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FROM THE AGE OF THE PASTOR TO THE AGE OF THE TEACHER

TROUBLE IN TRANSITION



AS THE CHURCH PASSES FROM AN ERA OF PASTORS TO AN ERA OF TEACHERS MANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS OCCUR...HOPEFULLY THEY MAY BE AVOIDED..

There has been a running debate among theologians concerning God's ways and whether He is taking us back to the former glory of the early church, restoring the five fold ministry, or if He is taking us on into things we can't as yet imagine.

It is not God's nature to go backwards. His general plan in history has been to take his people forward into new and unexplored territory. He called Abraham out of his home land to settle in a land he knew nothing about. When the Israelites left Egypt for the promised land God gave them a whole new set of directives to live by. He is now calling us to a new heaven and a new earth, to the New Jerusalem.

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We are moving ahead into a new age. It calls for new understanding and insight. We want to stay in step with the Holy Spirit.

WE HAVE UNCHARTED TERRITORIES TO EXPLORE.



"God has given apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come into the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the son of God; unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ (Eph. 4:11-15).

GOD DOESN'T RUN US IN CIRCLES.



We're expecting God to take us straight forward not in a circle, back to previous ways. He did give apostles to the early church: Peter, John, Thomas... twelve of them in all. After the apostles many prophets arose: Ignatius, Polycarp, Origen are a few. After a longer period evangelists came forth: Luther, Knox, Wesley... they spread their newly restored doctrines of faith, sanctification and more. After the evangelists there came an era in church history of great pastors, men like Moody and Ironsides. These men built great works around established truths.

THE FIVE FOLD MINISTRY HAS OPENED ITS LAST FOLD.



The church is now passing from an era of pastors to an era of teachers. This is not to say there are no longer prophets or evangelists or that there is no need for pastors, but rather that now the great cry from all areas of Christianity seems to be for teachers, for men who can prepare us for the final glorious age of the church.

We are in a time of transition and, of course, there is much confusion. The church has been under pastors, and the pastoring atmosphere has been good to a point but now teachers are needed to take us on to that final step, into the fullness of Christ, to that time when the Bible says 'no man will need to say to his neighbor, "know the Lord," for all men will know Him (Jer. 31:34).

PASTORS ARE STILL NEEDED.



Because we are in a transition period many people are confused about the role their particular church is playing in God's plan. A movement started some years ago urging Christians to leave their denominational churches. Many did and many faltered, not knowing what to do or where to go. Churches were labeled evil or corrupt and much misunderstanding arose.

We are not mad at churches but we do believe pastors must begin to see the important role they have and learn what is happening in their congregations.

A pastor has a duty to protect his flock, much as a mother protects her children from the harm of the world. A pastor lays foundations and drills his people in the basics of the faith. We all need this. A mother also disciplines her children and teaches them the fundamentals of life.

A PASTOR'S DUTIES ARE MUCH LIKE A MOTHER'S.



But, unlike many pastors, every good mother knows that her child is going to grow up one day and move out on his or her own. They need freedom to explore the world and start their own home. If they are not afforded this freedom and taught the responsibilities that go with it they will, for the most part, be most miserable.

Pastors must begin to see it is not their duty to hang on to people forever and ever, keeping them confined in one church or Christian society. It is absurd to expect people to sit week after week and hear the same basics preached over and over again. No one can grow under these conditions.

Rather than doing this, the job of the pastor is to bring those who have been entrusted to him to a point where they can hear any teaching and not be shattered in their faith, or caused to stumble and fall. They have to learn to eat the grapes and spit out the seeds.

ONE DAY THE KIDS HAVE TO LEARN TO CORE THEIR OWN APPLES AND PIT THEIR OWN GRAPES



It is a sad thing when a mother, through ignorance or jealousy, holds onto her children, ruling their lives into adulthood or even after they have left home, using fear or threats or acting hurt whenever the offspring doesn't do things her way. This makes for a very unhealthy situation and will probably ultimately cause the child to break completely with the mother, wanting to have nothing to do with her.



I'LL NEVER GO HOME... NEVER, NEVER, NEVER

Many pastors act just this way. They cannot see beyond the confines of their structure or denomination themselves and therefore can't help or even understand the mem-

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bers of their flock who are growing out of those confines.

Like the sun-clothed woman of Revelation 12:1, it is the destiny of the church to give birth to the sons of God. It is a great and delicate responsibility, one that cannot be dispensed with. The church is needed and should not be looked down on or despised.

When a child does mature enough to leave home he doesn't try to do away with his mother. The mother has other children to take care of, she is still needed. Even if there are no more children the mother should be honored and respected by the adult child.

IF YOU HAVE LEFT A CHURCH DON'T TRY TO HARM IT IN ANY WAY.



Likewise, if you have left a church you should not despise that which gave you birth or nourished you for a time.

Separation from a church can be a healthy thing, but we realize that most of the time the separation is terribly misunderstood. Usually, neither the pastor nor the one leaving knows what is going on.

The pastor, in most cases, tries desperately to hold on to the victim. The victim needs just as desperately the freedom to follow the spirit inside that is aching and groaning for fulfillment. In many cases the separation is such a negative thing that the people leaving want nothing to do with anything that smacks of church ever again.

Unfortunately, in this time of transition from an era of pastors to an era of teachers many pastors have become our enemy simply because they do not understand their mission.

SOME PASTORS HAVE MADE THEMSELVES OUR ENEMY.



Even though this is so, we should in no way attempt to harm any church. As we see in Revelation 12, God has prepared a place in the wilderness for the Church. There it will be protected by the earth.

Traveling around the country we see there are many pastors who have a teaching spirit, this is good. These men and women realize it is not their job to build a stockade with one door leading in and no way out.

JESUS SAYS...

I AM THE DOOR... YOU CAN COME IN AND GO OUT AND FIND PASTURE (JOHN 10:9)



MANY PASTORS SAY...

WHEN YOU JOIN OUR CHURCH YOU FIND PASTURE HERE ONLY.



Jesus, as the Chief Shepherd, said He was the door and that those who enter through Him can go in and out and find pasture (John 10:9). Many underhirlings say "Kuh-uh, here's the door in, but there's no straying out again. Our church is it, we have all you'll ever need.

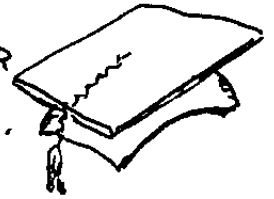
Those with a teaching spirit are realizing people are tired of being sheep. They want understanding. They want to grow up. They want to be useful. The teacher realizes he is processing people, equipping them to go out into the world and develop in their own way with God. The life pattern they develop may be quite different from the church they came from but the basics will remain the same.

CHRISTIANS ARE TIRED OF BEING SHEEP.



We do not know of any denomination that has moved as a whole into new realms of the Spirit. There has always been a separation. When new life springs up in a denominational church, the hierarchy always ends up trying to suppress it or find some way to expel it. This is the story of Church history.

THE NEED NOW IS FOR TEACHERS.



The church must keep giving birth to new moves of God. In this final day let's honor our Mother (CHURCH) and Father (GOD). Let's come forth with understanding and compassion.

Hopefully this message will help some of you who are having or have had trouble in an organized Christian group. Maybe now you will understand what is happening to you, and you will not have to suffer the heart ache and pain many of us have in our search for truth. □