

THE MOBILE MINISTRY WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN

Ephesians 4: 8-16.

"Therefore he says, "When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." {Psalm 68:18}

He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints, to the work of serving, to the building up of the body of Christ. {This is the only occasion that the word *poimenas* has been translated 'pastors'. In every other case it is translated *shepherds*}.

Until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we may no longer be children, tossed back and forth and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, Christ; from whom all the body, being fitted and knit together through that which every joint supplies, according to the working in measure of each individual part, makes the body increase to the building up of itself in love".

It is not mere unity that is taught here but "growth".

God always takes the initiative.

The first step in the redemptive process was, The Father sent His Son: John 3:16.

After Our Lord and Savior finished the work His Father sent Him to do He returned to heaven and sat down at His Father's right hand to begin interceding the Father on behalf of the saints.

Then on Pentecost Sunday the Father fulfilled His pledge by sending the Holy Spirit as promised.

When the Holy Spirit came He brought Spiritual gifts for all to profit by.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (NKJV) "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills".

As far as our acceptance with God is concerned a Christian is complete in Christ as soon as he believes. Rom 8: All sin has been forgiven and condemnation is gone. But while the work of Christ "For us" is perfect, the work of the Holy Spirit "In us" is far from complete. It goes on daily and will continue to do so throughout all our lives Romans 8:28-29. Almost every figure by which Christians are described implies our need for growth and maturation. Even Paul could say, "I count not myself to have apprehended, nor to be already perfect Philippians 3: 12-14. To assist in this process the Lord has arranged some things, and done some others.

1. Within local congregations he has provided Elders and Deacons for the purpose of feeding, watching over and serving the flock.

2. After Christ ascended and took His place at His Father's right hand He gave gifted men and women to His body on earth Ephesians 4: 8-11.

As elders feed and watch over the local flock, so also do the gifts in Ephesians equip, adjust, feed, and care for the Body.

From His high and lofty place the ascended triumphant Christ began His heavenly ministry of prayer and intercession for His Body on earth. But equally as important He gave especially gifted servants to assist His Body to grow to full maturity. And He set them in His body as it pleased Him to do so. (This arrangement is unacceptable to many.) Unlike local oversight these gifted individuals were given to the Body at large, God having predetermined the circumference of their influence. Peter and James with the Jerusalem brethren went to the circumcision, while Paul and Barnabas were sent to the Gentiles. These gifts are still being sent forth under the direction of the Holy Spirit by Christ, to be recognized, and hopefully received by His body, for the purpose of edifying it.

In Eph 4: 8-16 Paul seeks to make the purpose for which these gifts are given clear.

When we take into account the roles these individuals are to fulfill it becomes abundantly clear how **vital** they were deemed to be in the mind of the Savior who gave them; and how **vehemently** the enemy will seek to discredit them. We quickly realize the position of pastor "singular" has **no** Biblical foundation, but more to the point this individual is a serious hindrance to the spiritual development of God's people.

1 Corinthians 12: 28 "And God set some in the church, firstly, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers, then works of power, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, kinds of languages. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of power? (MKJV)

Oh what bitterness and discontent is manifested as to position, which members occupy in the body. They forget that it does not say they have been placed "as it pleases them". The Jerusalem Apostles and the Antioch Apostles were not unlike the Old Covenant Judges, who fulfilled a dual role; i.e. they were Prophets as well as Judges. In restoration, given due recognition, apostles will operate in much the same way today as they did back then. We also see recorded named and nameless prophets in Acts and the Epistles.

Barnabas was a Prophet who later became an Apostle. He was a Levite, called Joses Acts 4:36. Later he was surnamed Barnabas by the apostles, (which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation,) from the country of Cyprus. He was a Prophet, an Apostle and a companion of Paul, acts 9:27; 11:22-30; 12:35. Called Jupiter by the pagans acts 14: 12-18. Separated from Paul through contention over Mark, acts 15: 36-39. Reconciled later to Paul in 1 Corinthians 9: 6.

Paul was prophetic throughout his life. We have such a tendency to divide people into tidy little compartments that we often fail to see the diversity in the way that the Holy Spirit operated as needs arose.

