. We cannot be apologetic about that. If Jesus apologised to everyone he offended, He would still be apologising today.

Having said that, we have no excuse for poor people skills. We simply have to learn these skills if we are going to lead God's people effectively. We have to learn to be aware of how we are coming across to people; how we are affecting people by who we are and by the way we communicate. There may be things that we can get away with from the pulpit but not when we get close to people. An important people skill is being aware of this and knowing how to tell how we affect them.

Something that is not in itself a people skill, but which illustrates the point, is the issue of bad breath. When you are on the platform, bad breath may not matter, but as soon as you enter into one-on-one communication with someone, then it matters very much. If you have bad breath then you know that you need to do something about that. Otherwise you are going to put people off. You have to brush your teeth and chew something that has a fresh smell. The same applies to personality issues that put people off. We must become aware of these and do something about them.

There is a man that I know who I believe is potentially one of the most significant leaders in the world. He is what I am multiplied by 10,000 in terms of effectiveness, but he tends to take over people's lives. If he would simply develop his people skills, I believe he could reach his potential.

We all have our quirks and we have to let God deal with us. Without getting into bondage, we need to ask God to chisel off everything that is abrasive, hurtful, and rubs people up the wrong way. We do not need those things in our lives.

I know that can be a life-long process, but God starts to deal with things immediately when we ask Him to help. Some of what needs to change He can deal with instantly, but with other issues it is a longer process. The point is to make a start and deal with these things so that we can develop the people skills we need.

Pastoral skills are related to people skills and are another essential requirement in order to pastor a church; that almost goes without saying. What we need to take note of, however, is that these are not skills that all come naturally. Some of them do need to be developed. Everyone who is in leadership should work on these faithfully and we should make sure that we grow and mature in these skills.

Developing our pastoral skills, which are an expression of our love for the people, really begins with a love for God. In order to pastor well we must first truly love the Lord. We love Him through our obedience, which is a willing obedience and not something we give to God with gritted teeth. Is Jesus worth that to us? Will we persevere, when it is difficult, because of our love for the Lord? Many pastors want to give up after every Sunday. We should actually never want to take up any other task, because we love the Lord and we love His people.

Developing our pastoral skills, which are an expression of our love for the people, begins with a love for God.

Our love for God is also expressed in a love of His presence. This is an important key to a church growing in maturity, effectiveness and numbers. A love for God's presence includes the fear of the Lord. If a holy fear does not come into the presence of the people while they are under the power of the Spirit (a fear that does not want to grieve, lie, gossip, be unforgiving, etc.) then there is actually very little, if any, of the presence of God. We merely deluded ourselves that there was.

I find it significant that in almost every one of the Bible accounts of people falling in the presence of God, they fell

FORWARDS, onto their faces, with the fear of the Lord. There may have been a counterfeit to the presence of God at times, and this is on the wane, but so is the real. We need the real presence of God back in our midst, but let us never be tempted to manufacture that; to make something that is not His presence seem to be His presence.

In learning to love God's people, it is also important that we love ourselves. If I cannot love myself I cannot love His people. I am not talking here of a self-centred self-love or vanity, but simply coming to terms with the way that God made me. As I love myself, I will no longer want to be someone else, because I am contented with how God has made me. Those who do not love themselves are likely to live in striving and failure and will never be able to fully love others.

Pastors love all the sheep. In expressing this love in our own leadership, we need to remember that, while we lead from the front, we put ourselves at the back of the line with regard to every privilege that may come around. According to John 10:4-17, that is how Jesus did it. The Good Shepherd leads the sheep out, they follow Him and He lays down His life for them.

We also need to love the world – the lost, the unredeemed, gays, lesbians, prostitutes, pimps, lepers, paedophiles, people who live with awful conditions, as well as respectable parents – all those who do not know Christ. We need to love them all with a love that is willing to die for them. Often our lifestyles are such that we are unwilling to get up from a TV show when God prompts us to pray for someone. As we learn to love them, however, we must put these people before ourselves.

We live in a world that is self-centred and lives to get. I believe that we need to be people of faith, but much of what we have called 'faith teaching' has placed the emphasis on me and not on others. It has, in fact, made us self-seeking rather than loving. What we need to learn is that in the Kingdom of God we do not live to get. We know we will be blessed

because of who God is, but this should never be our motive. Our motive related to what we have is that we get to give and not that we give to get.

Pastors are skilled as shepherds. They search for sheep and care for them. We read in Ezekiel 34 that they seek the lost (verse 14), they deliver people out of despairing places (verse 10-12), they feed the sheep (verse 12-14), they bind up the broken hearted (verse 16-18) and they strengthen the sick (v16). Psalm 21 tells us that shepherds relieve needs, while Psalm 23 tells us that they lead (verse 1) and that they restore souls (verse 3).

Pastors love all the sheep.

As pastors we want the sheep to love us. We want them to be committed to us and to what we are doing, but there needs to be a mutual and equal commitment both ways, and a mutual and equal love for one another. Our love and commitment for them will give them the assurance that they can depend on us. They know that we are not going to suddenly pull the rug out from under them. We are not going to desert them.

When I look around the body of Christ today, I grieve because of some of the things that leaders do. How quickly we as shepherds can desert the sheep. When some better opportunity arises we leave, without any thought of what we are leaving behind, who we are leaving behind, or who is going to take over, without really setting things in place before we move on. When you look at some of this, it is an amazing thing that those who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them are not constantly walking around weeping. I know that it breaks my heart, and I constantly have to deal with that around the world.

The time may come for a pastor to move on, but that should be done properly. We need to make sure that the people have been prepared and that the leadership is prepared before we move on to the next phase of our call. We need to make sure that they are cared for, that they are loved, that things are in place before we move on. All of that is a fruit of genuine love and commitment. Godly leadership comes from being servant-hearted, loving, caring and committed to the sheep.

Another aspect of having good pastoral skills is that pastors set an example for the people they pastor by the way that they live. In 1 Corinthians 11:1, Paul wrote about others following his example as He followed the example of Christ. He was not encouraging them to follow his **style** but to follow his **lifestyle!** We have missed the point and are bad leaders if we encourage or allow people to copy our style.

Yet another aspect of pastoral skills is knowing how to counsel, how to hear the Holy Spirit for words of knowledge, words of wisdom and for the discerning of spirits. I personally feel that the work of the Holy Spirit is the most important thing that we need when it comes to giving counsel. There is nothing that can replace the supernatural revelation and work of God. As we grow in this, not only will we rely on God rather than on our own wisdom, but it will also save us so much time.

Pastors set an example for the people they pastor by the way that they live.

At the same time, however, we do need to develop some practical skill in counselling, part of which is a structured thinking process of how to counsel people when they sit in front of us with their heartaches, their concerns and their aspirations. We need to develop, as one of our pastoral skills,

the art of communicating the truth in a clear, unambiguous way back to people in answer to their questions.

We also need to understand human nature and we need to know something of the dignity of every human being if we are going to learn how to communicate well with others. Sometimes we can be offended by people simply because we do not understand human nature, or because we do not understand anything about their background. Let me use an illustration from rural Africa.

In parts of Africa some people put animal fat on their hands and arms to keep their skin moist, because where they live it is very, very dry. To many of us who live differently that has an offensive smell, and that can very easily put us off. At times like that we have to understand that what may be offensive to us is perfectly natural and normal for them; it is not offensive at all.

We have to do the same with sinners. Sometimes we have forgotten how sinners think. Pastors are sometimes the most far removed from reality of all people on the planet because they only deal with saints. The saints' sins are much the same as the unbelievers' sins, but they also have their own set of sins that the heathen know nothing about. We can get so involved with dealing with saints' sins that we forget what sinners' sins are like, and consequently, do not know how to relate well to them. Sin is never acceptable, but we need to know how to love sinners. What I am saying is that we have to make sure that we understand human nature when we are dealing with people. There is a 'pastoral' skill required in this.

Pastoral skills also include the ability to come up with Bible answers when we are called on to help people. For example, some parents have children who are good-natured in that they behave themselves most of the time. Other parents have children who are less good-natured, who misbehave and are often rebellious. We must not forget that there are Bible

solutions for rebellious kids. Neither must we forget that Bible solutions are always to be given with tenderness and love and never with condemnation.

Franklin Graham, who has taken over the Billy Graham Organisation now, is a great preacher, and he is counting for God. He is winning people to Jesus everywhere, and he has access to influential people like the President of the United States of America, presidents of other nations, kings and despots. He talks to them face-to-face.

Pastoral skills include the ability to come up with Bible answers when we are called on to help people. These are always to be given with tenderness and love and never with condemnation.

There was, however, a period in his life when he went through some serious rebellion. Billy Graham's team members would invite him to travel with them overseas to the meetings they were involved with, and he would have a packet of cigarettes with him. Although he was in rebellion, there were Bible solutions for him and those were given with grace. Eventually he came through for God and look at him today. We have to be able to communicate Bible solutions, but we need to communicate them with grace and broken-heartedness. That is a pastoral skill we need to develop.

Say somebody who is genuinely looking for help comes to you and says, "You are not going to believe this, but I have been sleeping with other women. My wife has just found out and she is heart-broken." You cannot respond with condemnation. Your heart should break with him. That does not mean that we excuse the sin, and we know what the Bible

says has to be done in such cases, but we are to be heartbroken with him.

God desires mercy, even above sacrifice, so love shows mercy, kindness and forgiveness. It is firm but never harsh. Love makes room for differences, disappointments and even failure.

The story is told of a visitor to a church where one of the great preachers of the revivals in England had preached. He stood behind the pulpit where this great preacher had preached, trying to get the feel of what it must have been like in those revival days. A janitor, an old man, came along, and the visitor told the janitor that he was trying to sense what that preacher used to feel like. He wondered how he could have been so effective, and he started to read from the Bible that was on the pulpit.

The story goes something like this. The janitor stopped him and said, "That is not enough. If you want those kinds of results, then, when you read the Bible, cry. When that preacher preached about hell, tears poured down his cheeks. His heart was broken for sinners. He was not threatening them with hell, he felt for them. Try tears."

It is often too easy to expose people and show them how bad they are, how wicked they are and how wrong they are, even though they may be Christians. In 'pastoring' them we do have to deal with what is in their hearts, but we do it with a broken-heartedness that cares for them.

The shortest verse in the whole Bible, John 11:35, simply says, "*Jesus wept.*" Two words. Jesus wept. There are other verses that tell us that He was full of joy, and some would expect that He would be like that all the time; that He would never be so sad that He wept. Yet He did, because He cared and He knew how to weep with those who weep. If we do not know how to weep with those who weep, we are lacking in pastoral skills. We should learn from Jesus.

In some circles you are not allowed to say that you have a broken heart. If you do, the 'positive confession' preachers immediately tackle you and accuse you of being negative. That is not God's way. Let us be careful of this, because we can be influenced by trends like this that actually work against us being like Jesus.

As we develop our pastoral skills we will also be able to rejoice with those who rejoice. It is so wonderful for me when pastors give me news of their church growing, I rejoice with them. When someone tells me that they have 50 people after they have been going for a year, I do not think or say, "Only 50 after one year! Some have more after a year." I rejoice with them.

Chapter 22

Preaching Skills

We need to develop our preaching skills so that we are able to communicate the truth effectively; to communicate it in a way that people can understand.

To a certain extent we walk on a tightrope in this area. On the one hand, Jesus was so simple in His communication. There is nothing that came out of His mouth while He walked this earth that I cannot understand. Not a thing. We ought to be like that in our preaching as well, to keep it simple.

At the same time, God has given us all a language with words that are descriptive, a language that explodes things and creates images within us. Just one word can cause this to happen. This is something that we can make good use of, but we must never flaunt it. When we begin to flaunt our expertise with words, the people may not understand the message.

I have listened to some who were skilled with words, but have walked out wondering what was said. What they said was said very well, but I did not know what it was. I did not know how it related to what to do with my life and I did not know how to change anything, because I did not understand the words that were used.

For example, it would be technically correct to call a person who tells lies a ‘terminological exactituder’, but we can also simply say that he is a liar. The terms mean the same thing, but which one do you understand well? We can see which is the most impressive term; the one that will make people think

that we are ‘educated’. ‘Terminological exactituder’ sounds much more educated than ‘liar’, but how many people will know what that means?

As we develop our preaching skills, we will learn not to use words that people do not understand. At the same time, we are not restricted to only using the simplest words that cannot explode on that screen of the thought processes, that faculty that God has given us as a canvas that the Holy Spirit paints on. If we can use more effective words, that bring more images to life on that canvas, then we should use them, as long as we always make sure that people know what we are talking about.

One final point with respect to developing preaching skills, is always to remember contexts. There is a cliché that carries a very powerful truth, even though it has become a cliché, and that is that “a text taken out of its context becomes a pretext.”

We must stay faithful to the context when we preach or teach from the Bible. Every word in the Bible has to be understood first of all in the context of that sentence. Every sentence in the Bible has to be understood in the context of that paragraph. Every paragraph has to be understood and interpreted in the context of that book. And every book has to be understood and interpreted in the context of the whole Bible.

If we do that, we will avoid pretext. For instance, in 1 Peter 3:21, we read a sentence that says that we are saved by baptism. We understand from the context of that book, and other Scriptures, that it does not mean that baptism itself saves us. There is, however, more than one group that believes that when we go under the water, that is literally what saves us, even though the Bible is clear that we are saved by regeneration; by God coming inside us and transforming us from within. It is the blood of Jesus that cleanses us from sin.

Baptism, although it is an act of obedience to the command of Jesus, is only symbolic of that.

We must stay faithful to the context when we preach or teach from the Bible.

Baptismal regeneration, as it is taught by the entire Catholic, Anglican and Episcopalian systems, is a result of taking the text out of context. They take a baby and sprinkle some water on it and they believe that they have 'Christianised' that child, and they then give it a 'Christian' name. That is heresy.

The doctrine of baptismal regeneration undermines the necessity of being regenerated from within. It undermines the efficacy of the blood of Jesus. It degrades and denigrates the whole work of the cross. It says that a little drop of water, or water poured on you, or even being immersed, is more powerful than the Blood of Christ and the Spirit of God. That is because of a text that is taken out of context and illustrates how important it is to develop skills that enable us to accurately communicate the truth of the Word.

Section Four

What Elders Do

Chapter 23

Definitions

Because of our backgrounds, traditions and preferences, all of us have our own ideas of how a local church should be run, how it should operate and how it should be governed. There is probably not one person who does not have some prejudice, or some preconception, somewhere along the line related to pastors and what they should do.

We bring all of these, as well as our traditions, with us when we join a church, even if we have never attended church before. We may be totally unchurched and even unspiritual, but when we walk in we have an opinion of how things should be done. That is how it was for me. As far as I can recall, I went to a church twice before I was saved, and I was saved when I was about 24 years old. In spite of that, I still came into the church with my own idea of church tradition.

This applies even more so to those who do have some experience of 'church'. Some people will walk into a church and be upset because of the way the person preaching is dressed. For some it is because that person is wearing a shirt and tie and does not have a dog collar, or because there are no long, flowing robes. Those in some of the Pentecostal churches generally expect a three-piece suit, or the equivalent.

All that I am trying to illustrate here is that we all come into a church with our traditions. Those who grew up in non-denominational circles, may one day attend a meeting in an Anglican church and wonder why the preacher has a robe

and is not wearing Levis with his shirt hanging out. That is as much a tradition as the robes. There are also many other traditions besides those that have to do with the way we dress. These have to be carefully considered, because many have no validity when measured against the Word of God.

Whatever our particular tradition or prejudice is, we need to put that aside, and with honesty return to the Bible and allow that to be the standard by which we judge what we believe to be true. By implication, that means that we need to be willing to change wherever needs changing. We need to be willing to throw aside anything and everything that does not line up with the Word of God. We will never be able to pastor God's people the way He wants us to unless we are willing to discard everything that is not in accord the Word of God, and also to pick up those things that are.

