

Church Leadership

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

In times of hardship and crisis, people look for and respond to real leadership. Honest men—men who stand fast and serve faithfully in the capacity to which they were called—bring comfort and peace to those who need them. Unfortunately, there are people who are always seeking out leaders who will take them where they want to go, without regard to God's call, His plan, or His purpose. Their leaders may go forward and even help others to follow them, but the end of that road is very rough.

Nowhere is this truer than in the Church of Jesus Christ. In many congregations, the models of leadership have become muddled as the years have gone by. What God intended to be handled as a family matter has become, in too many cases, competitive striving. Instead of the intricate working of the corporate Body of Christ, we sometimes see churches that are led by committees and regulated by business principles that do

not permit faith obedience for the individual.

The Bible is very clear about leadership in the Body of Christ. This booklet shows that Jesus Christ is the Head over all, and as we submit to His headship, He will lead us in the paths that produce peace—straight paths that will cause us to be hidden, protected as members in particular. There, He will teach us His ways through the gifts He has ordained, so we will be prepared to serve His purpose on earth. By hearing from God now and by receiving one another according to the gift of God, we will be ready to receive all the blessings of eternal life as one Body—His bride—forever and ever.

Chapter One

THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE ASCENSION

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

“Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching” (Romans 12:3 -7).

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

“With all lowliness and meekness, with

longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

“One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ” (Ephesians 4:1-7).

Are You Hindered from Taking Your Place in the Body?

Many people are hindered in their walk with God because of a soulish predisposition, and they are inclined to respond in situations based on previous experiences. In many cases, their predisposition combines with genetic tendencies in areas of weakness and natural strength. Ultimately, though they desire to be one with God and the Body of Christ, their over-thinking will get them in trouble.

An impulsive person may respond impulsively to a drive or compelling power. Peter impulsively declared that he would never deny Christ, but that impulse would not carry him

through the period after Christ was arrested and tried. Peter denied Jesus three times and was beside himself with grief. But in the end, he recognized that he was *in* Christ, hidden and protected. From that time, Peter allowed God to lead him into places he never would have gone (John 21:18). In the measure that Peter was occupied with Christ, he was used as a leader in the Church, bringing many into eternal life through the glorious Gospel.

God desires that His people would be occupied with Christ. In Ephesians 4, Paul describes how we are to walk, regarding ourselves and others. He declared that we are “called out” ones, and then he described the unity of the Trinity. According to Paul, the unity of the Godhead is the abiding principle for unity in the Body of Christ. The Son yielded to the Father, the Holy Spirit always glorified Christ, and the Father delegated authority to the Son, who was sent to lead “captivity captive.” “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son” (John 5:22).

The Gifts God Gives to His People

The gifts Jesus gives unto men are the result of the glorious victory He won before He de-

scended into the lower parts of the earth. In 1 Peter 3:18-19, after He was crucified and died, Jesus' body was quickened by the power of the Holy Spirit, and He descended in order to preach to those whose souls were in prison.

Some of the people there were not in captivity in the truest sense of the word. There were two parts to that place, and not everyone there was considered to be in prison (1 Peter 3:19). Paradise was described in the Old Testament as a place of beautiful walled gardens, enclosed parks—a place of pleasure that was accessible only to special people. It was separated from the place of torment by a great gulf that was fixed between them (see Luke 16:26).

Those people who were in paradise were comforted, and they did enjoy their state, yet those souls were not able to go directly to heaven when they died. But now, having conquered death, Christ was ready to lead captivity captive and bring release for those in paradise. Still, that could not happen until, as the glorified Man, He ascended to heaven and was seated in His perfect humanity at the right hand of the Father. Up until then, the Finished Work victory was a faith issue but not a completed issue. This is why, in addition to His resurrection, Christ's

ascension is so important.

*The Hypostatic Union: The Invisible
Made Visible*

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

“Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

“Who being the brightness of his glory, and *the express image of his person*, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:1-3).