HOW DOES ALL THIS AFFECT ME?

The present state of affairs is that the religious systems refuse to acknowledge that the Mobile Ministry as seen in the New Testament has any merit today. For them to receive these individuals into their gatherings would mean that massive changes would have to be made. The current professionals jealously maintain ridged control over their power base, which is people and property. The only kind of growth systems are interested in is numerical. They surround themselves with tenets designed to protect and preserve their movement from heresy, which seems to the rational mind to be a smart move. But these tenets quickly become impregnable walls beyond which restoration truth cannot penetrate.

Isaiah 42:22-23 “But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivers; for a spoil, and none says restore. Who among you will give ear to this? Who will hearken and hear for the time to come?”

We have come into family life for growth, not just numerical, but spiritual also; growing up into Him in all things. The immature can't reproduce.

THE HOUSE CHURCH MOVEMENT

Without the foregoing the present house church movement will eventually run its course. Euphoric home groups, with their ladders up against the wrong wall will slowly grow stale, or self-destruct if they fail to recognize and receive the mobile ascension gifts. It matters not whether you meet in a home, or how many you meet with, but are you prepared to recognize and receive these gifts of the Savior? Perhaps you feel that you have no need of these special gifts of Christ, i.e. Apostles, Prophets and Teachers. Unlike Paul you possibly feel you have arrived? Are you sure you're not just a group of middle class reactionary saints who moved from a church building into a home? Or was it because you had a conviction that there was so much more to Christianity than what you were experiencing. Are you in the semi retirement mode where the only thing missing from your static life since you pulled out of the system was a miniature church where you could meet in the comfort zone of a home with Christian friends to talk things over? Perhaps you believe you know everything because you're a priest now, and so that puts you on the same level regardless of calling?

How soon we forget that we have nothing that we didn't receive. That if there is any virtue in what we have then it probably came from the Lord through His trusted servant.

History repeats itself. Israel ignored the prophets God sent them. The reason God did so was because the Priesthood was willful, corrupt and wicked. But the people rejected the prophets and chose rather to have a King like the other nations. This arrangement went on for hundreds of years from Saul to Zedekiah.

Then in 2 Chronicles 36: 16 But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was **no** remedy. {remedy: Heb. healing} (KJV)

From the time that Samuel appointed Saul, the day to day running of the Kingdom was in the hands of the reigning King, assisted by his Princes, and the officers he appointed. They made war, owned large tracts of land, which their servants farmed for them. The maintenance of the king, his household, and army, was a very costly burden, yet it was willingly born by the people that supported him, and fought his battles. These kings were politically powerful, became exceptionally wealthy, and invariably led the people into idolatry and apostasy. Except for a pitiful few they were stubborn and sinful men. Fourteen of them were assassinated by their own brethren.

We see their counterpart in Christianity all around us today. The Kings of these religious kingdoms surround themselves with financial savvy administrators whose task is to promote them personally and to ensure their financial success. Whether they are individuals or movements makes no difference. Some have encircled themselves with highly paid servants who bath in the limelight of their bosses as they attend to their wants. Flaunting their wealth these superstars and those that pander to them are an impediment on the Gospel message.

Jude said they are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withered, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots Jude” 1:12 KJV.

Except for a pathetic few, the Kings of Judah and Israel were wicked men. They murdered the Prophets with impunity, and all the while the priests were willing pawns in their hands. Many commenced their reigns in a most promising fashion, such as Saul, Solomon, Uzziah, and Joash to mention a few, but before their lives ended most were living in open rebellion and idolatry. God gave these kings, and the people that chose them, over to their reprobate desires. They were to pay dearly for hundreds of years for their rejection of King Jehovah. They are still paying today.

PRIESTS

From the very beginning the priesthood that commenced with Aaron and his four sons was corrupt. Two of Aaron's sons (Nadab and Abihu) were slain by God in the Holy place because of their wickedness. Later sons of Eli the reigning high priest, Hophni and Phineas his had become so vile that God destroyed them. He then proceeded to bypass the priesthood and restore the rule of the prophet-judge with Samuel. But even before Samuel died they began to clamour for a King as the nations had.