If anyone is not willing to do that, then a book like this may offend them. I cannot, however, advocate an approach that is anything less than a commitment to only teach and practise what is in the Word, no matter how hard that is.

We will never be able to pastor God's people the way He wants us to unless we are willing to discard everything that is not in accord the Word of God, and also to pick up those things that are.

Up until twelve years ago, and for some even less, it was a huge challenge to stop using 'Pastor' as a title and call the person by his first name. I have asked people for over twenty years to show me in the Bible where anyone was called 'Pastor' as a title. Not one person has ever been able to, and yet many people would not listen to me preach again because I would

not allow them to call me pastor, even when I proved to them that it was not Biblical to do so.

People have rejected us because of this. My wife, Ann, could tell you of the number of pastors who have fought us on this issue. Even when they knew it was not Scriptural to use 'Pastor' as a title, they wanted to, because they had trained for seven years to get to the place where people would call them 'Pastor'. I remember one man who was adamant that I was not going to deprive him of that. He wanted at least a few years with the 'prestige' of the title.

Even my own mother, on the occasions she writes, still would like to address the letter 'Rev Daniel'. There is something that says, "My boy has made it! He used to be bad and now he is good." I have even had people write to me as the Archbishop! The titles that we have had are the most ridiculous things in the world. Once we examine how some of these are actually used in the Bible it will become clearer why I say that.

In the New Testament there are three Greek words used for the people we call pastors, or elders of local churches. They are: *presbuteros*, *poimain* and *episcopos*. The New Testament passages we are about to look at use these three words interchangeably to refer to the same person, or team of leaders. First we will look at what these words mean, and then we will look at the contexts in which these words are used, and that will clarify why we should never use these as titles.

The first word, *presbuteros*, is the word from which we get our words 'presbyterian', 'presbyter' and 'presbytery'. It is the Greek word that is usually translated as 'elder'. This does not, however, mean the same thing as 'elder' in an Old Testament context, although some of that idea does carry through into the New Covenant.

The word *poimain* means 'shepherd' or 'pastor'. A *poimain* is a shepherd or a pastor of the sheep. It can be translated as

either one of those two. For example, in Eph 4:11, where that Greek word is usually translated as ‘pastor’, it could also be translated as ‘shepherd’.

The third word is *episcopos*. Those who place an emphasis on this word often have episcopal systems of church government. That Greek word is made up of two Greek words, *epi* and *scopos*. *Epi* means ‘over’ and *scopos* means ‘seer’. The truest translation of that word is thus ‘overseer’, although it is also translated as ‘bishop’.

We turn now to consider some of the passages in which these words appear. To begin with we look at Acts 20:17 and 28:

From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church (verse 17).

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood (verse 28).

Paul is saying farewell to the elders (plural) of the church in Ephesus and is giving them some final instructions. He uses all three words while addressing the same group of people. There were not three groups. In other words, he is saying that the Holy Spirit has made them to be elders, shepherds and bishops, and it is clear from the context that the words can be used interchangeably to refer to this group. We will come to see why this is so in a moment.

If you are an elder, then, whether you like it or not, God says you are also a bishop and a shepherd. When we interpret this as a hierarchy and allow some to teach that elders occupy a lower rung on that hierarchy than bishops, we are teaching heresy. This is exactly what we find happening all over the

world again today with some Charismatic and Pentecostal leaders calling themselves bishops.

We cannot say that this is not really an important issue because the Holy Spirit recorded this very clearly in the Word, and we should be committed to being whole-Bible people. If anyone is going to pastor a church and is not committed to being a whole-Bible person, then he is like the blind leading the blind. This is why we have to be transformed in our minds and we have to make sure that our behaviour is adjusted accordingly.

These three terms, which are used interchangeably with reference to this group of leaders, refer to different aspects of this office, but that is all. They refer to different ‘functions’ and are not titles at all. For that reason we have to stop using them as titles, even when someone wants to be called ‘bishop’. Wearing a purple shirt with a white dog collar does not make anyone a bishop. Consider the following contexts:

In Titus 1:5 & 7 Paul instructs Titus to ordain elders and then he gives guidelines for the type of people that he is to choose. At that point he refers to them as ‘overseers’, which is a function of the office. The word used here is the word that is elsewhere translated as ‘bishops’. In fact, the King James Version actually uses the word ‘bishops’ instead of ‘overseers’ in this verse.

Peter also uses these words with reference to the same person or office. In 1 Peter 2:25 Jesus is called the “Great Shepherd” (*poimain*), and “Overseer” (*episcopos*) of our souls. In 1 Peter 5:1 we read:

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers...

Peter writes to the *presbuteros* (elders) as a fellow elder and exhorts them to be *pomain* (shepherds/pastors), and to serve as *episcopos* (bishops/overseers). Once again, the three terms are used interchangeably of the same group of people. There is definitely no hierarchy of church leadership implied in this passage at all.

Why then three different words for the same person? We have answered that in part by saying that these words refer to the different functions that these leaders carry. Let us examine that a little more.

I believe that one of these words (elder) refers primarily to the office or the qualification. Another is the spiritual ministry, which is the ministry of shepherding. The third word (bishop) describes the governmental work that has to be done, that of administrating or overseeing the church.

In other words, whether we talk about pastors, shepherds, overseers, bishops or elders, we are talking about one and the same office of leadership in the church. We also find in the Bible that these are almost always used in the plural. This is because the Scriptural pattern is for there to be a plurality of eldership who lead each local church as a team.

It is important to understand the pattern for church government that is revealed here. If we are not clear on this, then we will be prone to error and have one or another form of hierarchy in the church. This is the reason that we find models of church government where the church members oversee themselves. It is also why there are cases where deacons exercise authority over pastors and tell them what to do. This is not in accord with God's revealed pattern for church government.

In the rest of this section we will examine some of the things that these elders should do and what their responsibilities are. Although we will use the word 'elders' to refer to these leaders most of the time, we could just as well call them 'pastors' or 'bishops'.

Chapter 24

Elders Spend Time With The People

God is looking for leaders to pastor His people. He is looking for leaders who will love them and who are not always rushing off because they are in a hurry to get away. Sheep need to be ‘touched’, and we can only do that if we spend time with them. There is no shortage of pastors who are ‘fleecing’ the sheep, but the people need to be loved.

I talk to pastors all the time about getting the elders back at the doors, mingling with the sheep, and yet I find that many are still not doing it. This is not an old fashioned thing. It is a very good way to stay in touch with the people. Too often the pastors want to do all the praying, all the teaching, and they focus on everything except the real task of being with the people, interacting in fellowship and showing them that they are loved.

Those who are pastors should not be doing all the praying. They should be mingling with the sheep. Instead, they end up standing at the front with the same three or four people every Sunday. There is nothing wrong with allowing some of the deacons to pray for the sick and others who need prayer. If there is something they encounter that is really serious, then they can simply ask the person to wait until the pastors have done what they need to do out there among the sheep.

People can be disgruntled with the church they are in, but when they know that they are loved it is hard for them to

leave. They may not like the loudness or the softness of the music, they may not like the tempo of the music, or whatever the case may be, but when they know they are loved, it is hard for them to leave.

On the other hand, pastors may be doing everything that the people like except spending time with them, showing them that they are loved, and they will still leave the church. They may not even know why they are leaving, but they know that something is missing. When you ask them what is wrong they will say that nothing is wrong, that everything is great, and they do not know why they are leaving. Or, they cover this up by saying that God is leading them on. In many cases, if they were to honestly examine what they are feeling, they would discover that they do not feel loved, because the pastors do not love people.

**Sheep need to be ‘touched’,
and we can only do that if
we spend time with them.**

I love pastors who have time for the people. You will see them with the people all the time. After meetings they cannot get away because they are busy speaking to them and loving them. There are others who can stand up and preach well, but who have no time for the sheep. The people may be spellbound while the pastor is talking, but what they receive does not sustain them. Knowing that they are loved will sustain them.

I am so aware of the fact that we cannot teach people if we are not available to them. Unless we can love people, we are going to hurt them if we accept leadership, especially eldership. What I am trying to say is, do not rush off after meetings. Hang around and make time to touch the people.

My mother is over 80 and she goes to a church in South Africa that is made up mostly of people who are far younger than she is. The average age is probably about 40 years old. My mother loves that church because they love her. She bakes cakes and goes to the church office during the week to have a cup of coffee with them. The whole staff closes down, just for that 10 minutes, and most of them are available.

Now, you cannot have 50 people doing that every day, or you would get no work done. Illustrations do have weaknesses, but this does illustrate what I am trying to say. My mother may have little in common with that group of people socially, but you cannot get her to leave that church, because they love her.

One of the pastors, even as a young, unmarried man, would arrive at her house for tea with a bunch of flowers and a packet of biscuits. He bought them himself, not with money from the kitty. Why? He did it because he loved her. How does a person leave a church like that?

If only half of the leaders fell in love with the people and started to express that love, they could transform the church. No widow in the church would have to go through the frustration of con artists ripping them off. We could also rally enough people from within the church to take care of them when they needed things fixed, or needed advice on issues.

It is with things like this that the rubber meets the road. This is where the world is itching and we must scratch where they are itching. That does not mean that we pander to them. Neither are we talking about psychological manipulation; we are talking about loving people out of a heartfelt conviction.

Chapter 25

Elders Rule – Part 1

A vital responsibility that elders carry is that of rulership. As we look into this, however, we will find that it has very little to do with the worldly concept of ruling.

One verse that speaks of elders and rulership is 1 Timothy 5:17. There we read that, “*The **elders** that **rule** well are worthy of double honour, especially those who preach and teach,*” (King James Version). The New International Version speaks of the elders as being those who “***direct** the affairs of the church well.*”

This, then, is a part of the function that pastors carry, to direct the affairs of the church, to rule. This, and the other passages that speak of local church leadership, indicate that this task of oversight, or the administration of the local church, is the responsibility of the elders and not anyone else. The pattern given in the New Testament for church government is actually very clear, and yet much of the church today does not do it that way.

For example, many still think that a democratic model, where the congregation rules or administrates the affairs of the church, is right. In reality, whenever we allow a model to come into the church where the congregation has the final say, we allow heresy to come in. We have to understand this. A system where the congregation votes pastors in and votes them out, votes on their salary, votes on whether we will do this or that in the church is not simply one of a number

of acceptable alternatives for church government, but is heresy.

This type of model is simply not in line with the pattern of the New Testament, and neither are any denominational models or models that create hierarchies of any sort. That is why we must have the courage to change whatever is necessary. We must adjust whatever we are doing or thinking that is not in line with Scripture.

It may take a little time to do so while we teach and help the people to unlearn and relearn, but this is not an issue we can simply gloss over or ignore. Everything else we teach will be negatively affected while we allow something that is heresy to remain in the church. Wherever such adjustment is necessary, we should teach the people lovingly, gently, graciously and patiently that it is the responsibility of the elders to rule the church.

Let us move on to consider what ruling in the church entails. We find that there are three Greek words in the New Testament for ‘ruling’. The first one is *proistemi*, and there are three senses in which this word is used:

- In 1 Timothy 3:4-5 and in Romans 12:8 the picture that is painted is of someone standing in front of others, or going ahead of them in a leadership capacity. This is perhaps the most obvious sense, and we will comment further on this meaning in the next chapter.
- Secondly, it is a word that can be applied to the way that a father leads his family.
- The third sense is of someone who is over others in the Lord.

When we come to apply this to leadership teams in local churches, we see that one way in which elders “rule well” is when they ‘rule’ the way fathers would ‘rule’ their families. This should immediately make it clear to us that ‘ruling’ as

elders does not mean what the world generally understands by that word, or even what many in the church, including elders, understand by that word. The way that many ‘rule’ the church, and what the Bible teaches about ruling, are often two very different things. We tend to think of ‘ruling’ as being what a king, or even a despot or a dictator, would do. That is why ‘ruling’ is often seen in a negative light.

Leadership in a family context is, however, never dictatorial. It is not a rulership that insists on having everything ‘my way’ and refuses to let anyone else have any say. The same applies to rulership in the church. It is a ‘family’ word, and rulership should always be exercised with this in mind.

For instance, when we try to instil values into our families, we do not do so by being dictators. We teach and patiently try to help them to grasp the importance of that value system, because we want them to embrace those values freely. The same should be true of church leadership.

Rulership in the church is a family word, and it should always be exercised with this in mind.

When I pastored a church in Adelaide, one of the things that was a real struggle for me was that for the first while after we had begun to lead there, there was a red glow out in the entrance when we finished the meeting every Sunday night. That red glow came from those who still smoked and who were desperate for a cigarette after sitting through the meeting. They ran for the exit, stood there and lit up.

That meant that the pastors of other churches who were on their way home would drive past and see the red glow. As a result, the rumours were going around that our church was growing so quickly because we were liberal about these

things. The truth was that I knew that in order to teach them to be really free, I needed to give them time to grasp that properly.

I decided that I would live with what the pastors were thinking and the rumours they were spreading. I would rather teach the people to be properly free than attack them for smoking simply because I wanted to save my own reputation. They could say what they liked out there, but I loved those people enough not to try to make them give up smoking before they had a conviction to do so; I knew that it would not last. On the other hand, I knew that if I taught them to be free, then they would also be able to give up smoking and stay free. That is how I understood ‘ruling well’ on that issue.

Good fathers are not primarily concerned about how it reflects on them when their children do things wrong. Good fathers are more concerned about how that is going to affect their children in their future as they grow up. Unfortunately, many pastors cannot truthfully say that this is their motivation when they correct people in their church.

Correction is often given because the people have made the pastors look bad. Their motivation is, unfortunately, not because they want to save them from having to face the consequences of that type of behaviour in the future. They are actually motivated by a desire to ‘look good’, and lack a genuine, heartfelt concern for the people.

Godly rulership is one of the ‘most missing’ factors in the body of Christ today. It is too easy to say that we are concerned for the people. It is an entirely different thing for that to come from the heart. Ruling as an elder does include correction where necessary, but it should always be given with an authentic, sincere concern for the way in which wrong behaviour could affect those that we correct into the future.

So many people seem to change overnight when they become pastors. The people look at them and wonder what happened to them. Why did they suddenly become monsters?

The reason is often that they have never really understood what rulership in the church means. So many people who desire eldership cannot wait to get there in order to ‘rule’ the way they want to. As a consequence, they miss God’s way altogether.

Godly rulership is one of the ‘most missing’ factors in the body of Christ today.

If we find that we have that type of motive in us, then we need get on our knees before God and not give up until He has delivered us, no matter how long it takes. We need to give God time in His presence so that He can change us. Often truth is not burned into our hearts because, when we hear it, we simply get on with our lives, without giving God time to burn it into our hearts, and burn out whatever it is that stops the truth from being lived out in us.

Some who are reading this book may have heard what I am saying here years ago, but are not in leadership yet. The reason for that is either that they did not hear the call, they were never called, or they never embraced these truths and gave God time to help them to make them personal.

I know how much spending time with God has helped me to apply what I was taught. This is something that I have tried to do ever since I was saved. I would go home from the Presbyterian church I was saved in with the few things that I had grasped from the sermon, or the pastor’s notes, when I could get those. I would take that and get on my knees and I would stay there until it was life to me, until what was taught became part of my life. I would pray, I would cry out to God and I would give God time to deal with issues.

That seems to be missing in the body of Christ today. We expect everything to be instant, but the truth is that we do not know something simply because we have read it or heard it somewhere. The word ‘know’ is a word that speaks of an intimate knowledge of something. The first time it is used in the Bible, it is used in the context of Adam knowing his wife, the result of which is that she conceived. Think about the intimacy of that. We have to know God like that, and that can only happen when we are willing to allow time for the seed that He places into our lives to grow and produce fruit.

