



A Word to Senior Pastors

Over the last many years (more than 25) God has been changing my understanding of the role of Leadership in His Church, and indeed, has been doing so across the world in the most unprecedented way in all of Church history. Countless Leaders, Scholars, Teachers, and Writers, have been led of God to carefully, and with great personal sacrifice, redefine for the body of Christ a more accurate understanding of the role and function of Leaders in the Church of Jesus Christ, and are being sent throughout the world to help His Church make the transitions needed towards the changes He is calling for. It is an exciting time of worldwide Church renewal and reformation.

What is at stake is far more than simply a redefined concept of Leadership, but indeed, a greater emphasis on the Centrality of Jesus Christ in His Church, with a Church that is far more Christ defined than at any time over the last 1850 years of Church history - A Church that literally and experientially dwells “In Christ, through Christ, to Christ, and by Christ.”

I know this area is an extremely sensitive one, and I am acutely aware of how impacting changes of understanding in this area are to my brethren leadership.

Let me begin by saying this, as you will be able to easily tell, from the many articles we have posted at Khtmin.org, we believe there is great need for re-defining Leadership, BUT, what we are not saying is that we envision a body without Leadership. This will never be the case, and would fail to comprehend the plan of Christ for His body. Nor do we believe the majority of those who currently, or in the past, have carried an inaccurate understanding of Leadership, have done so from malice, arrogance, or disrespect for Christ.

We believe error crept into the Church, during a time of great vulnerability, due to the great challenge of early heretical teachings that threatened the Church, and encouraged an over development of human authority to compensate for and ameliorate the dangers of error they all faced in these heresies - such heresies as Gnosticism, Docetism, Arianism, etc., all of which diminished the nature and work of Christ.

Nor, are we saying that we do not see a place for full time and full financial support for some of the Leadership in the Church. There will always be a need for those who are fully supported by the body of Christ, so that they might strengthen, equip, and build up the Church of Jesus Christ.

In a nutshell, what we are saying is that we believe, at the hands, and probably good intentions, of brethren such as Ignatius (ca. 35-107), Clement of Rome (Bishop from AD 88-99), and Irenaeus (ca. 125-185), the Church began a slide towards a form of Leadership that unwittingly began a slow and steady removal of direct headship authority of Christ, in “His” Church, and tended to replace it with a Leadership that was far too oriented towards honoring the ideas, dominance, and doctrines of men rather than mandating the continual direct leadership of Christ in His own Church, with a fully engaged body participating in the Church’s government, direction, and ministry.

We are not proposing that Leaders have no authority, but that their authority does not rest in titles, ordinations, positions, official offices, nor in charisma or strong temperaments. Their authority is real and genuine, when based on an accurate reflection of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. Thus, it is a “Word Based Authority.” It is far less of a style of Leadership used to run the businesses of this world, and far more of a yieldedness to the chief executive order of the Lord Jesus Himself, expressed through every member, compactly fit together, causing the increase of itself in love.

Leaders are those we come to anticipate and expect, more than others in the body, will have strong godly character, unique gifts of grace, solid wisdom, extensive knowledge of Scripture, the experience of years of service to the body, and a consistent representation of the mind of Christ for the Church. This does not mean they will be free from error, personal flaws, or struggles, but their lives are solidly founded on Christ, and their lives and family manifest that.

Their posture is far more that of humble servanthood, rather than the expectation of executive privilege or special treatment.

We have outlined many Scriptures, that address each of the elements mentioned here, and I refer you to those articles, as well as the many other web sites and books dedicated to clarifying this area for the body of Christ.

It is our desire to come alongside our fellow Leaders and encourage them to see, embrace, and transition towards that which Jesus Christ is revealing to His body in these days. We resist using name calling, to further the work of Christ...such terms as Pharisees and Hypocrites generally do not accurately describe the good Senior Pastors we know, who have sought for years to shepherd the flocks they oversee.