In verse 3 of Hebrews 1, “the express image” in the Greek is *charakter tes hupostaseos*, which denotes that Christ is the exact representation of God, meaning *He is God*. *Hupostasis* speaks of something that already exists but is not visible, which now becomes a visible reality. In what is called the hypostatic union, Christ is the wholly valid revelation of the invisible transcendent reality of God. God has become visible on earth as a man. Occasionally, Jesus Christ is said to be the ‘essence’ of God. In fact, Christ is God, but He is

more.

Christ was God in His pre-human state. When He took on human flesh, He was the manifestation and realization in human form of what He already was: He was God, having two natures: human and divine. This is vital in relationship to our salvation, because in one Person, He was a perfect man. Therefore, He was the perfect sacrifice for sin.

Furthermore, in this hypostatic union, just as Christ was able to manifest God to man, He now represents man to God (Hebrews 2:16-17). We who are born-again are in Christ. And because Christ is the exact representation and image of a perfect man, we can now go freely to the throne of God, be heard, and receive grace and mercy for our need (Hebrews 4:16).

The Ultimate Triumph for the Royal Family

Jesus' royal family—God the Father and the Holy Spirit—was established in heaven in eternity past. As prophesied, the Son of Man was born of the seed of David. The result was the hypostatic union, when God became a man in the Incarnation.

This principle of the hypostatic union seems to be related to the Greek verb *huphistemi*, which

means, “to place oneself under” or “to stand under.”

As a perfect man, Christ surrendered the position, the power, and the knowledge He possessed in His deity. In His humanity, He had to go through the suffering described in Psalm 22. He had to experience terrible persecution and ultimately the Cross. After He was crucified, the risen Lord Jesus spent forty days on earth, and then He ascended into heaven. Ten days later came the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), when the apostles and many more were filled with the Holy Spirit and three thousand were saved. Today, the same Holy Spirit is available to constantly fill every believer's life.

Satan and his demons fought Christ's ascension like nothing else. They understood that Jesus' entrance into heaven would mean their defeat. They hated Him, rejected Him, and they all came out on the day of His ascension to keep Him on earth and to limit God's glory. Jesus, however, brushed them all off as if they were fleas.

Picture it! Satan's armies were defeated because the risen Lord just brushed them off (Colossians 2:15), and in the blink of an eye, He traveled billions of light years right up to the

throne room in heaven. By the time the two angels announced to the apostles that this same Jesus they saw going up would return again (Acts 1:11), He was already in heaven, billions of light years away.

After His ascension came His “session”—when Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Man, was seated on the throne (Hebrews 1:3, Hebrews 12:1-2; Acts 5:31).

Finally, a man was accepted in heaven.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is now seated at the right hand of the Father. He is the glorified Man—fully accepted in heaven. With His glorious ascension came a new opportunity to reveal His victory and to express His triumph through the revelation of the Body of Christ on earth. Jesus went up and the Father received Him, making Him the head over each member of His Body—the Church—which now operates through the Holy Spirit in His stead.

Chapter Two

PASTOR-TEACHERS: GOD'S GIFTS TO HIS PEOPLE

"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

"(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

"He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:8-11).

Ephesians 4:8 says that God gave gifts unto men. Here, "gave" is the aorist active indicative of the Greek verb *didomi*, which means that the present reality was expressed in the certainty of a past event. Christ performed the action to make it possible for Him to give gifts. First He

descended and then He ascended, far above principalities and powers. Then He entered into a new privilege of being the head of His Church. According to Ephesians 4:11, these gifts are a direct outcome of Jesus' glorious victory in taking captivity captive when He went to the lower parts of the earth. The "gifts" are men whom He conquered, and they are God's "gifts" for the Church.

The first gift Jesus mentioned was the gift of apostles. These were church leaders who actually saw Christ on earth, given as specific gifts for this time period in Church history. After the last apostle died, those gifts ceased. There are no apostles in that sense today. Some beautiful Christians have done and still do missionary work. They operate in an apostolic fashion, but they are not apostles.