Often we are too busy running around ‘serving God’ to actually spend time with Him properly, and that is not a good thing. I do not think it is a godly way to live, either. Some time ago, I did a Bible study on activity and how it related to rest. I looked at God’s ways in this and worked my way through from Abraham, the other patriarchs, to the life of Jesus, Paul, and the book of Revelation. What I saw was that none of those who are given as examples in the Bible for us to follow knew the kind of busyness that we know.

This is evident from the first few chapters of the Bible. God came down and walked in the cool of the evening with Adam. What for? He came to have fellowship with this man who He had created. After the fall, ‘work’ as we know it was introduced for the first time, but even then, when you look at the lives of the patriarchs, it is clear that they were not running around all the time. They did not lead frantically busy lives

Jesus walked for hours with His disciples, and there would be times that they would stop and sit under a tree. As He spent time with the disciples, He would create opportunities to teach them. He would observe things around them and say, “See that?” and then He would teach them something based on what they saw.

They did not know this insane activity that we know today. They were not consumed by busyness. At the same time, we do not want to be lazy, and so I agree with Paul who said, “If

a man will not work, he shall not eat.” We also have to live out the things that are birthed by God in our spirit. That means work; doing things in response to God’s Word and direction. Our lives may be full, but in everything that we do we have to find God’s pace for our lives.

A number of years ago I began to learn how to slow down. Unfortunately that was due to an illness. Before that, I had been running to and fro throughout the face of the earth in the same way that many people are today. Being too busy doing things is often less productive and less effective than we think.

For instance, some may wonder why they are not seeing good leaders come through, but they never take time to ‘father’ them, to ‘impregnate’ them with the truth. As much as we need to learn to give God time so that we can come to ‘know’ the truth and to work it out fully in our own lives, we also need to take time with people and to work with them as a father would with his children, so that we can see the same thing happen for them. That is essential if the body of Christ is to have elders who “rule well.”

We come now to the third sense in which the word *proistemi* is used. An example of this is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, where it talks about elders as being those who are “*over you in the Lord.*” This does not refer to those who are above us in a hierarchical sense, though. 1 Peter 5:2-3 makes it clear that leaders are not to ‘lord it over’ the sheep, but to serve them.

What is conveyed in the passage from 1 Thessalonians is a sense of elders being those who are a protection in our lives. In the same way that I can have armour ‘over’ me, such as the breastplate of righteousness that is ‘over’ my heart, the word refers to elders who are over us in the Lord.

Loren Cunningham, founder of Youth with a Mission, gave one of the best illustrations of this that I have ever heard. He spoke of his experience of going into churches around the

world and finding that where the pastors were obsessed with money, the people were also obsessed with money. In other churches where the pastors were having affairs with women, he found that the people were also having affairs.

He then went on to talk of leadership being, in part, like an umbrella. When there are holes in the umbrella, it no longer offers protection. In the same way, when elders are not living a godly life, they are no longer protecting the sheep. When that happens, the enemy is sometimes able to come through the ‘holes’ of the umbrella that the leaders are meant to be as those who are ‘over them’ in the Lord.

Elders are not ‘over the people in the Lord’ in a hierarchical sense, but in the sense of being a protection for them.

When elders understand properly that God has put them in place to protect the people, then they will not dare to flirt with ‘fame, fortune, or females’ – or ‘males’ for those who are females. God is the ultimate shepherd, but He has ‘under shepherds’. He is the ultimate protector, but He has ‘under protectors’, in the form of elders. When elders truly love the people, they will not do anything that will remove that protection from them.

Very clearly, then, ‘ruling’ is not at all dictatorial. It is full of concern, motivated by love, and it provides the people of God with protection. We talked about loving the people in the chapter on developing our people skills but, while it is in part a skill, it is far more than that. It is a genuine, heartfelt and intense caring for the sheep. If we do not have that kind of care for the sheep, then it becomes very easy to abuse them and misuse them in one way or another. When we genuinely love them, however, we will take care to rule them well.

Chapter 26

Elders Rule – Part 2

The second Greek word for ruling is the word *hegeomai*, which simply means ‘to lead’, to go ahead of the people. The picture that it refers to is of the way in which an oriental shepherd would lead (or rule) his sheep by going ahead of them.

Those who have seen shepherds leading their sheep in Israel, in the busy streets of Jerusalem, in Bethlehem or elsewhere, will know that it is beautiful to see it happening literally. Above all the hustle and bustle of the traffic you will hear this noise, and then you see these sheep and their little feet are hitting the tarmac. There is a shepherd walking in front of them, and he is simply talking, and they are following him. He stops at the traffic signal and he keeps talking, and they all stop. Then the traffic signal changes to green and he changes his tone of voice, and they all start walking with him again, right across the street, until they get to the next green pasture. He is ruling those sheep.

The Bible does not say, “my sheep hear my voice as I drive them on before me.” Nor do we read, “my sheep hear my voice and will run as I chase them on my motorbike,” as they do in Australia. And neither does it say, “my sheep hear my voice and will move when the dogs start jumping on their backs, yapping and chasing them on.” In South Africa, the shepherds walk behind the sheep and they hit them with light branches and throw stones at them, small ones, to keep

them on track. In the Orient they do not know these ways. They simply walk in front of the sheep. “*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me*” (John 10:27).

Many pastors around the world are like South African or Australian shepherds. They are either using the equivalent of motorbikes and terrorising the sheep, or they are whipping and throwing stones at them to get them to go where they want them. Those stones can sometimes even be the Scriptures, which are ‘thrown’ at the people to get them in shape. This is not ruling as the Bible teaches it.

We are to walk before them and they follow us because they know we are committed to them, and that we are willing to lay down our lives for them. True rulership has the best interests of the people at heart. They should know that no matter what we are asking them to do, no matter how big the mountain to be climbed is, or how high the wall to be scaled is, we genuinely care for them.

Interestingly, the word *hegeomai* is also the same word that is used of a general leading an army. I have served time in the armed forces and have noticed an interesting difference between lower and higher ranking officers. The lower ranking officers generally scream, shout and pull rank a whole lot more than higher ranking officers. High ranking officers, such as generals, tend to be quite secure about their rank and so do not scream at the troops all the time. There may be exceptions, but generally they are people who know who they are and are secure in that. They have ‘arrived’. They are not ‘wannabes’ and are far easier to talk to.

That is how it is in a modern day context. In the older contexts of pre-New Testament and early New Testament days, most of those who were generals took great care of their soldiers. They knew that without them they were not going to win any battles. For that reason, they made sure they were clothed, fed, looked after, and they did not let them get away

with things that would undermine their effectiveness, either personally or as a part of an army.

As rulers, we should be like shepherds who walk in front of the sheep, who are committed to them, and are willing to lay down our lives for them.

There is a third Greek word for ‘ruling’ – the word *poimaino* – and it is found in the references to leaders in the church in Hebrews 13:7, 17 and 24. This word sounds a lot like *poimain*, the word for ‘pastor’, but it is a very strong word that has to do with discipline.

Discipline is an aspect of shepherding that is also very important. Phillip Keller, who grew up as a shepherd and was later on a pastor, has written on this aspect of shepherding. He tells of how, on occasions, shepherds have to actually break the leg of a sheep because that sheep constantly strays and can potentially lead other sheep astray with it. That must be hard for a shepherd to do, but this ‘discipline’ is then completed as the shepherd carries that sheep around on his shoulders until the leg has healed.

Good shepherds (and fathers) are gentle, caring and always motivated by love, and that also applies to this important part of ruling called ‘discipline’. I saw that with my children. Discipline lets them know that they cannot get away with things that are not right. It changes the way they think about what they do. It was because of the love in my heart for them that I would discipline them, as painful as that may have been, when they would not respond to the love that they received before the discipline came. It is necessary to show them that we mean business, for their own sakes.

In the same way, there are times when we have to discipline people in the body of Christ. It comes with the territory of ruling well. While I believe that the motivation has to be love, care, and a willingness to lay down our lives and to die for them if need be, we must never see that as meaning that we are always going to be ‘Mr Nice Guy’.

Our motivation cannot be to have everybody like us, because then we will always try to avoid offending anyone. We will then tend not to say things that they do not like, and never ask them to do anything they do not like doing. This will not do. We have to love them strongly and consistently enough to bring discipline and be firm when it is required.

There were times when I had to tell my children to sit in the bedroom, close the door, and study for two hours, and there was no debate about whether they felt like doing that or not. They had to finish school and so they had to study, whether they liked it or not. This kind of firmness may have raised questions in their minds about whether I really was a loving father. Did I not care about the fact that they did not like sitting there, that they would rather be playing cricket or tennis? I could not let their perception of that influence my decision, though, because I did know what was better, and I wanted that for them because I loved them.

Shepherds have to love the people strongly and consistently enough to bring discipline and be firm when it is required.

At times we have to take firm, decisive action with the sheep. We cannot be concerned about whether they think we are ‘Mr Nice Guy’, or even whether they think we are

amongst the most demonic people on earth. When discipline is necessary it is not loving to withhold or avoid it.

May I also say here, though, if you, as a leader, cannot receive discipline when it is required, then how can you exercise it? That is something that worries me about many of the leaders who have fallen and been exposed in recent times. They have affairs or fall into various types of immorality, but when it comes time for them to be placed under discipline, they will not submit.

They say that the ‘work’ they are leading is too big for them to be placed under discipline for 18 months; that the work would fall apart if they had to step down. What I would say in response to that is then they do not really have anything that is a work of God. What they have is a group of people that are going to be even worse off than they were, because they will not receive discipline and step aside for a season.

To my mind, we cannot exercise discipline if we are not willing to have it applied to our own lives. We have to accept this if we are going to pastor a church. If we do something wrong as a pastor and it affects the people, then it has to be brought out in the open. It does not have to be brought out in the open for the sheep, but it often does when it is a shepherd who has fallen.

Chapter 27

Elders Teach The People

The same verse that speaks of those who rule well (1 Timothy 5:17) says that we are to honour those who are our leaders, “*especially those who teach,*” implying that they are able to teach. In 1 Timothy 3:2 and in Titus 1:9, we read again that those who are chosen to be elders should be able to teach.

Preaching and teaching in the church is primarily the responsibility of the elders. There may be others who also teach and preach, but this will always remain the responsibility of the elders. It is not even the task of the Apostolic/Prophetic, or trans-local team that the church relates to, as important as it may be to expose the people to that input. Elders are to teach their people, and anyone else that teaches adds to what they carry as a primary responsibility.

Not all elders are able to teach to the same extent, but all must be able to teach to some extent, even if they cannot hold an audience for hour after hour. That means that they must be able to communicate the truth of the Word of God in a way that people can understand it and know how to live it out. Being able to teach does not only mean that they can communicate verbally, it means that they are able to impart truth and to impact people.

For us to be able to do that – to be able to teach – we must ourselves be thoroughly taught in the Word of God. We must be familiar with it, although not in the wrong sense. We must

know what it stands for; we must know what it teaches and we must be well equipped theologically. If we are not, or if we only know a few selected texts, we may mislead God's people without even knowing it.

Preaching and teaching in the church is primarily the responsibility of the elders.

Those who call themselves Jehovah Witnesses really only know a few selected texts and they base their whole argument on their understanding of those texts. They take the teachings of Russell and reproduce them with all the inaccuracies of his interpretation of the Greek and Hebrew texts. It would actually be more accurate to say these people are Russellites, because they are not truly witnessing for Jehovah.

They appear to know the Bible, but they do not really know the whole Bible. Most Christians are scared to tackle them because they seem to know so much. The truth is that they only know a few texts that are key to what they believe, and then those texts are interpreted in a particular way that supports their beliefs. As much as they appear to know what they are talking about, and appear to be able to teach, what they believe is a distorted view of the Word of God.

Most of us would not handle the Word of God that way, but we are not doing much better if we only know a few key texts, even if we are interpreting them accurately and are not corrupting them as the Russelites do. To some we may even appear to be able to teach, but that would not be the truth.

We need to be true students of the Word if we are going to teach the Word effectively. We have to know what the whole Bible teaches, and we need to know how to interpret it correctly. This begins with a love for the Word.

You can very quickly tell whether someone loves God's Word, or whether they really know God's Word, by how quickly they are offended. Those who know and love God's Word are not easily offended. Those who only know a few key texts, however, are often offended very quickly. As soon as someone stretches them outside of what they know (those few key texts), they begin to get offended.

People like this are then prone to become angry and either defensive, or to start pressing their point too strongly in order to keep the discussion within the confines of what they know. Too many who are behind pulpits are like that. They know a few texts well, but when you stretch them beyond that they lose their temper; they show their true colours. We are not to be like that. We must truly know the Word.

We must not fool around with God's people by trying to get away with less than this. To be a pastor we must study to show ourselves approved, a workman unto God, rightly dividing the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15, paraphrased). This verse does not talk of 'a' word of truth, but 'the' Word of truth, indicating that we must know the whole Word. In other words, we should know the Old Covenant as well as the New Covenant. While we may not necessarily be a pulpit figure, we must be able to systematically teach the Word, and we must be able to teach on every subject contained in it, even if it is only in smaller groups.

Those who know and love God's Word are not easily offended.

Acts 6:4 tells us that leaders in the church should devote themselves to the ministry of the Word and to prayer. As much as we study the Word in order to minister it, we also need to spend time in the Word in order to be impacted by

it ourselves. We need to make a distinction between our own devotional time, quiet time, or whatever we call it, and studying the Word. These are two different times. Every one of us needs to get alone with God for a devotional time on a daily basis, and every one of us needs to find some time to study the Word as well.

I try not to study the Word when I am alone with God in my daily devotional time. I do spend time in the Word during my devotional time, but this is a time for God to speak to me and for me to speak to Him and to worship Him. He comes to affirm things, to encourage, correct or convict me. For that to happen I need to give Him a chance to speak.

This is not the time to go into the Greek or Hebrew meanings of Words, but is a time in which we allow God to bring adjustment to our lives. At other times we do devote ourselves to the study of the Word, and then we can look at the Greek and Hebrew and consult commentaries and the like.

I would advise you to get some good commentaries for yourself, as well as an interlinear text and a lexicon of sorts. W.E. Vine's publication on New Testament and Old Testament words is useful. Find a commentary that is not too heavy-going, and that does not have too much of a bias one way or another. Matthew Henry's commentary is one that is not too difficult to grasp. He did not simply look at the Greek and the Hebrew, but also tried to apply it to life. Others that are useful, and are a lot more up to date, are the NIV, the IBF and Wiersbe's commentaries.

None of these are replacements for the Word and neither should they end up doing no more for us than looking impressive on our bookshelf. We need to work through them diligently, but always to use them as aids for our study of the Word.

Anyone who feels called to eldership, but is not prepared to study the Word in order to know it and love it, should lay

down that call to be an elder. Either that, or ask God to change your heart. If you are not prepared for God to change your heart, however, lay it down. Stop fooling around. Determine to rather go and do something else than to do damage to God's people. I do not want to be ungracious in that, but this is a serious thing, and there are simply too many people in pulpits who only know a few key texts. We must be able to teach the whole Word.

Anyone who feels called to eldership, but is not prepared to study the Word in order to know it and love it, should lay down that call to be an elder.

We will look at fashioning and forming teams a little later on in this book, but one of the most remarkable aspects of how Jesus dealt with His disciples was that He spent relaxed, unhurried time with them. During some of that time He allowed them to ask questions. In other words, they were able to tap His brain, to get close to Him, and ask the questions that they really wanted to ask.

