

Structures of christian fellowships

We cannot order when the Holy Spirit should manifest or come in our midst, but we can hinder him in his work.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom. If we plan out everything, we could miss what the Holy Spirit has for this day or meeting.

So, it has to be a structure of freedom where the Holy Spirit can use and speak through whoever He wants. He can use a child or someone we never thought of.

When you come together what is Apostle Paul suggesting.

1 Cor. 14, 26 *What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up. If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God. Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people.*

Germans are always very much into order but the order is not the answer but the peace. Order is only legitimate if it brings peace.

Because some leaders don't have the courage to stop or encourage their members, this does often not work out. Jesus said if you pray don't make many words as the heathen, because they believe they are heard if they make many words. Your father in Heaven knows what you need. Frustration comes and they feel more safe if there is an order that everything is planned out.

I have not heard of any revival that started because of the right order of a service.

Smith Wigglesworth left a few times a congregation because they turned into being a rigid and legalistic congregation and did not give the Holy Spirit anymore the freedom to work.

Galatians 5, 1 *“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love”.*

As the Holy Spirit restores everything, He will also restore the manifold gifts and the different callings received through the work of the Holy Spirit to build up the Body of Christ.

Ephesians 4, 11-13: *“It was HE who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ”.*

Many of God's children are displaced because of the human control in the church. We seldom see Acts 13, 1-3 in practice in the Church. They served the Lord together in prayer and fasting. There was no agenda mentioned in Acts 13, 1-3, but they received personal and corporate words of confirmation for their calling from the Lord. Today the Body of Christ suffers because many of God's people are in bondage of human structures and they are not liberated to serve according to their calling. If the Holy Spirit will be poured out again, every one of us will walk under the anointment of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus will reign in His Body and everybody will be able to serve in the calling the Lord has given to him.

The Lord is calling and sending workers in His harvest and He will restore these ministries and protect His flock from the self-appointed or self-promoting ministries. There is some confusion in the body of Christ because the five-fold ministry needs to be restored. Peter Robertson from New Zealand wrote a book called *The Jerusalem Revival*. In this book he wrote:

“The church in New Zealand will only see revival in the measure they are investing themselves for a Holy Spirit revival in Jerusalem.”

I got his permission to quote some short passage from his book *Letters to a Young Prophet*:

“The unholy three's only way of conceiving “government” in both Church and state is either the tyranny of the one over the many (dictatorship), or the tyranny of the majority over the minority (democracy). Prior to the Reformation, tyrannical governments were the order of the day via kings and popes. Since then, Protestantism has been seduced by various manifestations of secular and religious democracy. It continues to strike me as queer indeed that Protestants who are so clear-eyed concerning the fallibility of an infallible pope are so utterly blind to their own equally stupid notion that majority of God's people are sure to be right. The “apostolic revolution” which so many have been trumpeting in recent years ought to be addressing the substantial gaps in the Church's foundations caused by all manner of humanistic rather than divine government. It's entirely about the Church being built on God's foundations, which are, Matthew 16:18 and Ephesians 2:19-20.

The true apostolic revolution is all about God's prerogative and right to build HIS house on HIS foundation, which consists of apostles and prophets, sovereign created and welded together by Jesus. This is the only “construction” that has the strength to bear the weight of those other leadership (usually pastoral, teaching, evangelistic) ministries necessary for the life and health of the local church life.”

Some time ago I received another article about the teachings of the Nicolaitians that could be interesting also for you. We read about this certain group of people in Revelations 2, 6 ***“But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”***

We do not have a lot of information concerning this group. According to the article:

“The Holy Spirit makes us aware about a teaching that influences the Body of Christ to separate the people from a walk of intimacy with the Lord. One of the stumbling stones is the spirit of the Nicolaitians. We recognized this spirit raising its head at the very outset of the early apostolic church and it represents a perverted form of leadership that has an opposite motivation to that of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of the Lord will draw the people to the Lord Jesus while this counterfeit influence seeks to separate the people from the Lord. The Nicolaitians spirit will masquerade as a true governmental and spiritual authority, but using fear, manipulation, and control to achieve its agenda. The term “Nicolaitians” comes from two Greek words “Nikos” and “Laos”. Nikos means to conquer and by implication, dominancy over the defeated. The term “laos” means “the common people” or the “laity.” It means: “to conquer (dominate-intimidate-manipulate) the common people (laity). An examination of church history is highlighting the

Nicolaitians movement that marked the beginning of an unrighteous priesthood within the Church. We want to identify the spiritual influences that has stolen the inheritance of the saints throughout the Church ages and overcome with Christ as He overcame.”