Jesus also gave "prophets," and this word speaks of preachers or *forthtellers*—those who spread forth the Word of God. Forthtellers are not foretellers who could predict the future. There is a big difference.

Also given were evangelists—men with specific gifts in the area of winning souls. All believers are to be evangelists and share the message of salvation, but some operate as evan-

gelists who are given as specific gifts to the Church.

The Gift of Pastor-Teacher

The next gift referred to is “pastors and teachers”—*poimon kai didaskalous* in the Greek text. The connecting word *kai*, according to the Granville-Sharp Rule of Greek Grammar, indicates that the phrase refers to one individual who carries out the duties of two offices. The pastor-teacher is given to a church as a gifted and called man of God—an under-shepherd who serves at the direction of Jesus Christ, who is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11), the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4), and the Great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20).

The pastor-teacher is prepared and equipped by God with administrative powers and delegated authority, and to undertake the work of teaching the Word of God. Clearly, the one who leads must also be able to teach and to preach the Word.

One of the most difficult things is for a man to take on the office of pastor-teacher without having the gift of being a pastor-teacher. We offer three kinds of ordination to men who qualify: administrative pastor, helper or assisting

pastor, and pastor-teacher. Some men are gifted to be pastor-teachers; others are gifted as assistants or as administrators. But each one is set apart because of his dedication to studying the Word.

The gift of pastor-teacher is not something a man ought to seek. When he is being filled with the Holy Spirit, he will know his gifts. As those gifts are discovered through the Holy Spirit's filling, they will be revealed without striving and struggling. The job will seem to come easy because he loves it. And instead of feeling weighed down and burned out, he can relax in the filling of the Spirit.

Some pastors struggle so much that they develop a driving spirit. These men show up for a time of outreach and feel compelled to preach for fifty minutes. They never seem to mind that the people they are speaking to have heard messages all week and are ready to go out and share the Word. When someone is asked to speak at an outreach meeting, he should go eight minutes tops. The outreach meeting is not the time for preaching. He could speak about God's motivation to win the lost, ask the Lord to motivate him and the others, and then go.

Preparations and Qualifications

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine” (1 Timothy 5:17).

“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine.

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

“And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Timothy 4:1-4).

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

“In meekness instructing those that oppose

themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (2 Timothy 2:24-25).

The pastor-teacher is to study until his eyes are red from tiredness. He uses all Scripture because God gave every word for doctrine and instruction. It is important for every pastor to preach the whole counsel of God, using categorical doctrine and the historical, literal frame of reference (isagogics), having studied the original languages of the Bible texts.

A pastor-teacher should always be well prepared and qualified to speak the truth, even when that truth will be inconvenient for some of the hearers. Beyond that, the pastor-teacher must have meekness toward people in the very unique situations when they oppose themselves. He must never lord over people by taking advantage of his position.

"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

"Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:2-3).

Chapter Three

THE RESPONSIVE CONGREGATION

“And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle” (Revelation 1:13).

“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding” (Jeremiah 3:15).

“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation” (Hebrews 13:7).

Jesus walks among the candlesticks. The candlesticks typify every believer, and Revelation 1:13 relates a beautiful picture of the Lord’s presence when the members of a godly congregation come together.

As a congregation, we never follow a man. We are led by the man who follows Christ. That

man is never to be exalted above measure. Respect is given to his office, his gifts, and his messages. Due honor should be accorded as we follow the pastor's office and messages that are given to us as gifts. The principle is that we are not to put one personality ahead of another. We receive our gift from God.

Every pastor-teacher needs a godly congregation that responds to God and obeys the Word. This kind of congregation recognizes, loves, and discerns a pastor's heart. The members delight in the law of the Lord, and they avoid the seat of the scornful and the ways of those who are prone to gossip and slander (Psalm 1:1; Romans 7:22; Proverbs 10:18).

"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Corinthians 12:27).

"As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me" (Psalm 18:44).