That is a good model with respect to teaching – to make room for people to ask questions. I believe that is possibly where people learn the most; when they can ask questions. If, however, a preacher does not know the Word of God, if he only knows what he prepares to preach on a Sunday, then he cannot make room for people to ask him questions. If someone throws a curved ball by asking a question outside of what he knows, he will be stuck.

That is one reason why many preachers use the pulpit as a kind of psychological barrier between themselves and the people. They use it to establish themselves as the one who does the talking, and to keep the people quiet, and especially

to stop them from asking questions. A pulpit should only be there to hold Bibles and notes, but it has become much more than that to some.

The reason that Paul spoke to women in the early church about only asking questions of their husbands once they got home was because asking questions was very much a part of the way things were done then. They did not know the kind of teaching where we all sit and have fellowship with the back of someone else's head, and watch one person's (the preacher's) face. They asked questions.

Paul was not trying to stop that. He was trying to ensure, in an environment where much two-way communication was going on, that there was order. Some women were being contentious, and that is what Paul was addressing. They were to refrain from bringing these questions up in the meeting and causing division. Those questions could be asked at home. His reprimand was not intended to put a ban on all questions in the church. He was merely dealing with it in a wise way. Questions are a good thing, and elders need to both make room for this and to make sure that they are equipped to answer them.

Chapter 28

Elders Equip The People

Elders are not only to lead and to teach; they are also to equip others to do the work of the ministry. In Ephesians 4:11-12 we read, *“It was He [Jesus] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, some to be pastors and teachers.”* What is the reason for that? It is “for the equipping of the saints to do the work of the ministry.”

Something I did often in the churches that I pastored was to ask the people to make a list of all the things that they thought that I should be doing; all the ministry things. Their lists would include preaching, visiting the sick, taking Mrs Brown to collect her pension, taking others to the hospital, and the like. Once they had their lists together, I would tell them that if they did not start doing those same things soon, then I was a failure. The reason that I gave for saying that, was that my job was to equip them for ministry, not to do all the ministry myself.

That is how we should understand the task of the eldership – to equip the people for ministry and not to do all of the ministry themselves. That means that they have to be able to do far more than tell stories, quote Scripture, or even to be theologically accurate. Equipping the people requires the anointing of God to impact and to impart what they are saying.

Please understand, though, that if there is going to be true ministry, where lives are changed, it is not only the preacher who needs to be anointed. There has to be an anointing on those who hear as well. One of the biggest problems in the church today is that while we have anointed preachers, we do not always have anointed hearers. Preachers should desire this, because without this they may have very little lasting impact. Preachers are often so taken up and consumed with the anointing on their own lives that they do not even notice that nothing really enduring happens when they preach.

The task of the eldership is to equip the people for ministry and not to do all of the ministry themselves.

People also handle that anointing incorrectly. They are wowed by the immediate impact of the ‘anointing’, and all they want to do is to get to the front so that the anointed preacher can touch them. As long as they can fall down, laugh, get goose bumps, get healed, be baptised in the Holy Spirit, or have some kind of an experience, they are satisfied, even if that has nothing to do with what was preached. Even worse than that is the fact that we who are leaders allow this to happen.

I am convinced, from years and years of studying the Word of God, plus the absolute conviction about this that the Spirit has put in my heart, as well as from my observation of what is happening in church after church around the world, that we do not always need to have ‘altar calls’. I am convinced that if there is a genuine anointing present on both the preacher and the hearers, then most of the time we do not have to have the people come up to the front in order to receive ministry. There are times when this is the right thing to do, but it is not

always necessary. They can either stand where they are and allow the Holy Spirit to touch them as they respond to the word, or they can respond as the word is preached.

I encourage you to apply this in your own life. Do not wait until the end of the meeting to come out and have hands laid on you. As the preacher speaks, ministry can take place. You can respond to the word as it comes and allow the Spirit of God to break something in your life, because you are drawing the life of God there and then.

This is what we see in the life and ministry of Jesus. He seldom called people to the front, if ever. Neither did the apostles. As we study their lives, their ministry, and their *modus operandi*, it seems that what is in the Bible and what is happening in the church today are worlds apart. Sometimes we get this right, but then someone will come along and change it and the people go rushing forward again.

I am not saying at all that there is anything wrong with bringing people forward. We do need to lay hands on the sick, and there are times when an impartation is required that comes through the laying on of hands. I am simply saying that it is often not necessary in order for enduring, life changing ministry to take place. I also think that we can lose sight of what God really wants to do, because people coming forward to receive ministry creates a focus on the anointing that the preacher has. There is much more than this that God wants to give in terms of anointing.

As a part of our commitment to seeing people equipped for works of service, we should trust God to place an anointing on those who are listening as well as those who are ministering in any way. Trust Him to work with everyone, in every seat; to save them if they are not saved, to break bondages where that is required, and to transform and equip them. Ask Him for an anointing that will break yokes on the music team. Pray that any person who testifies, and any person who does anything at any point throughout that whole meeting, will be anointed

and have an impact. Pray that there will be an impartation that will change everyone, including the preacher.

Elders should want to see the people equipped and be satisfied with nothing less. If that is not happening, then they are wasting their time. That might sound a little too strong, but it really does feel like a waste of time if no one is being equipped for ministry. Those who are going to be pastors should have that in their hearts. They should be so convinced of God's intention for every Christian to be a priest (1 Peter 2:9), that they are only satisfied when that is happening.

I believe that this is what we see happening in Acts 8:1-5. These verses indicate that when the Christians in Jerusalem were scattered because of persecution, they were able to preach the word where they went. What this implies is that they did not simply sit and listen to the apostles' preaching while they were still in Jerusalem. They did not only take notes. They responded to the word and allowed it to transform them.

As a result, they were equipped and were able to reproduce what they heard with an anointing that was able to break yokes, and to impact and impart to those they ministered to. In the same way we all need to be equipped and able to go out and minister. That is God's pattern for His Church, and He tasks elders, as a part of their calling, to work with Him to produce this in the life of every Christian.

Chapter 29

Elders Prepare And Release Leaders

As we saw in the last chapter, all the saints need to be equipped for ministry, because we are all priests. Some are, however, also going to be called to leadership, and it is the task of the elders to both see that they are prepared for leadership, and to release them into that leadership.

We will come back to the issue of releasing leaders later on in this chapter, but first we will look at one particular aspect of how eldership can make sure that potential leaders get all the preparation that they need, that of exposing them to the impartation that comes through the Apostolic/Prophetic team to which the elders relate.

The elders of each church have a primary role to play in equipping leaders for leadership, but not an exclusive role. The role of trans-local ministry in equipping leaders is also vital, and elders should see to it that opportunity is given for this to take place.

This exposure must always be initiated or endorsed by eldership, and no trans-local team should ever bypass the elders as if they were irrelevant. Neither should elders deliberately leave all leadership training to this team. The input of both the elders and Apostolic/Prophetic team members is required to train leaders.

Elders should be able to find many opportunities to spend time with potential leaders in order to train them, but there

are not as many opportunities for input from trans-local team members. That is why we have to teach the people to make it a high priority in their lives when there are team members in town for a regional training time, or a similar event.

The role of trans-local ministry in equipping leaders is vital, and elders should see to it that opportunity is given for this to take place.

We should then make it as easy as possible for them to be a part of that, even if it means closing some of our own meetings down to facilitate that. It is essential that we participate in what is happening in the context of our city. If elders are not prepared to pay the price for that, they will not be able to fully equip leaders for leadership. Even having team members come into our church will not make up for what is lost if we do not make sure they are equipped for the bigger picture, something that trans-local events are specifically designed to do.

Something I would like to mention, while we are discussing corporate times of training with a trans-local team, is that when God looks at a city or town, He only sees one church. Consider what would happen if Paul, who understood God's heart concerning the Church in the city, were alive today. If he were to write a letter, he would write to 'the' church in a city. He would not write only to one church, not even to the biggest church in a city, and neither would he write to the 'churches' in the city.

For him the 'church in the city' would include all the local expressions of church in that city, because that is the way God sees it. All of the congregations in a city make up one church in that city. What would be required, if Paul wrote such a

letter, is that the churches would need to come together to hear what Paul had to say. If we do not think that way, we are restricted in our understanding of God's plan and pattern. If we do not adequately expose our leaders to the bigger picture with that understanding, then we will keep them restricted as well.

Paul would never have been able to go to each and every home in Corinth where there was a little church meeting. He would have spent his life in one place if he tried to do that. He understood clearly, though, that each was a part of the city church, and so what he would do was call them all together. I am sure, too, that they came, and that they did not only have the turnouts that we have. We think that we are doing well when between five and ten percent of the people come. New Testament church leaders would have equipped the people to know that those times together were vitally important opportunities and should not be missed.

I know that not all church leaders think this way yet. Some have built up a name and a reputation, and are not prepared to make room for anything that they feel would spoil that, even if it is a Biblical thing. I would say that leaders who feel that way should rather not get involved in eldership at all. They are worried about what would happen if they closed a meeting, that they would lose some finance because they are not able to receive the offering, or that there is a possibility of losing a few people who may have visited. Actually, that is something that comes with the territory when you lead a church.

I have heard the excuse used that they are too concerned about one soul being saved to close a meeting down. Jesus, who was more concerned about one soul getting saved than we are, sometimes packed up suddenly and left the place He was in, went elsewhere, and never came back. We are only talking about one meeting every now and then, and an excuse

like this does not recognise the sovereignty of God or the heart of God correctly.

A person's salvation is not only dependent on us. God is not going to let someone off the hook because they came on Sunday and the doors were closed. It is not as if He looks at that person and says, "Oh well, that church blew your opportunity to go to heaven. You will have to go to hell because that church closed its doors for that Sunday night that you were going to go to church." That is not how God is. We can trust the sovereignty of God, and His care, concern and love for people.

I am not saying that we should close our meetings down for every little thing that is happening around town. I am talking about making sure that we are together with those that we have a primary relationship with. This should be a trans-local team that has Biblical precedents. Making sure that we are at the city events that they facilitate is a necessary part of making sure that there is reality to our relationship with them.

We do not do the same for every visiting evangelist, teacher, etc. that comes through town. We cannot keep closing meetings for all of that, because we do not have a primary relationship with those people. In fact, we have no relationship with them at all. That does not mean that we do not go to those events. We can go to those that have a genuine anointing, as long as there are no other meetings at our own local church. All of this is something that we teach as we prepare people for leadership.

Preparation for leadership is still not the whole story, though. Those who are trained and ready should be released into their call and ministry by the eldership. This is more important to talk about than what some may think. Preparation without release will have a negative effect on those being trained. Many churches have had an abundance of leadership training for years, but they never get to the

point where they release anyone. You will often find in those situations that the people who are coming (or used to come) to the training have lost heart. When that happens it is not likely that they will continue to come anymore. I would not keep coming either if after 5, 6, or 7 years there was still no release. I would wise-up after a few months.

Those who are trained and ready should be released into their call and ministry by the eldership.

I believe we need to be honest with people about this process, though. If someone has been coming to leadership training month after month, and in my heart I know that he is never going to make it, I would sit down and tell him that. It is really great that he has a desire for that, and that he keeps on coming, but I would tell him that, as best as I can discern the heart of God, he does not have the anointing or the call.

I would not stop him from still coming to the training if he wants to. It is wonderful if he still wants to be equipped in a general sense, but, in order to be faithful to him, I would not allow him to continue with false expectations. That way he is only going to be hurt at some stage. It may hurt him if I tell him that, but not as much as he would be if he faces the disappointment years later.

Even so, I would always make it clear that this is only my feeling. This is the best that I can discern God's will, but I would love him to prove me wrong. I would not shut the door on him, because God may still do something that I do not know anything about yet. I only want to be faithful now, but that does not make it final.

I have had to do that with some people, and some have been hurt, but it was never my intention to hurt them. It

has always been my intention to save them from hurt. With some there was actually a call to leadership as far as I could tell, but, in spite of the fact that they had been coming to the training for years, there were a few key issues that they could not get to grips with; a few adjustments that they did not seem to be able to embrace. In those cases I had to be honest with them about that because I wanted them to see that, unless they could change, they were really shutting the door on themselves. This has to be done in order to be faithful to people.

The goal of the training is, after all, to release people into their call and ministry, and we must be very honest about this. We must not fool around with God's people and talk as if we have 100 potential leaders coming to training, when 70 of them have been coming for years, and we know that we are never going to release them. In honesty we may only have 30 potential leaders, even though 100 people are attending the training.

I am so tired of seeing God's people have a hope built up, only for it to be smashed, until that hope is so deferred that they are sick in their hearts – and still the leadership allows the game to go on. If we are pastors we have to break those cycles. Be bold and courageous, but be loving and gentle. Be honest, but do not crush hope. Do not dangle carrots in front of people and give them false hope, but do not leave them without hope either. That may sometimes be difficult to do, but that is what pastors are called to.

Chapter 30

Elders Pray For And With The Flock

Elders should be devoted to prayer in general. There are all sorts of things that are happening in our church, our city, our country, and in the nations that elders should be praying for regularly, but I do not plan to cover all of that in this book. In this chapter and the next, I want to look at two specific areas of prayer; one being prayer related to the flock, and the other being prayer related to the sick.

Acts chapter 6 highlights prayer as one of the primary responsibilities of the church leaders. Although the church leaders in question were not elders at that stage, because they still had to come to understand God's pattern for leadership in the Church, they were a sort of prototype of elders. As such, they serve as an example for us of what church leaders should do.

That passage in Acts 6 speaks of a dispute that emerged between the widows of the Jews and the Greek believers. The people called on their leaders to take care of this, but they chose not to get involved directly. I believe that is because they understood that, even though the dispute was a serious matter, they could not allow that to draw them away from their primary responsibilities – prayer and the ministry of the Word.

Prayer remains one of the most important things that elders should do. They need to pray much for the flock, and

they also need to make time to pray with the flock. Prayer is often one of the first things that gets left behind as we encounter various kinds of distractions. As we see, Acts 6 illustrates one of these, the temptation to get involved with things that should be the responsibility of someone else.

Success and busyness, and these often go hand in hand, can also hinder us from praying. I have seen how even perceived success can have that effect. The more a person seems to be successful to the people and to him or herself, the less time they have for prayer. So often, too, we hear those who are elders talking about how busy they are, and how there are so many people who want time with them that they do not have time to pray.

Prayer is often one of the first things that gets left behind as we encounter various kinds of distractions.

I understand how this can happen, but it is never acceptable that it does. Anyone who is, or who is going to be, an elder needs to make prayer for the people a non-negotiable part of what they do every day. When a church is below 100 people, then the lead (visionary) elder can pray for everyone by name every day. Once it gets beyond 100 members, then there should be other elders who come onto team with them, and they can then work out a way between them to continue to pray for every person who is a part of the flock, by name, every day, without making it a dogmatic, organisational task.

I tried to do that as a team leader, but the team eventually became too large for me to pray for everyone by name every day. Even though it became impracticable to do so anymore, I never wanted to make any excuse for not finding a way to do this as often as it was possible. At the same time, I did

not want to become organisational and begin to manage this with computer printouts or the like.

Computers can be used to help us in ministry, but we should never allow a computer program to be what determines when and who we pray for. That is an organisational way of doing things, and the church is not an organisation. All life and ministry in the church should be organic. Some pastors end up being directed by the computer as to who they will visit at any particular time. There are even leaders, who look successful in natural terms, who are teaching that this is the way that it should be done

I think that computers have many benefits, but I have also seen how pastors can become tied to their computers. I have been into the offices of many of the churches that we relate to as a team, only to find the pastors sitting at their computers. Often they are not even working, but are playing games on the computer. They give more time to the computer than they give to the people, to the sheep. Computers are there to help, not to direct our lives. We must use them and not allow them to use us.