True leadership will equip the people to do the work of the ministry. Ephesians 4:11-12. The apostle Paul was willing to lay down his life for the people to whom he ministered. He did not lord his spiritual authority over the people but readily poured himself out for the sake of the Lord’s Church. That quality is the predominant separation between the genuine and the counterfeit forms of leadership. The true leadership model is not that of a pyramid but an inverted pyramid. True spiritual fathers will take great joy in seeing their spiritual offspring flourish in their relationship with the Lord and the impartation of the gifts. The Lord clearly expressed his disgust and hatred for the Nicolaitian spirit and its corrupt agenda. In fact, those who shared His disdain for this evil opposition were commended. (Revelation 2:6) and those who were holding on to it were criticized:

Rev 2, 15 ***“Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.”***

For those entrusted with true authority, make no place for intimidation, control and the power-hungry counterfeit authority over the sheep. The Nicolaitian spirit will target Christians who have lost their “first-love” affections for the Lord. The enemy meticulously orchestrates a series of life events that cool our affections for the things of the Spirit with the intended hope of imparting apathy and lethargy. Hope deferred will make the heart sick! If accomplished, the door is then opened to this form of leadership that directs the focus of the people away from the Lord. Thankfully, the spirit of wisdom and revelation is promised to each believer, affording understanding of our rich inheritance in Christ. The Lord is granting the spirit of revelation to open “eyes and ears” to a place of fellowship with Him and taking away hopelessness. In its place, “first love” affections are being restored. Holy desperation is in the hearts of a bridal company who will not be satisfied hearing the testimony of others who have encountered the Lord Jesus— they must have their own personal relationship.

In John 10 there is a clear word from the Lord stating, ***“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow me”***. We are promised the ability to experientially apprehend the revelation of His Voice. The more acutely familiar we are with His Voice the more capable we become of recognizing the counterfeit. The restoration promises will take place. In Joel 2:25 ***“I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm my great army that I sent among you.*** The Lord prophetically outlined this privilege when He said: “To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out of bondage and oppression into a place of freedom and liberty because where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (John 10: 3) The Nicolaitian spirit will no longer hold bride of Christ hostage. Her destination is to be joined with the Lord in the promised union.

True Apostolic leadership will be commissioned with a fourfold mandate like the one given to the apostle Paul. The Lord sent one of His cherished friends, Ananias, to release a prophetic commission to the now converted Saul of Tarsus. Ananias told Paul four specific admonitions that would overshadow his life and are also characterize apostolic leaders. The scripture in Acts 22:12-15 says:

“A certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, and well-spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, came to me, and standing near said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very time I looked up at him. And he said, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth. For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard’”.

Paul was empowered with four distinctive privileges that exemplified his apostolic calling. Those are:

1. Appointed to know His will;
2. See the Righteous One;

3. Hear utterances from His lips;
4. Be a witness/testifier of what was seen and heard.

The word witness is a judicial term signifying one who gives testimony only to what they have personally seen and heard. Anointed eyes and ears are essential in the accomplishment of this mandate. These attributes will begin to separate true governmental qualities from the Nicolaitians spirit. The Disciple of Jesus, John must have known the teaching of the Nicolaitians. In this light we understand also better what he had to say about the teachings of the Gnostics and the Nicolaitians. He is warning us in his first letter, in

1 John 2, 18-21: ***“Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth”.***

And in 1 John 2, 26-27 we also read: ***“These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him”.***

John was for sure not against it to teach in the church; he is only addressing those leaders who believe that without their advice the sheep of the Lord would not find the right way or understand the ways of the Lord.

Apostle Paul comes also against this group with other words. 2 Corinthians 11, 5 ***“I do not think I am in the least inferior to those “super-apostles.”^[a] 6 I may indeed be untrained as a speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way. 7 Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge?***

And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. 13 For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

2 Corinthians and 12,11 ***“I have made a fool of myself, but you drove me to it. I ought to have been commended by you, for I am not in the least inferior to the “super-apostles,”^[a] even though I am nothing. 12 I persevered in demonstrating among you the marks of a true apostle, including signs, wonders and miracles. 13 How were you inferior to the other churches, except that I was never a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong!”***

It looks like these “super-apostles” took good money for their service.

I know this is a fine line and there is no place for rebellion towards leadership and we also have to bear the weakness of others as they bear with us. Love is covering the sin. But if we recognize the problem, it could help us to find our way and calling in the Lord Yeshua.