Those in a congregation should be faithful to attend all the services and to be there at the appointed times as often as physically possible. They should understand that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. They are members in particular; they are part of the pastor-teacher's team. By coming to church,

those in a congregation discover the position God has for them on the team.

As members in particular, those in a congregation who recognize that they were made one in Christ will love one another (John 15:12). They give double honor to the pastor for his work and his labor (1 Thessalonians 5:11-12). They obey when they hear the Word of God, mixing faith with what they hear and growing to be steadfast and immovable in the work of God (1 Corinthians 15:58). They pray, they obey, and they worship.

Every pastor and congregation should love and practice the Great Commission (Acts 1:8), serving as witnesses to their Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. In so doing, they come to love the fact that they can disciple the people they win to Christ.

The Way to Victory

I have noticed that people who participate in this kind of congregation overcome certain pre-occupations. Of course, every individual stands or falls before God. In other words, a pastor cannot force anyone to make right decisions. He can only lead them by presenting the whole counsel of God and by loving them as he prays for them.

Most people, however, have problems because of one or two habits that they will not give up. I know of a person who will not quit smoking. Smoking is not the real issue; the issue is that this person enjoys no victory. His health is being tremendously affected. The whole issue behind his predicament is a besetting sin that he will not let go. As a result, he is limited in his blessings, in his process, and in his progress in the Kingdom of God. He has admitted that he doesn't feel right when he smokes, but he will not receive victory above his preoccupation.

Work and Edification

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12).

What is the purpose of the pastor-teacher? In Ephesians 4, the first time the Greek preposition *pros* is used (translated as "for"), it expresses the purpose of an action. The pastor-teacher is given to help to perfect—to make complete, to fully equip, to make adequate, and to completely furnish—the saints under his care. "Saints" are simply those who have received Christ, those who have been made holy and set apart in the Finished Work.

Every precious pastor should set out to disciple leaders under him. Those who are being disciplined should get to know the Book and be able to come up with fresh truths every time they get up to speak. These pastors will then be able to lead and to equip those who hear them.

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29).

“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Colossians 4:6).

“Edification” is a word that pictures a church that is constantly growing, with new members constantly being incorporated into the Body as it extends and increases. Each member learns to function with his call, increasing inwardly as he obeys outwardly.

The “work” done by anyone in the congregation ought always to be a function performed with energy from Jesus Christ. All things in the Church must come under divine appointment so that the ministry can run efficiently, accurately, and powerfully in oneness.

God has given gifts to men, severally as He will. Let us go forward with one purpose: to

draw near to Christ as we lead men to Him. As He is, so are we in this world. He has ascended and is seated at the Father's right hand. Therefore, let us recognize our position in Christ, seated above every enemy and every hindrance. Let us begin to operate in the measure of the gift of grace He has given to us.

CONCLUSION

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

The way to experience maturity and the fullness of Christ is to receive the Word as taught through the gift of a pastor-teacher and revealed in the Body of Christ. The head of the Church is Jesus Christ, and He has ordained us to be here in His stead, participating as necessary members of His body on the earth. Therefore, it is crucial that each of us knows the geographical will of God—which is to know who God has called to lead us and to know where we belong.

Through years of being a pastor to several churches and preaching in many others, I have always placed an emphasis on prayer, on soul winning, and on building the Body of Christ through the local assembly. It is so vital that people are trained to become leaders. In turn, the

church sends out those leaders to equip others with the glorious Gospel. This has been the key to the success of our ministry. We have equipped people by God's grace.

We believe that it is vital to provide our congregation with Christian day schools for their children as well as facilities for adult Christian education, such as our Bible college. We offer these provisions for men and women to become fully equipped in the work of the ministry and to give them a desire to win souls and make disciples through the Holy Spirit's compelling love for the lost.

Is there anything more precious than abiding in the unity of faith where a church's vision, love, truth, prayers, and obedience are unlimited? This oneness in the unity of faith is what true, godly church leadership produces in the midst of this world system.