Getting back to our discussion on prayer: we are to pray for the people and we must never allow anything to become a substitute for that. We also need to find some time to pray **with** them. The prayer that Jesus prayed for His disciples in John 17 He prayed while they were with Him. We call the prayer He taught the disciples in Matthew 6 the Lord's Prayer, but I think that John 17 is the Lord's Prayer. There He was not only praying for them, He was praying with them. We can use many of the times that we are together with our leaders and the people to do the same.

Those who are lead elders can pray with the other elders in an elder's meeting. Pray for them and their wives one by one while they are there with you. We can also pray with the people while we are together on Sundays. There is nothing wrong with leaving the pulpit during the meeting to go and

pray with some of the people. Open up the possibility for this and listen to the Holy Spirit. As He leads, go across, lay hands on those He directs you to, and pray with them.

In other words, we are not only to be praying in our closet. There are also times when we need to be praying with the people and for them. Jesus, the perfect Elder, the perfect Pastor, the perfect Bishop, modelled this for us.

Chapter 31

Elders Pray For The Sick

One particular area of prayer that elders are called to give attention to is prayer for the sick. This much is clear from James 5:14 which says, *“Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders. Let the elders anoint him with oil and let them pray, and the prayer of faith will heal the sick.”* It is therefore a responsibility of the elders to pray for the sick, but we do need to understand the context for that given in the Bible. In the first place, we do not actually find the elders offering to pray for the sick. What we do see is that those who are sick ask the elders to come and pray for them.

Secondly, we see here that the local church is where God wants people to receive healing. We have lost much of that and have often taught the people something else altogether. We have taught them to go to healing meetings, like the ones that Benny Hinn has, if they need healing. I only use him as an example because he is so well known. While I do not want to speak against what people like Benny Hinn are able to achieve, we have to see that God wants to heal people in their local churches. In fact, that is the first place that they should come when they need healing.

We are, however, often so intimidated by the ‘success’ of those who we consider to have a healing ministry that we are hesitant to pray for the sick. May I share with you a perspective on that, and ask that you do not misunderstand what I am saying?

When we read about people like Smith Wigglesworth, we do not realise that most of the books written about them and their healing ministry leave out the accounts of the many people that they prayed for who did not get healed. What we do find in those books is one success story after the other.

It is a responsibility of the elders to pray for the sick, and the local church is where God wants people to receive healing.

Much the same is true for those who are considered to have healing ministries today. I have been to a Benny Hinn meeting and I saw many, many of those who arrived in wheelchairs being wheeled out in wheelchairs. Many who were crippled, who came in with walking sticks, or were asthmatics, walked out without being healed.

That does not in any way mean that Benny Hinn does not have a valid ministry; there are many who are healed at his meetings. The fact is, that men and women who work in that type of environment pray for so many more people than elders do, and as a result, they seem to be having more success than elders are.

If we were to work out a fair comparison, we would more than likely find that most of them do not have much more success, percentage wise, than what elders do. What happens is that elders are so intimidated by the 'success' that those other men and women seem to have that they do not pray for the sick, even though the Bible says that they should. The Bible does not tell the sick to go to or call for the passing evangelist, no matter how great he is. It tells them to call for the elders.

Please do not interpret what I am saying as judgement against those who have healing ministries. All that I am trying to do is direct us back to the pattern that God gives us in the Bible, and to exhort those who are elders not to sow the wrong things. Teach your people to call for the elders, but if they do happen to be at a healing meeting and are healed, thank God for the bonus.

Do not, however, allow them to believe that is only where healing is can happen, because the Bible says that it is supposed to happen through the local church. Let us work with God to change the face of the church back to what he wants it to be, but without being in any way derogatory toward those who do things differently.

Another point that needs to be made with regard to praying for the sick has to do with the use of anointing oil. As far as I understand the Bible, it is the elders who anoint those who are sick with oil. I find no evidence that supports anyone else being given this prerogative by God. That does not mean, however, that only elders can pray for the sick. There are gifts of healings that are given to people other than the elders. In the Body, however, unless there is someone present who has such a gift of healing, God's way is for the elders to anoint those who ask them to with oil. Only the elders can do that, but anyone can pray for the sick.

**As far as I understand the Bible,
it is the elders who anoint those
who are sick with oil.**

The habit that some Christians have developed of carrying a little bottle of oil around with them, and then anointing anyone who is sick with it is simply not Biblical. There is, however, nothing to stop them from taking God at His Word,

which says that we will lay hands on the sick and that they will recover. This is a sign that He said would follow those who believe.

In summary, then, anyone can pray for the sick in response to the Word of God, and He does not only give gifts of healing to elders. Yet, it is a specific task of elders to pray for those who are sick and who call on them, and to anoint them with oil when they do pray for them. Those who are sick should also see this as God's way of doing things, and not ignore this and go running off to someone else for healing.

Chapter 32

Elders Feed The Flock

In the same way that sheep need good green grass for food, the 'flock' that we lead needs good food, and it is the elders, who are shepherds, who must see to it that they are well nourished. What does it mean, then, to prepare good food, fresh green grass, for the sheep?

We sometimes think that in order to get fresh grass (or fresh bread, if we were using another popular analogy) we need to continually wait on God in order to discover something that no one else has discovered yet. That is not what it takes to get good food for the sheep, though. Finding and being able to give the sheep green grass does not mean that we have to find new truth.

Much of what we teach will have been taught before, but it is still good food, provided we are not merely regurgitating something we have read or heard. In order for what we bring to the sheep to be fresh green grass to them, it has to be something that we have truly assimilated into our own lives. When we eat food our bodies assimilate some of that. It is broken down, and that which is good for the body is absorbed and becomes a part of us. Whatever is not absorbed is discarded as waste.

Similarly, we should be assimilating that which we learn and allowing that which is good to become a part of us. Another way to put this is that we move beyond being hearers to becoming doers of the Word. When we have done that,

we have something to give to someone else that is like fresh green grass. Even if we have only heard or learnt something today, it can become green grass if we allow it to become a part of us.

In order for what we bring to the sheep to be fresh green grass to them, it has to be something that we have truly assimilated into our own lives.

Too many people are taking what they hear on tapes, from another pulpit, or what they read in books, and are accumulating information without letting it become part of them. When we try to teach something like that to others, then no matter how good that message may be when we preach it, we are not giving them anything that is really fresh. It is actually nothing more than regurgitated, half digested stuff, and that is never pleasant or helpful; it is not suitable food for the flock.

Unfortunately, that is often what is happening on Sundays, because preachers are reading books, watching videos, listening to tapes and then simply regurgitating that for the people. Then we wonder why the people are not growing and healthy. It does not take too much of a bad diet for them to be going downhill health-wise, especially if that is all they are getting Sunday after Sunday.

Bible Colleges often produce much the same result. They feed so much so quickly to their students that there is no hope of them getting it all in. In spite of that, once they have graduated, they receive a diploma or a degree, and are then supposed to be fit to feed the people and to pastor them. The truth is that most of them are nowhere near ready to do any of that after a few years of Bible College.

Bible Colleges do not make anyone into a shepherd and neither do they truly test anyone's ability to be an elder. They were certainly not the route to being trained and released in the New Testament church. In fact, there is nothing in the Bible to support the role that Bible Colleges play in most modern churches.

The closest you get to anything resembling a 'college' was the school of the prophets, and those were definitely not Bible Colleges. They were simply bands of prophets moving around with the 'principal prophet' watching him, observing him, imitating him, asking him questions and learning from demonstrations of the prophetic office.

The training and releasing of people into eldership, or any leadership role for that matter, should take place within the life of the local church. We are told in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 what to look for in those who are going to be elders, and nothing is said there about diplomas or degrees. These passages talk about lifestyle issues, which are not the kind of thing that we can tell from a person's life simply by looking at their academic qualifications.

Even if we invited a person to spend two months with us in the church, it would still not be enough to fully determine what his lifestyle truly is. We can do that with those who 'grow up' in their walk with God in the local church, though.

We see a man pressing through when his marriage goes through a rocky patch, and then we know that he is indeed the husband of one wife. We see his children go through rebellious stages and that he does not quit on them, but brings them through, and then we know that he can manage his own household.

We are able to watch them grow over a significant period of time, and we can see from the way that they live among us whether they have assimilated truth or not. We know, from what we have seen in their lives, whether they can teach and

can feed the flock or not, and we do not base that judgement on a piece of paper.

We can go on, but the point is that elders need to have the truth in their hearts. It must be a part of their lives because they carry a primary responsibility for seeing that the sheep are fed. We can see how important this is to God from the conversation that Jesus has with Peter on the beach after His resurrection.

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep.

John 21:15-17

The very nature of Jesus' questions make it clear that He is commissioning Peter afresh as a man who loves Him, and who has demonstrated His commitment to Him just before this conversation by jumping into the water and swimming ashore the moment He realised it was Jesus on the shore.

He draws Peter into verbalising that commitment, and then entrusts Him with what is unmistakably very important to Jesus. He does not say, "because you love me go out there and lead the sheep," or "go and administrate the church and preach." What He entrusts Peter with (and, by implication, those who lead in the church) is to feed His sheep; to care for them and feed them the spiritual food that they need.

Jesus wants His people to grow in their effectiveness in ministry and in maturity. As much as it is primarily the elders' task to see that they get the spiritual food that will enable this, we must be careful to teach them that, if the only food they get is from us, they are going to have a rather unbalanced diet. It is of vital importance that they feed from the Word themselves, and then also from us and others who are trustworthy teachers, and we can help them to make the decisions about who that would be.

The same is true for those of us who teach. We also need to be fed from the Word and from others. Whatever we need to be preaching on is the very nourishment that we need to draw from the Word and from others. The Word is always to be the most important source of nourishment to us, but there are some outstanding teachers that have given us much that is useful.

Jesus wants His people to grow in their effectiveness in ministry and in maturity.

I would recommend any of A.W. Tozer's books, J.I. Packer's book, *Knowing God*, A.W. Pink's *Attributes of God*," Oswald Chambers' book, *My Utmost for His Highest*, books by Andrew Murray and F.B. Meyer and *Foundations of the Faith* by Derek Prince. We should allow what these writers have taught to become food that supplements the main diet of the Word and enables us to become well grounded in the whole counsel of God.

Some who are in pulpits around the world are not well grounded. There are some preachers who are not even sure of their own salvation. When things are going well, then they feel that they are saved, but when things are tough, they

doubt their salvation. Let me ask this: when a man has a fight with his wife are they still married? Does he have to ask her to marry him again? Of course not. Their marriage is not annulled simply because they had a fight.

That is how some people think about their salvation. When they feel good they feel saved, but when they do not feel good they feel as if the Word of God has been annulled. It cannot be annulled, and it teaches that we can know, without wavering, that we have eternal salvation. Pastors have to be grounded in this so that their people can be grounded.

This is true for far more than the issue of salvation. We need to be grounded on the word with regard to persecution, at least grounded enough to stand up under attack. It is astounding to see what people will fall back on when they are under attack. They begin to fight fire with fire, slander those who slander them, and defend themselves. What happened to turning the other cheek? When you see people fighting back in this way, it tells you that they do not know the Word.

The same applies for all the important truths of the Bible. Why do we slander? Because we are not grounded on the word! Why do we fight for promotion? Because we do not know that it is God who brings promotion.

So we need to be preaching the whole counsel of God. True nourishment is helping people really get to know God, His will, His ways, His attributes and promises. Preach the themes of the New Testament, which means that you have to bring in the Old Testament as well and give the people a 'whole-Bible' meal. That would include themes such as heaven, hell, tithing, giving, grace, mercy, forgiveness, teaching on the beatitudes, prayer, bringing up family, handling finances, and so the list goes on.

All of these are included in a balanced spiritual diet, but we must take care that they are never merely topics to be talked about. They are truths and themes from the Word that should become a part of our lifestyle. We teach on these

things so that the people can be truly grounded in their faith and stand up under trials!

True nourishment is helping people really get to know God, His will, His ways, His attributes and promises.

We do not preach to ‘wow’, we teach to feed. That is why we must make sure that we do not preach in order to look good. We should never preach in order to try to impress anyone. We simply do our best for God. We love the knowledge that God is using us to feed His people, to change their lives, by His Spirit, and we never play to the crowds or to our ego.

Chapter 33

Elders Make The Flock Secure

Ephesians 5:25 talks about husbands loving their wives as Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself up for her. What strikes me about this is that Jesus did not wait until those who were to become the Church were doing everything right before He did this. He gave Himself sacrificially to a people who were in rebellion; who were doing everything wrong.

The Church is still doing a whole lot of things wrong, and yet He still gives us His love unconditionally. Leaders are to do the same. To love the Church unconditionally and so make them secure. When we give our lives sacrificially for them, and when we do that wholeheartedly, even when they are not doing everything right, we bring security to the people of God.

That means that we never hold out on them when they are holding out on us. Some of us do that, but just as that is not right in marriage, we cannot sulk and withdraw because we do not get our own way in the church. That is not sacrificial living. When we sulk and withdraw, it is a step toward disaster in the church, as it is in any relationship. It does not bring security to those we lead.

Another thing that we need to do is make sure that we do not bypass or overlook things that really need to be dealt with. In my marriage with Ann I have to be honest with her without ever holding out on her. There are times when Ann has come to me to apologise for something, and although I

have accepted her apology, that was not the end of the story, because there has still been an issue to deal with.

That may sound ungracious, because we have been taught that when someone apologises we should forgive them and then carry on as if nothing happened. That is actually often hypocrisy and delusion. I do need to accept her apology, but if there is an issue that is not resolved, then we need to be honest and loving and make sure that we deal with it. I say that I have had to do that with Ann, but she has had to do that with me as well. In all that, though, we do not lose our temper with each other, and we do not withdraw from each other. That has kept us both secure.

Sacrificial love includes holding the people accountable, which means that we do not carry on as if acts of rebellion and unrighteousness do not matter. They do matter, and how we deal with them also matters. True love will not let these things go uncorrected. To ignore them because we think that by doing so we are being 'loving' is not really loving sacrificially. That will never bring security to the people.

Sacrificial love is honest, it is available, it is encouraging and it never withdraws or withholds from the people we lead. Even when we need to rebuke them, we still encourage them, but not by covering over or ignoring any issue. We deal with those, but without withholding sacrificial and unconditional love, because we want to instil a genuine sense of security in the people.

Chapter 34

Elders Plan

Elders plan and strategise. That is also a part of their responsibility, but to do that without revelation from God is ineffective as far as the Kingdom of God is concerned. That is nothing more than humanism, pragmatism, or something similar. It is also unnecessary, because God is faithful to give us the revelation we need. I have found that to be true both when I was leading churches and as the team leader of New Covenant Ministries International. God has constantly given me revelation and vision so that I could lead His people where He wanted them to go, in the way that He wanted them to get there.

When I talk about vision I do not mean things like, “We want to be working into 50 nations,” or “We want to see churches planted in 5 new nations this year.” Those are goals. Vision is something that helps us to plan and strategise and to find godly, wise ways to do what God has called us to do. Vision goes beyond programmes, and vision incorporates everyone and enables us all to be going in the same direction.

I believe that the day a leader stops coming with revelation from God to the team he leads, those men and women, especially those who are big-capacity people, would not be able to follow that leader anymore.

There are men and women in your church who are not ‘full-time’ ministry people, but who have big vision. They especially will not be able to follow you for too long if you

are not setting vision and strategising and planning in a manner that ensures that they are incorporated into the ongoing life of the church. They need to be able to participate in something that is beyond the tasks that those who are in full-time ministry or eldership are involved in.

Elders need to be getting vision from God so that we know what to do with high-powered business people. We need to know how to lead those who are wealthy in an effective way, a way that enables them to participate meaningfully in the church, and that does not only relate to their wealth. Many of these may never be called to preach, and yet we need to know how to make a way for them to come with us and to participate wholeheartedly.