We trust in their good hearts, and refuse to cast stones at anyone. Rather, it is our desire to be an encouragement towards a redefining of leadership, that will not only strengthen the bodies of believers they oversee, but will lift a great weight of strain off their own shoulders, in having carried an understanding of Leadership that they were never meant or graced to carry. We have seen far too many brethren burn out, melt down, and morally collapse under this strain, and our hearts are deeply kindled for their distress.

It is my hope that great and effectual doors will open for assisting the body of Christ in making these transitions.

However, we also believe another very real error will have to be addressed, once the concept of Senior Pastor, in which absolute administrative authority and control over the policies, doctrines, and practices of the Church, are turned back over to the body, and most pre-eminently to the Lord Jesus Himself. That error, is the error of defining the Church as an Organization, or Business, or Corporation.

We see no solid evidence of the apostles laying any foundation principles on Christ, that define the Church in these terms and approaches. These, we believe, grew out of the role of Constantine, in 325 AD, when he married the Church and the State together, and turned the Church into a State run business, for controlling the beliefs, practices, and monies of the citizens of Rome.

And, while the Reformation, led by our brother Martin Luther, brought the Church a great distance towards reformation to the foundational truths in Christ, we believe what he left in place ultimately made room for an even intensified form of organizational error under the Industrial Revolution, of the late 18th century, and early 19th century. Church began an increased evolution towards concepts that were even further removed from the foundations of the apostles, and thus necessitate a further

work of Reformation

Notions of Church as a place, Church as a business, Church as a corporation, Church with bosses, CEOs, Senior Pastors, corporate executives, etc., led the Church towards an unhealthy understanding of the role of its Leaders, and effectively severed the headship of Christ from His Body, and removed His authority as expressed through each member of the body, and placed it in the hands of seminary trained professionals and scholars.

Once again, we do not question the good intentions of Senior Pastors, nor do we fail to see the impact and guidance of historical conditioning, but we believe the Lord Jesus has called for a careful dismantling of these understandings, towards a return of spiritual health to the Church, that the Church has not fully experienced since approximately 150 AD.

In most cases we do not see this as being something any given congregation should rush in to, nor be forced to receive, apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit opening eyes, changing perspectives, and founding in Christ.

Our desire is not to come in to Church fellowships, and clandestinely subvert the spiritual authority of the shepherds who currently pastor their Churches. We believe such behavior would dishonor Christ and His body. Rather, we desire to come alongside Church Leadership, and gently encourage, where there is openness, a fuller understanding of what Jesus Christ is desiring to accomplish in His Church.

Where there is less openness to these principles, we limit ourselves to simply revealing the Lord Jesus Himself, and leaving the adjustments to Him, for a later date. We choose to respect and honor the authority of pastors in their congregations, by not speaking on those topics they desire we refrain from, yet, we hope to engage the pastors privately, with full respect and grace, towards answering any genuine questions they may have, as regards the things we are seeing in Christ.

We see no good place for argument, or forcing the issue, and have confidence in the work of the Spirit to transition His Leaders and Church towards those things He desires. We believe respect, and relationships built on love and honor, are far more the way of Christ, to effect true and godly change, rather than through pressure and confrontation.

We look forward to the day, where those things which Jesus Christ is addressing in these days, will have come to greater fruition, and believe the body of Christ will rise to higher heights than it has ever known. We believe the world has tired of Church as a big business, and longs to see simple and genuine acts of love, grace, truth, and wisdom, manifested, as the earth's only hope for life in Christ.

I close with two guiding passages, that greatly encourage my heart:

Hebrews 3:1 Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, 2 who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. 3 For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses--as much more glory as ***the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself.*** 4 (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) 5 Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, 6 but ***Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.*** 7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, 9 where your

fathers put me to the test and saw my works 10 for forty years. Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.' 11 As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.'" 12 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Psalm 127:1 A Song of Ascents. Of Solomon. **Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.** Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.

We are fully confident that as His Church is returned to a more direct oversight by Christ, that He will build something in our day that will astound all of us. We are dedicated towards this end. This defines our lives, ministries, and dreams.