There are others who have an anointing and a call of God on their lives that we have to lead into the fulfilment of that. Some of those may be more anointed than we are, but there is no problem with that if we have revelation from God, and can lead in a way that makes room for them to fulfil what He has called them to.

What do we do with those who are unemployed? We have to have vision for them as well. We have to include them in our planning and strategising. I hope none of this scares you off. I hope this excites you and exhilarates you so that you want to rise to the challenge of leading the church God's way.

Chapter 35

Elders Refute Dissidents

Titus 1:9 says that the elders are to exhort believers and refute dissidents. That simply means that we encourage the people, but that we silence those who are causing division. I have said this before, but let me say it again. When you are a leader, especially an elder, you cannot always be Mr Nice Guy. We sometimes have to correct people and to rebuke them. As much as we have to encourage them, according to 2 Timothy 4:2, Titus 1:9 and Titus 2:15, there are times when a rebuke is necessary.

On those occasions we may even need to ‘command’ them regarding what they should be doing. In other words, we do more than simply giving them the truth and then leaving it up to them as to whether they want to respond to it or not. Sometimes we have to bring the truth together with a command, and insist on it being applied. In Acts 2:38 we read that Peter commanded people to be baptised. 1 Timothy 6:17 is another verse that shows us that we sometimes have to command God’s people concerning certain things.

We do, however, have to make sure that when we have to command anyone concerning the truth, that we do so without being dictatorial. The way to ensure that is to live a lifestyle of commitment, submission and always have a heart to serve them. Then, on the few occasions we do have to command them concerning an issue, or refute dissidents in our midst, they will know that we are not being dictatorial. They always

need to know that the command comes from a place of serving, that it brings life, is loving, that we are committed to them and want the best for them and for the Kingdom.

Section Five

Forming Team

Chapter 36

The Purpose Of Team

Team is a much discussed topic these days and we should be fairly mature when it comes to being 'team players' by now. Yet, I often found that when someone came onto the New Covenant Ministries International team, they came with a whole lot of baggage as to what a team should be. In fact, the longer I led this team, the more I realised that many people have an altogether unbiblical understanding and interpretation of what team should be. To many, it is simply an effective way to get things done and, while it is that, it is designed to be far more than that. Team is not merely a functional entity.

Team is designed by God to model something of who He is, which is why one of the most important features of team is that it is relational before it is functional. That should always be given priority over any function that the team has. Not that function is neglected in any way, but it does mean that wherever we find ourselves connected, by God, with a team, we need to give a high priority to fellowshiping together and simply spending time together. Our meeting together should never be all business.

I believe that many teams have lost the value of simply being together to spend time fellowshiping, talking, laughing and enjoying each other. They have lost the value of being able to play together. Being a team is not only meant to be about discussing dates, strategies and the like. There has to be a

sense of togetherness that a team has with each other, and that does not come about unless we deliberately give time to building that through relational times together.

If we lose our friendships and only keep going with function, which is very often what can happen to a team, it will not take long before we will be like anyone else and we will not be modelling what God wants team to embody in the earth today. While I know that we (New Covenant Ministries International) have not got anywhere near that, we certainly have that heart, the desire, to be that kind of a model as a team.

Team is designed by God to model something of who He is.

What is it that God wants to model through teams? I want to begin to answer that by looking at why I think He raised up New Covenant Ministries International as a team. I believe God raised us up to be a Biblical, Apostolic/Prophetic, whole-Bible example of the Word who became flesh. The whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, every statement, was personified in Jesus as the Word who became flesh and dwelt amongst us. The Bible says that we saw His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, who is full of grace and truth. This is what we want to model as we build this team.

We are not primarily trying to build a New Covenant Ministries International 'value system'. We embrace the values that we do because they are, as far as we are able to discern, values of the Kingdom of God. His value system is one that is a whole-Bible – Old and New Covenant – value system, and Jesus, the King, is the highest expression of those values.

Jesus was the One who formed the first true apostolic team. While we can see roots of that in the Old Covenant, team as an expression of who God is was first worked out fully through Jesus and His team. The twelve men that He chose as apostles continued to model this after His ascension, and so did those who were part of the ongoing apostolic ministry. This we see throughout the New Testament and beyond that. We should expect to see that until the end of the age, because this is an office and pattern that, as Ephesians 4 teaches, we will have operating in the Church until Jesus comes back. We are merely a part of that.

As a team, God wants us to reflect the Kingdom of God. He wants us to ‘flesh out’ Apostolic/Prophetic team to the churches we serve. Not in a manner that benefits or draws attention to ourselves, but with the same attitude that we see in Paul’s life when he said, “Follow me as I follow Christ.” What I understand is that we should be fleshing that out as a team because we understand that it is fleshing out a vital aspect of who Jesus is. People should be able to look at us as a team and see Jesus, who is the Great Apostle.

That is why God raised us up. Not only to do the work, but to model the work. Churches, pastors, the people we lead, and other groups of people, whoever they may be, must be able to look at us and see the Bible being worked out by us as an Apostolic/Prophetic team. Every leadership team in the context of the Kingdom should be making Jesus, the Word, as He is revealed in the Bible, visible to the people around them.

Tragically, there is often very little difference between the lifestyle we see in the Church and what we see in the world. There is no radical difference in its morality, in its behaviour, its standards, or in its government and authority. We are often a very poor model. Big churches are sometimes seen as a model for others, but only because they have a few thousand

people and seem to be successful, not because they reflect who Jesus is.

Too many miss this fact and want to model those churches, to copy them and become a big church themselves – even if all the people in the church are living carnally, or are spectators who are hiding in the crowd instead of being participators.

Every leadership team in the context of the Kingdom should be making Jesus, the Word, as He is revealed in the Bible, visible to the people around them.

Very seldom do you find that others want to model themselves on a small church, but some of these are actually the best models of what God wants. They may only have 100 or 200 people, but all of them are actively involved, serving God in the ministry that God has called them to, and as a church they are making what Jesus is like visible to the world. In spite of that, we find that other churches do not want to model what they have because they are small and are not considered to be ‘successful’. They are looking for a worldly success rather than a truly Biblical model.

We find the same mistake is made when looking for a model for church government. Often we govern the church in the same way that we would run a business. Within the New Covenant Ministries International family we have tried to build non-hierarchically, and yet there are still churches that are relating to us as a team who are running their church like a business. We find that they often have autocratic leadership who are making decisions independently. That is not modelling what God wants. Jesus wants the Word to become flesh in us.

Another mistake I have seen leaders making is that, because they are thinking organisationally, they will hide behind us as a team by saying, “This is the way New Covenant Ministries International does it,” or, “This is New Covenant Ministries International policy.” Actually, New Covenant Ministries International does not have ‘policy’. We do not want to ever get to the point where we are making decisions according to policy, just as a secular organisation would. We should only refer to the Bible, which is what I think we do try to do.

That is why it is vital that we get rid of any ‘baggage’ as an Apostolic/Prophetic people. That includes getting rid of any attitude that coming onto a leadership team means promotion, an opportunity to travel, to be financed, to be able to do a number of things we would otherwise not be able to, or that we will have more authority once we are on leadership team. All of these things have to go.

There are times when an Apostolic/Prophetic team has to help churches implement difficult decisions, such as when to close a church down, or when leadership should be moving on. If, however, we as a team are not showing the churches we work with and the people we lead what Jesus is like, it is going to be very difficult for those churches and leaders to submit to us when there are decisions like this to apply. We have to make sure that we are like Jesus if we want them to trust us.

In John 14:5-14 we read:

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Jesus answered: “Don’t you

know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Churches are very often asking what God looks like, the same question that Phillip asked Jesus. In a very real sense, we should be able to say, "Well, how long have we been around? How long have you been with us? Have a look at us if you want to see what God is like." To a large degree, a leadership team should be able to say that if you have seen their lives, you have seen the Father. When the team is in action, people should be able to watch them and see what God is like.

We know how God feels about sinners when we look at how Jesus dealt with the woman caught in the act of adultery. She should have been stoned to death, but He did not condemn her. Instead, He told her to go and sin no more. We know how God feels about sickness when we see how Jesus healed people. We can see how God feels about anything by looking at how Jesus dealt with it.

When Jesus walked on this earth as a man He was acting like God. Why? Because He was God in man. He was acting like Himself; the way God would act in a man. We know how God acts in heaven because we can see how He acted on earth

through Jesus. The wonderful, beautiful thing is that Jesus is in me, the Father is in me and the Holy Spirit is in me. God wants to be Himself in me and in you, and He wants to be Himself in every leadership team. If any of us are walking unbiblically in any deliberate way, we are presenting the world with a distorted image of what God is like, and we miss the purpose of God to reveal Himself through us.

As a leadership team we have to catch that. We understand from 1 Corinthians 3:16-19 that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. We must live out Colossians 1:27, *“To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”* And Colossians 2:9-10 *“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.”*

**We know how God acts in heaven
because we can see how He acted
on earth through Jesus.**

These are literal truths. In Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily and we are complete in Him – in Jesus. Just imagine the truth of that. Imagine if we really believed that about ourselves for a full 24 hours. The reality is that we come in and out of that; we do not believe it all the time. If Jesus is in me and is given free reign to be Himself in me, if He is able to act through me in a manner that is consistent with who He is, then people will begin to see what God is like.

As far as I understand it, there are only two reasons why that does not happen. Either we have been given light and we are not responding to it, or we are in ignorance. If we are in ignorance it is because we do not know what the Word

says. We are not Word literate. That is not acceptable for leadership teams. We should know the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Not that we know every verse, but we know it, know how to handle it, know how to teach it and we know the truth in it.

It is also imperative that there is not any area of controversy in our lives with God. That means that we are doing what the Bible tells us we should be doing, and we are not doing what the Bible tells us we should not be doing. If the Bible tells us that we are to be a team, then we should not be acting as individuals. If the Bible tells us that we should submit one to another, then you and I should not be living in rebellion, doing our own thing without regard for the rest of the team. The Bible tells us to, “in honour prefer one another” (Romans 12:10, KJV), so we do that. We do what God wants us to do.

Hebrews 13:8 says that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. That means that He wants to be consistent within us and that has an implication for the way that we live. We have to make sure that everything in us is honestly committed to Jesus Christ, and that we are yielded to being like Him in every way.

Everything in the Bible is factual. Everything in the Bible is true. That does not mean, however, that every fact is the truth. For example, if the Bible says that Jesus said a particular thing, then He did say it, and it is also the truth. When the Bible says that the devil said a particular thing, what he said may not be the truth, but it is a fact that he said it.

Our response to the Bible is not merely to a factual account of events, though, but to the Word of God that contains the eternal truth that we are to live by. What is ‘truth’ in the Bible becomes truth to us when we surrender our wills, surrender ourselves, to that Word. In a sense, we need to be willing to do what the Word says before we even know what the Word says.

There needs to be a continual response to that Word, including repentance where necessary. When we discover something in the Word, and we are not doing it the Bible way, either personally or as a team, we need to repent of that, otherwise we are resisting God. That is why I say that we should submit ourselves to that Word unconditionally, even before we know what the Word requires of us as a team, or in any other area of our lives.

A surrendered heart ceases to argue with God. Please surrender and make the truth of the Word truth for you. When that happens, the truth transforms you. If you have the Word and it has not become truth because it has not got into your heart, there is no transformation. You may be able to quote it and preach on it but it has not changed you.

we should submit ourselves to the Word unconditionally, even before we know what the Word requires of us as a team, or in any other area of our lives.

I have heard people all over the world preach on being set free or preach on team, but without the reality of those things being true in their lives. I know that we have team members, and pastors in relating churches, who preach on team, but who are not team players. Why is that? It is because they have not fully submitted themselves to the truth. They still have arguments with God. There are areas that they are holding out on. May God help us to get free of all that.

Scripture tells us that if the Son sets us free, we will be free indeed; we will know the truth and the truth that we know will set us free. If we are really free we will never feel the need to defend ourselves. We will not be self-promoting or always

be trying to outdo someone else. We will have dealt with any competitive spirit.

When these things happen in a team, it means that God is not free to be Himself on the team. Some of us are self-promoting. Some of us are always justifying things that we are doing, even though we know we are wrong. Some of us are reacting to one another. Not responding, but reacting. Sometimes we are harbouring things against team members.

In the book of James we read that God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. In a marriage the husband and wife are one, and if one of them is resisting God, is proud or arrogant, then God is resisting that marriage. There is a resistance against that marriage that comes from heaven, and it gives the devil an opening.

Team is also one, not to the same degree as marriage, but it is still true that if we have pride within the team, then God is resisting the team. Some of us can be sold out and serving God, but if we have one person on team who is proud, always wanting to be first, boasting, or showing off, then God resists us as a team. We cannot afford to let that happen. If we do, we are not modelling what God wants us to.

Team is not all about having authority or being able to preach or travel and work into the nations. First and foremost, team is called to model the life of Jesus. In other words, it is not so much about what we do as it is about what we are.

We need to act like Jesus and so we must make sure, when we are dealing with anyone (team members, pastors or the people) as a team, that our attitude and actions reflect the heart of God.

Chapter 37

Building Team

God is the author of the Bible, but over centuries He used many people, who never even knew each other, to write what we have in His Word. The Holy Spirit in them was the author and orchestrator of the Word of God, but in that process, He allowed their personalities to come through, while still maintaining the integrity of His revelation. If God could do that over centuries with people who did not know each other, and still bring through His one mind and His one value system, then surely He can do that with us who know each other.

In spite of the fact, then, that teams are made up of people who are different to each other, there is a way to build a team that works together as one. When we are building a team, the personalities of each team member should not be cramped, stunted or suppressed as we do what God has called us to, but neither should they be expressed in a way that attempts to take the team down a path other than what God intends.

It is vital that each member in any team stays on the same track, which is why a heart of unity is indispensable if a team is going to be effective. That is something that is worked out relationally and not only functionally. One aspect of this is to make sure that there is continuity to what the team is doing so that the team is not jumping around from one thing to another. That will help all of the team members to stay on the same page together.

Another vital unifying factor for team is that they work out a value system that is a Kingdom of God value system, and not their own value system. Every one of those values has to be one that is consistently taught in the Word of God.

In spite of the fact then that teams are made up of people who are different to each other, there is a way to build a team that works together as one.

All of this, personalities expressed in a godly manner, staying on the same page, maintaining a heart of unity, and consistently working out a value system that is God's and not ours, keeps us moving in the same direction together as a team.

What we will look at now are some principles that we have applied in building an apostolic team. These same principles will be helpful with the development of any leadership team. I want to start off by talking about some important team dynamics that are often overlooked when people are going to develop a team.

The team leader, and possibly some of the team members, chooses the team. It does not happen the other way around, where a member initiates the choice to be on the team. This is how we see Jesus choosing team in Mark 3:13-15:

Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve – designating them apostles – that they might be with him and that he might send

them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.

That was the world's first apostolic team. We see a forerunner of this in the Old Covenant with the twelve spies going out to explore the land, but this is the first true apostolic team. Jesus chose these twelve men. They did not choose themselves. They did, however, need to agree to be on His team and embrace the implications of that. This must always be true, because team is relational before it is functional. It is therefore a two-way thing. Jesus chose them and they agreed to be on team.

The disciples had to have a heart that was willing to be joined to both the team leader and the team. This is sometimes hindered when those who are invited onto a team cannot find grace to transition from one leader (or father) to another. While we can perhaps cope with that, it is often not helpful. It creates another set of circumstances that we have to constantly deal with for the rest of our togetherness.

By way of illustration, consider this: who is the father of New Covenant Church Bryanston (NCCB), the church that I pastored some years ago in South Africa? I use this term 'father' to refer to a relationship and not as a title, the way that Paul did.

I was the first to pastor it, then Ian McKellar pastored it, and now Ashley Bell is leading that church. Does that church have three fathers? The answer is yes and no, but in answer to the question of who **'the'** father is, I have to say, whether people like it or not, that I am **'the'** father. What about Ian and what about Ashley? I am **'the'** Father of the church, Ian was **'a'** father to the church for a season, and now Ashley is **'a'** father to the church and the father to some.

The same is true of Victory Faith Centre (VFC) in Pinetown, South Africa. Rob Rufus started it and so he is **'the'** father.

Then Rob moved on and Sean Dooley came in and was ‘a’ father and then he moved on. Right now Nick Hardy is ‘a’ father.

In both of these examples there is one man who was and is ‘the’ father and another who was ‘a’ father but is no longer ‘a’ father of the church. If, however, the people at NCCB still want me (or Ian) to be their ‘father’ and the people at VFC want Rob to be their ‘father’ and do not transition, we have a disaster. The people who cannot transition their allegiance and alliance to the next father, while still honouring ‘the’ father of the work, will find it very difficult to continue with that church.

In situations where there are many people who cannot make the transition, then it generally means that the previous father was not a good father. The world often tells us the opposite, but the fact is that the former father probably did not teach the people well.

He more than likely drew them to himself, and kept them to himself, in the way he preached and lived out his life, instead of preparing them, while he was still the father, for someone to take over some day. This is something that is true for each transition from one leader to another.

In the same way, it is possible for people to come onto a team, a local church or trans-local team, but still see someone other than the man who is the father at that point as their father. In such a case, they will only give the person who is the current father of the team a secondary allegiance.

As I have said, that is often the result of bad training by the previous father, but ultimately each person is responsible for how they make the transition from one leader to another and the final accountability will lie with the person concerned.

Being part of the team (or church) does not only mean that you are joined to the leader of the team (or church), you are also joined to the team (or church).

The Bible teaches us that we have covenantal relationships with each other, and yet the church is full of people and pastors who jump from one relationship to another. People move from church to church with little or no concern for covenant.

Pastors move on if the going gets tough. They go somewhere else because they are 'led by the Spirit', or so they say, even though we know that they are not. Sometimes, even team leaders leave and begin to relate to another team, with no regard for their previous relationship, or how it affects the body of Christ. Often, breaking covenant is not seen to be of any consequence, but it is. While I do not believe that any group of believers is eternally linked at the same level forever, to break covenant is always a very serious thing.

It is imperative to grasp the truth that we are in covenant when we are fashioning and forming a new team. Each member needs to understand that we have been joined to both the leader and to the other members of the team. One cannot be joined to the team and not to the leader, and you cannot be joined to the leader and not to the team.

It is imperative to grasp the truth that we are in covenant when we are fashioning and forming a new team.

No one can relate into a team through one person on the team either. They may initially come into relationship with a team through one of the team members, but once they are part of that team, they then need to have direct access into the whole team. They can no longer only relate to the team through that one person.

Another important aspect of team, which is linked to this, is that **the authority of the team leader needs to be understood and embraced**. A team cannot have multiple leaders; that will undermine the very nature of team. There cannot be more than one set of hands on the steering wheel. Any team where that is the case is headed for trouble. If I am driving a motorcar, but you are not sure that I can do it well, and so you want to have your hands on the steering wheel as well as mine, we are heading for disaster. Both of us cannot steer the same car at the same time. It is the same for a team.

In the earlier chapters of Acts we see constant references to Barnabas and Paul and how they worked together. At one point, however, there was a problem that arose between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark (Acts 15). After that incident, there are no more references to Barnabas, only to Paul. I believe that was because Paul was the team leader and that a line was drawn on that issue.

There is always room for significant discussion, dialogue and input from all members of the team, and a team must never lose that, but the final decision rests with one person. The team leader. That is true throughout the church.

There is always room for significant discussion, dialogue and input from all members of the team, but the final decision rests with the team leader.

In Acts 15, where we read of the Jerusalem council, James stood up and verbalised a final decision on the problem that the council had to address. Although the communication was that the decision made was one that seemed good to all of the leaders, he took responsibility for that decision. The

whole council had made a contribution and backed him up completely, but he stood up as the leader of the church there and accepted accountability for the decision.

This same principle is illustrated in the book of Revelation. The letters to the churches in the first few chapters of that book are addressed to the ‘angelos’ (singular) of each church, a term that is generally accepted to refer to **the** leader of each church. The letters are not addressed to the leaders (plural) of each church.

The pattern that the Holy Spirit has given us in the New Testament is for every church to come to the place where they have a plurality of eldership who together carry the responsibility for the church. There is, however, still one person who leads that team and carries ultimate responsibility for the church.

While the scriptures are against (actually ‘against’ is too weak a word) dictatorship, lording it over the sheep and things of that nature, they are equally against democratic models of church government. There can only be one leader in the team, and we need to understand and embrace that, whether we are the leader who is fashioning and forming a team, or a team member who is joined to that team.

Chapter 38

Choosing A Team – Part 1

We move on now to consider some of the things that we look at in the lives of those we are considering as potential team members. Please remember that I am using the New Covenant Ministries International team as an example, but these principles can all easily be applied to any leadership team.

In the first place, **do they really love God above all else?** Do they love Him more than their own reputations and their own ministries? Is Jesus their true pasture and their true hope (Jeremiah 50: 6-7)? True love for God manifests itself in true obedience. This is what we see in 1 John 5:3, 2 John 6 and John 14:15. We have to come to the place where we love God the way that Jacob loved Rachel. Seven years seemed to him as if it was only a day.

The attitude embodied in the words of Mary in John 2:5 are so vital. *“Whatsoever He saith unto you do it,”* KJV. Obedience reveals our true love for God, and so we can, and should, ask whether those we are considering for team have obedience.

What about their calling? Is this clear? We look at both the call as they have heard it directly from God, as well as what is confirmed by others around them. Is there recognition of their calling by others? Are people recognising their calling

by coming to them for counsel, advice and help? You cannot bring people onto team that no one else recognises.

The call is also confirmed by their ability to work with and honour others they would be on team with within their locality, city or church. An important aspect of that is whether they are team players, or are individualists who want to be the top dog.

Anointing – the Holy Spirit’s ability and the Holy Spirit’s authority – is another important thing to consider. Do they have the ability to break open hard situations? Without that they are not going to be too much help on your team. Do they spark people?

Look to see whether they have an anointing and an authority that causes people to want to follow them. Anointing brings release and not bondage. It breaks bondages. Very often leaders ‘imprison’ people because they do not have a true anointing, or they are themselves not free. They can, without realising it, imprison people while they are talking about structure. They can even imprison people while they are talking about grace or healing.

As we look at anointing, we also look to see whether they **are able to communicate truth**. We refer again to the passages in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 3 that talk of elders being able to teach. Those we bring onto a leadership team should be able to teach. As a team we would look specifically at whether they understand God’s blueprint from the Scriptures, and especially the book of Acts, with respect to trans-local team. Are they wise master builders, or does what they build fall apart and have to be repaired to bring stability and security back to the people? For team in a local church setting, we would look to see if they understood God’s blueprint from the Scriptures with respect to the Church and church government.

Do they get revelation from God? While they may get some input from other people, has that honestly become a revelation from God to them, or are they simply regurgitating what they teach. A leader who does not personally get good revelation from God can cause rebellion because he is not envisioning people with the truth.

A chain is only as strong as its weakest link. It is the same with team. There may be many strong links, but that chain is still no stronger than its weakest link. That has to sink in when we are choosing leaders and people to come onto team. That is why I asked everyone whom I invited onto team with me, before they came on team, whether they had any skeletons in the closet.

By asking that, I gave them opportunity to tell me whether there was anything in their past, that had or had not been dealt with, which could compromise them or the team at a later stage were it to come to light. That meant that I wanted to know about potential problems, such as whether they had ever been through any serious debt that had not been paid back. Someone could at any time come and expose that, and I wanted to hear it from them first, and not from someone else. It also meant that if there were any things that needed to be dealt with first, then we could work on that.

I would also want to know if anyone has been through a divorce, or if there was anything else in the past that could bring into question their ability to lead. It may be something that had been dealt with, but if anyone ever wanted to bring that as an accusation against that person, then, by their having disclosed that upfront, we could, with a clear conscience, tell people that we already knew about that and that it was dealt with.

Even having any unforgiveness is a problem. We have to be forgiven and forgiving. *“If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another”* (1John 1:7).

Unforgiveness hinders that. There should be no hidden sin or agendas with those we bring on team.

Are they shepherd-hearted? Do they genuinely care for and love people? They should not be in the habit of getting frustrated with people and taking it out on them by getting heavy-handed and harsh. Another thing that is closely related to this is **servant-heartedness**. This is essential, as all leadership should be exercised from this place of servanthood. Do they want to see people released and raised up higher than themselves?

Are they bold? In other words, they should not be man-pleasers and should not be led by the bleating of the sheep or other shepherds.

Are they passionate, zealous, focussed and honest?

Are they self-starters? Are they initiators without being independent?

Are they self-disciplined? In other words, when left to themselves, they still do the job faithfully and effectively.

Are they resolute? That would mean that they are not open to bribes or flattery.

Are they hard workers?

Are they secure in their calling, in themselves and in their God? In other words, they do not self-promote all the time because of insecurities.

Are they vulnerable, so that they do not hold their cards too close to their chests? Pastors have often told me of members of our team that they do not know how to read, because they hold their cards close to their chest and preserve all their options. We should not be like that as team players.

Do they have experience? According to 1 Timothy 3:16, leaders are not to be novices. Experience should bring wisdom. If we have not learned from our experiences, we have not become wise. If we have not learnt from the past, then we are going to make those same mistakes again in the future.

Do they have the necessary skills? Their abilities as people who will need to minister to others should include skills like preaching skills, people skills, planning skills, prayer skills, perception skills, participation skills, and peace skills (when to confront and when not to).

Perception is a vital skill that is not always taken into consideration enough. By perception, I do not simply mean those insights that accompany the gifts of the Holy Spirit (word of wisdom, word of knowledge and discerning of spirits). I mean also our ability to scope, to see the ramifications of decisions that are made now. What will happen in a few years, time? Are they able to see where what they teach and put an emphasis on today will lead in the future – 6 months, a year, or 2 years down the road?

Are they people of faith? I do not mean people who are in ‘hyperfaith’ every second of every day. That is often not real faith at all. We should look for people who truly trust God in everything. People will not want to go to the nations if they are not people of faith (Gal 3:8, 14).

Those who live in real faith do not live in fear (Matthew 8:23-27). We must not live in fear of failure, of man, of the future,

of threats, or in fear related to our health, our finances, our capabilities, our vulnerabilities, or our weaknesses. Neither must we live under intimidation from the congregation or enemies.

People who have faith are willing to take risks when necessary. We need people who can make room for failure and take some risks, but who do so because they truly trust God. People who live in hyperfaith will take unwise or presumptuous risks, while those who are fearful will not take risks at all.

Are they sacrificial? Are they willing to pay the price? John 10:1-13, especially verses 11-12, is a passage that speaks of this kind of lifestyle. Are they willing to pay the price of dying, even though that is unlikely to happen? Are they willing to pay the price of not insisting on their rights? Paul said he had certain rights, but he insisted on none. Passages that speak of this quality are 1 Corinthians 9: 1-27, 2 Corinthians 11:16-33, 4: 7-18, 2 Timothy 2:3 and Jeremiah 12:5.

Sacrificial people are willing to endure hardships, within the wisdom of God, no matter what comes their way, and they are willing to put the interests of others ahead of themselves.

Are they able to see God in and behind all the events of life? An example of this is Joseph, whose brothers sold him into slavery. When he was reunited with them, he told them repeatedly that what they had done in selling him into slavery was something that God had allowed, because He had a plan behind it all (Genesis 35).

Do they have sensitivity? Can they read people and situations? Do they have a sensitivity to God, to His voice, to His promptings? Do they know the still small voice of God?

Do they have the peace of God that passes all understanding (Colossians 3:15)?

We look, too, to see if they are sensitive to people. Not that they are guided by them, but they know how they are affecting people by what they say and do, how people are being affected by others on the team, and how they are being affected by what God is saying or doing. Look to see whether they can read these types of situations, feelings and insecurities.

Do they love, honour and respect God’s Word, which makes us wise? Does the Word play a major role in their thinking, planning, counsel, preaching and conversations (2 Timothy 3:10-4:8)? Watch the way in which those you want to bring onto team handle the Word of God publicly. Some people do not even bother to read it, even though the Scripture tells us to give ourselves to public reading of the Word. What do they do with new things that God is doing? Do they elevate those to the point that other teaching and doctrines are made to look less important?

We also look for **humility**. Arrogance and haughtiness discredit the whole team and selfish ambition is disastrous on any team. Self-praise is a curse in Christ’s body (Matthew 6:1-8). We are looking for people who are not self-promoting and people who are not self-reliant. We all need a real baptism of true humility.

Watch how they handle praise and watch how they handle criticism, for we will surely get a lot of both (Proverbs 27: 19, 21). Are they able to handle these without pride or insecurity?

Do they love to be first? I have watched some who sit in a situation where something is being discussed, but keep quiet and let everyone else talk, and then they take the best

of what everyone has said and come out with it as the answer. Rather than being honest and saying what they personally think, they wait until they have everyone else's wisdom, and then make their 'contribution'. That way others often think that they are much wiser than what they really are.

What is the motivation behind that? It is not necessarily the good of the whole, but rather a desire to look good, a love to be first, to always have the last word on something or to have a smart-aleck remark.

Do they have personal integrity? Everyone starts off having to earn the trust of the other team members. They must be both truthful and reliable, people whose word is their word. I have had shock after shock of people telling me that they would do something and then never doing it.

Are they teachable (Proverbs 12:1, 9:7-8)? Some people have the knack of talking their way out of everything and then turning things around and lecturing to you when you are trying to teach them something. Teachable people do not always know better.

Do they have gathering power? The Bible does not say that anyone must first become a deacon/home cell leader in order to become an elder. In fact, God even wants some people to be a deacon and never be an elder. When someone is a deacon or home cell leader, however, it can be a very helpful way for us to see the gathering power and the keeping power of that particular individual. Do they gather, or do they only keep what you gave them, or do they only gather from the Christians in the church? We do not want people on team who cannot bring the lost to Christ. Even if they are not number one men, they must have brought some people into the church.

I have said many, many times before that I do not think that it is wise to bring someone onto your leadership team and start to pay them if they are only very good carers of what you have already got. If they are going to come onto the payroll, they need to be adding to the numbers in the church. While it is of absolute importance that they are faithfully visiting the flock, that is not enough. They must also be adding to the flock.

Do they have a real, genuine love for God’s people (Philippians 2:17)?

Are they really generous? True hospitality, which is a characteristic of an elder, is birthed in a generous heart. Are they generous with their time, with sharing what they know, and with where they go? That is important, because some people can travel many miles, and it may look as if they are generous, but in actual fact they go where they get a good offering and lots of applause.

Are they generous in their tithes and giving? Do they only tithe and give the bare minimum, or do they sometimes go above that, perhaps double-tithe? Are they generous in their offerings, alms giving, and in apostolic giving?

Are they contented (1 Timothy 6:3-10, Hebrews 13:5)? Have they learnt to be content with what they have (Philippians 4:11)? Are they content with what God has done with them and is doing with them and through them? The desire for riches brings all kinds of temptation, and discontentment may lead to some using ‘godliness’ as a means for financial gain.

If there is any ‘discontentment’, then it should not be an agitation and frustration. It is a realisation that God has more for them and they want that, but they are absolutely and totally contented with what they are in right now. Seeking

more, but contented. Paul talks of not having arrived, but still pressing on toward the mark. He also talks of having learnt to be contented whether he has much or he has little.

Are they theologically sound? We must have a good look at their theology. If they are not making some serious attempts to get educated in the Word, they are likely to cause you trouble later.

I teach in our circles that we should not release anybody onto any kind of a team if they are not at least enrolled with the International Theological Correspondence College, which we run specifically to make sure that as many as possible have the opportunity to be trained theologically. They either need to be in it, or they have done it and they are still learning, training and getting better equipped.

Check to see if any of their theology is extreme. Do they have an overemphasis on discipleship, demons, healing, inner healing or anything else? Do they chop and change all the time so that you do not know what they are going to do next? This is a comment that I have heard many, many times from people about some team members. When that team member is speaking well, they want him in the church, but they are nevertheless hesitant about inviting him, because they are never too sure what he is going to come out with next.

While I think that we have to be open to the unexpected, it should not be because the person is volatile and unpredictable. We should not be extremists. People should not be worried about what we will do next, that we may mess up their church and leave them to fix it up again. I hope there is no one who feels that way about me.

When I go into a church I want to be theologically sound. I want to speak to those people like a father. I do not want to go in as an exciting, dynamic, preacher who will sweep them off their feet. Let other people do that. I want to go in and, in a fatherly way, bring stability with no extreme doctrines.

Chapter 39

Choosing A Team – Part 2

Do they have a heart for the nations? I do not want people on our team who do not really have a heart for the nations. We should let them develop that heart before we bring them onto team. I would say to all pastors, when you are developing your team, do not only bring on pastoral people. While there is a desperate need for pastoral people, to bring them on when they do not have a heart for the nations can close down what God wants to do through your church into the nations.

We need to teach people that if they only have 50 people in their church they may be ready for a church plant. I want to break the mentality that you have to reach a certain number to become a base. A base church is a church that is established to the point that people are not falling away all the time, and which is making all of its resources available to the discipling of the nations. You can do that with 50 people.

We need to be planting churches all over the world. There are too many towns and even major cities where we do not have enough churches. We need to once again rise up and challenge the people about planting churches. We should do so wisely, though, because we do not want to make people feel that they have to go and plant a church. In a wise, fatherly way, we simply need to be presenting the challenge and the possibility that God could be calling them to plant a church.

We need to be challenging those leading churches to look for people to go out and plant. Once again, teach them to do it wisely, not in a way that makes anyone feel that if they stay in the church for more than a few years as a pastor, then they are backsliding and are not fulfilling the Word of God. We do not want all of them to stay. Some must go, and so we have to be able to talk that through in a wise way.

This is how I feel about church planting: if we have 5000 churches relating to New Covenant Ministries International (and I know that there are more that relate to us), we should be planting at least 2500 churches per year. That would only mean that half of those churches plant a church every year, or all of them plant one church every two years. In other words, it is not unreasonable to say that we should be planting thousands of churches a year. I look at some of the bigger churches and I think that they should be planting more than one church a year.

We are looking for people who do not take short cuts. These are people who have thrown off every weight, all illegitimate things (Hebrews 12:1-29), and who have left habitual sin behind (verse 1), they persevere no matter what, they are looking to Jesus (verses 2-4), are encouraged by hard truth (verses 5-12), give it all they have got (verse 14), are living at peace with all men, live holy lives, allow no bitterness to remain in their hearts (verse 15), are not sexually immoral (verses 16-17), even in their thought lives, and are building what is eternal, the Kingdom of God that cannot be shaken and will escape the judgement fire of God. They live with a positive awareness that we will all stand before that judgement seat one day (verses 25-29).

It is costly to build a true Bible-based church, to see the church down the road grow quicker than yours through compromise, and yet not to compromise your message. If you were to preach positive confession all the time, or prosperity,

or a watered down version of grace that does not deny all ungodliness, you would have a whole lot of people coming, and the church can grow quickly, but what good is that?

It is costly to remain faithful, to be truly Bible based. Unfortunately, many commit intellectual immorality when they present the gospel only in terms of the benefits and leave out the persecution, the rejection, the misunderstanding, and things like that, which come with following Jesus.

Jesus was honest. When the rich young ruler could not pay the price, Jesus let him go. We have to get back to being honest. It is costly. There are no short cuts to growing truly Biblical churches.

We are looking for team players, people who play by the ‘rules’ or the ways of the team. For example, I ask even those who are outstanding teachers and preachers, and can hold a crowd for an hour or more, to only preach for half an hour at our Leadership Training Times.

One of the reasons for that is that we want to bring others through who cannot hold a crowd for more than that yet. We want to help develop them, and one way to do that is to ‘level the playing field’ as it were, and give them the best possible opportunity to grow in their preaching.

When team members feel that they can overshoot the mark, and look at me while they are preaching and ask to go on for longer (even though there are thousands of people present and I have asked all the team members not to ask me that), what can I say? What they are communicating, when we have asked everyone around the world to stick to half an hour, is that they are not team players. It is simply unfair to all who are trying to be team players.

They may do that because they feel that they were brought onto team because of their giftings, rather than because they are team players. This is a very serious issue. Those who do this communicate to others who are gifted, that they can simply rely on their gifting and they will get onto somebody's team one day.

We have to be team players. When we say half an hour, then we mean half an hour. Not half an hour of preaching and then half an hour of praying for people. We mean half an hour in total. Who can challenge them afterwards?

When I want to find out about what happened at any of the Leadership Training Times, I ask this kind of question. I want to know if anyone went over the half hour allocated to them. Did everyone cooperate? The people I ask are on the spot if anyone did not. They may not know what to say because they do not want to dishonour anyone, but I have to know these things. Unfortunately, I do still hear from those who have been at Leadership Training Times that some people speak for longer than half an hour. What that looks like is that we have different 'rules' for different team members. The truth is that they are not team players.

It is not always going to be like this, and there will be some exceptions, but this is how we do it as a team right now. Even when it is my turn to speak, I consult with the other team members **before** I speak. Sometimes they will say that I need to speak for longer, simply because I am the father, and the people do not hear me enough because I am not getting around the world that much anymore. If there are enough of them who feel I should, then we can make an exception. I do not, however, make a decision about that while I am up on the platform speaking, and look down to the person who is leading the meeting and ask if I can go on. How can they say no?

As a team and as individuals, we are modelling something for others. Whether we do so intentionally or not, they will look to see how we live. **Every team member should be a person who will model:**

- Biblical truths of body life.
- Submission.
- Christ-like character.
- Devoted commitment to Christ and to one another.
- In honour preferring one another.
- True Christ-like service. Not only at public events, but everywhere.
- Forgiveness. There have been times on our team when there were men on team who were not talking to one another, who were holding bitterness and hurts against one another. They talked to me about it and I am glad that they did, but they must get healed and sort it out. Get it forgiven.
- What it really means to encourage one another.
- The truth that no person is the whole, but together we reveal the whole. When they stand up and communicate as if they can do anything, they are modelling the ‘part’ as the ‘whole’.
- Making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of love.

What about the problem of possible **mixed motives** in team members? This has to be taken into account when we are considering someone as a team member. While I have preached in the past that God can take care of our motives, some are preaching that motives mean nothing. The opposite is true; motives mean everything.

While we do not want to go scratching around in morbid introspection all the time, we have to be very aware that some people have mixed motives. Many teams may find that, in spite of watching out for this, they will still end up with people on team who have mixed motives. They have mixed motives as to where they preach, what they preach, where they go and who they spend time with. What are we to do about this?

To begin with, we must take note of 1 Corinthians 4:2: *“Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.”* This is talking about us being faithful stewards, faithful to that which we have been entrusted with. That should affect all of our decisions, including those related to our time, travel, talents, treasures and tithes.

For example, faithful stewardship of our **time** would include making the best of the time that we have when we are at any given place. We need to use our time in the most beneficial way for those we are there to serve.

Consider carefully whether it will be the most beneficial use of our time if we **travel** there in the first place. Will it be the most beneficial use of our time (and their time) if we go to a particular place?

We have team members all over the world, and I believe that God has placed each of us where we are going to be the most beneficial. That means that those who are in Africa are going to be most beneficial in Africa. Those in Africa came onto the team because they were beneficial in Africa in the first place. For that reason, that is where we want them to give most of their time, with a few exceptions. It is a trust that we have, and we should be found to be faithful stewards of that trust.

What about our **talents**; our gifts, our abilities, our skills and expertise, etc.? Stewardship of our talents must include using them in the most profitable way. Once again that will

include where we preach, what countries, what regions and what churches we visit.

Good stewardship must also involve our **treasures**. *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”* (Matthew 6:21). Treasures are those things that we count most important in life, those things that we think most about when we are not involved in anything. Faithful stewardship means that we invest our treasures where they will be most profitable.

Faithful stewardship with the **tithes** of the church is also essential. As team members, we are generally paid to go where we go and do what we do from the tithes of the church we are part of. We must be found faithful in how we use the tithes that come into the church. We must use them in the most profitable and beneficial way when we spend on travel, accommodation, etc. I am not advocating poverty. I am not saying that you should go and live in a hovel. Simply choose what is the most beneficial. What do we really need?

Quite honestly, some need to go and stay in a hotel rather than in someone’s home when they travel, but some go to hotels when they could be staying in someone’s home. There was a period when I was not well and it was not always beneficial for me to stay in people’s homes. Once I was well again, I wanted to get back into people’s homes and stay with them, and I do that at times, with the little bit of travelling I do around Australia.

That was what was most beneficial at the time, but that can change. There are seasons when my telephone is ringing all the time with people asking me very serious questions, and it is difficult to fit that around a family’s routine. During those times I may need to stay in a hotel. Each of us has to work out what is the most beneficial.

Sometimes we may travel economy class, but at other times, because of what is happening in our life at that moment in time, we may need to travel business class. We cannot simply

take any of that for granted; rather decide what the most beneficial use of the tithes of the church will be. Sometimes you may need two weeks vacation a year and at other times you may need more. We must make sure that we do not abuse the people or the privilege of leadership, but we also have to make sure that we do not destroy ourselves either.

Those are some of the factors that have been important to me in building the apostolic team I have led. Some of those things are not easy to say to any team. It may even sound as if I am not happy with the way things have been with New Covenant Ministries International, but I have to say from my heart that my wife, Ann, and I rave about the team. We love them and I go out, almost on a daily basis, and thank God for the team. I thank God for their sacrificial giving wherever they are involved around the world.

It is not as if we cannot see that. It is simply that God always wants to do things to make us more efficient and more effective, where fewer fingers can be pointed at us without us becoming beggars, or being in bondage. Lets stay free and faithful.

Chapter 40

My Dream Team

In conclusion, I thought that it may be useful to briefly share a few of the qualities that I see in my 'dream team'. This is my personal vision of what an ideal team (including myself) is. There is some repetition of what has already been covered, but that only serves to emphasise some of those things.

Humble. All of us, every team member is humble.

Prayerful, even if we do not find prayer an easy thing. We are prayers at home, we are prayers in the church, and whenever we get opportunity, we pray together as a team. We are not only praying in the prayer meetings, but we are praying throughout the day. Praying without ceasing if that is possible. That is what the Word tells us to do.

We are prayerful before we consider things, prayerful before we respond or react, prayerful before we pick up the phone and say things to people. We are prayerful before we challenge people, prayerful before we say, "God is saying..."

United. Where there is such a wonderful unity and fellowship and friendship in the Holy Spirit, that even to see someone on the team get hurt is a ghastly thing for us. When we see someone withdrawn, we do not simply say, "Well that is par for the course. We know that comes with the territory."

Rather, there would be such a desire in our hearts for unity that we want to see unity maintained at every level.

Co-operating. Where we do not always want to have our own way or do things our own way. Neither do we exclude ourselves from any aspect of what the team is doing because we are not convinced of it. We co-operate with one another. We do things together.

Non-competitive. Where we even stop joking about a competitive spirit, or justifying it from the Bible. It simply is not there. The Bible is against it.

That means that we do not try to out-preach, out-prophecy, out-heal, out-win souls, whatever it may be, with each other. All competitiveness is dealt a deathblow.

Selfless. Where we truly take up our cross daily and deny ourselves, in order to do the will of God. We are not always asking what is in it for us. What will we get out of it? We never ask for applause, commendation, or encouragement. We simply get on with it.

As I look at the life of Jesus it amazes me, if I am honest with the Scriptures, to see how seldom He commended people. He was not always running to His team saying, "Well done!"

It amazes me how seldom Jesus even answered a question directly. He answered some questions by asking questions. Sometimes He refused point blank to answer the question. He was not always concerned with keeping the people encouraged, even though the Scripture does say that we should encourage one another. I think it was because He also modelled a selfless life.

I want us to be the kind of people that are so selfless that if no one ever commended us again we would still keep going. We would stay faithful, buoyant, joyful, zealous and fervent.

We are **looking after the interests of others and not our own**. This is part of my dream team. We would phone one another simply to encourage one another. Not the same people all the time. I know that there are some on our team who hardly ever get a call from another team member.

Some are perceived to be more important on team and have a higher visibility than others. Often the team members are phoning them, but what about the others? How many people pick up the phone and phone them in order to look after their interests, to find out how they are doing and let them know that they are thinking about them? I am talking about a genuine interest that comes from the heart.

My dream for the team is that we would let God develop such a love and an interest in one another that it becomes a part of who we are. Following up each other would be a natural thing to do.

Wise in the decisions and statements that we make. That we discern what our decisions will lead to. We are able to discern what spirit is operating, not only the gift of discerning of spirits, which we do, but the discerning of what is actually happening there; what is going down.

Available. My dream team would be totally available to God and the team members are available to the team leader. We are also all available to the others on the team. We are available to all the churches that relate to us – the small ones as well as the big ones.

You do not know how much the small churches appreciate big-capacity men coming in to visit them. I do not see myself as a big-capacity person. I see myself as a kind of a two-talent man, but I am surprised at the number of times that the smaller churches have said to me that it amazes them that I have time to come to their church. You do not know how much they appreciate that.

No longer reactive but responding. Not simply picking up things and reacting to what we see as a lack in a particular church. Not reacting because we are being left out. I simply want people to be responding wisely. There is a major difference between reacting and responding.

Another quality of my dream team is that we are **accountable**. Accountable to one another and accountable to the elders of the church that we are in.

I mean truly accountable. Too many say that they are accountable to me and yet I do not know what they are doing because they do not let me know. I do not know what they are doing with the money they are entrusted with. I do not know what they are doing with their time. I do not know where they are half the time.

I am talking about authentic accountability. There have been some on team who, at the end of the day, I know are not accountable to a soul on this earth. It grieves me to say this, but if God were to stand before them, they would have to say, “God, they think that I am accountable but I am not.”

Faithful. With our time, treasures, talents, etc, as I talked about previously. We are faithful to our spouses, our children, the people that we minister to, the people in the church and the spouses of the ones we sometimes counsel.

We do not want unfaithfulness on our team. I hope that every one of us is being faithful to our spouse, absolutely faithful, even in our minds. My dream is that we are faithful to the extent that this team will never ever have to ‘discipline’ anyone on the team because they have been unfaithful.

My dream is also that every person does not think of me as an idiot, even if I am. There do not have to always be ‘balancing factors’ on a team. I do not need those who are always challenging, always telling me to think outside the

box. While I love input, I do not like input that always implies that I am an idiot. I am sure that no one does.

Well, that is in part how I see my dream team. I see it as a team that wants to be together, and that our getting together is not always about 'business', that we would be a team that sees the value of sitting around tables and laughing, hour after hour – a whole day if need be – without any times of teaching or one business issue.

My dream is that team members will come to team meetings with no baggage, without any preferences as to what they think we should be doing, and a heart that trusts the leader to do his best and not to waste their time. We will all be determined to enjoy being there.