



“The Character Qualifications of a Leader” Exemplified in the use of Authority in the Local Church Leadership

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Because the principle of Authority in the local church has been so emphasized throughout Church history and especially in our day, we take up a discussion of the New Testament teaching on this subject, in the hopes of establishing a pattern that represents the mind of Christ.

A famous Englishman was quoted as saying: “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Lord Acton, Letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton, 1887

Without a doubt one of the most self deceptive and carnality stimulating dimensions of life is the dimension of having power over other's lives. When we possess power we more quickly tend to deny our tendency to be deceived in our motivations for the use of that power than in any other area of life. How often have we seen men and women who have spoken of one purpose for their authority, but the reality was ultimately very different.

Steve Brown in his book "Born Free", comments on his visit to the White House during President's Nixon's time in office. His friend Bill Lukash, who was then President's Nixon's physician, took him to see the Oval Office. While they were there he invited Steve to pick up the phone in his office and make a call anywhere in the world. Steve tried to resist the offer, but finally gave in and called his home. His following comments are interesting in light of our discussion of the use of authority:

"Finally, Bill took me to his own office. He pushed the phone over to me and said, Steve, you can call any place in the world on this phone. Just pick it up and the White House operator will instantly put you in touch with anyone you want to talk to—anywhere. Want to try?

And I said, No, Bill, but it is interesting.

But he insisted, so I called Anna. And that's when I lost it. I said, Anna, you're not gonna believe where I'm calling you from!

That day I learned why a man could sell his soul in the White House. You think to yourself, *This is the seat of the most awesome power in the universe. From here decisions are made that change the course of history. This is where history resides.*

I realized that, if I were to get a job in the White House, I would probably do anything to hold onto the **power** it represents."

For those who have never held a position of authority over the life of another it is hard to imagine the intoxication that comes with being able to exercise that power. To be able to control others just by virtue of your position is an awesome and intoxicating thing. The question we must explore when we come to the New Testament is, "What kind of authority and what limitations, if any, are there to that authority in the lives of those who are called to lead the body of Christ?" How similar is the use of New Testament authority to that

expressed in the world?

Are New Testament pastors the basic equivalent to CEO's and executive officers in the corporations of this world? Does the world's exercise of authority form the appropriate model for the Church? Or are we too look for something different?

What do Jesus' words in Matthew 20:20-28 mean?

Mat 20:20 (NKJV) Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. 21 And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom." 22 But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." 23 So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father." 24 And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. 25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "**You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26 "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27 "And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave; 28 "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."**

Those words are haunting. They just kind of get inside your heart and bounce around trying to find a shelf to come to rest on, but they just don't seem to find a place to settle because it's like our hearts don't really have a compartment for these words because we wonder if we have ever seen this kind of authority. Are we used to seeing the Gentile kind?

Is it possible that whatever Jesus is talking about is so radically different from any other pattern in the world that we are almost incapable of comprehending it by comparison to what we are used to seeing?

What CEO do you know who would allow his stock clerk to fire him? Is that a fair comparison to Jesus allowing a few non-descript Roman soldiers to nail Him, the Lord of Glory, to a despicable cross? How does that kind of use of authority translate over into the local church? Whew..., I don't know about you, but this is a pretty heavy thing to ponder. And, it makes me wonder if I have ever done it right before. How about you?

To begin our study we will do a short word analysis of the three principle terms used in this area: Authority, Rule, and Submission.

1. Authority - derived from the Greek words:

- a. Katakuriouo - become master, gain dominion over, subdue, lord it over, rule over someone or something.

Mat 20:25 (NKJV) But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles **lord it over** them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.

Foerster, in Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, has the following to say on this word: "To exercise dominion against someone, i.e. to one's own advantage...for themselves and therewith against those entrusted to them."

Thus the concern is one of motivation. If the exercise of authority is ever for personal control so as to generate one's personal goals, rather than exclusively for the good of the one submitting to their authority, then that authority is corrupt.

The leader is never allowed to pursue his own private agenda when attempting to secure the obedience of those following his leadership. He must be, at all times, sensitive to what is truly the will of God for that individual and what is in their best interest, even if it means that the leader's goals must be set aside.

The use of the preposition "kata" strongly suggests authority used "against" someone, rather than for them. How subtle is a leader's tendency to use authority in a way that is really an attack against the integrity of another individual by attempting to coerce them into accomplishing the leader's goals for their lives so as to protect the leader's personal agenda.

How often are leaders tempted to control the behavior of those under them simply because their behavior is in some way making the leader's life uncomfortable, rather than having the pure motivation of seeking the betterment of the follower exclusively.

This word is used in the other parallel passage to Matthew 20: Mark 10:42, and a different word, but very similar, is used in the other parallel passage of Luke 22:24-27 - Kurieo - "to exercise lordship over."

It is also used in a very graphic passage in Acts 19:15-16 (NKJV) "And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" 16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, **overpowered** them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."

How often do leadership lean towards overpowering their people by their knowledge and office, rather than by exposing the love of Christ?

Finally Peter uses this word in his important passage on Church leadership:

1 Pet 5:1 (NKJV) "The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as **being lords over** those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. 5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

In that we are considering Peter's words, it would be well to notice a couple of other words he uses in this context:

"Not by compulsion" - this phrase indicates that leaders in the body are to recognize their calling by God and volunteer to lead, rather than having to be drafted like unwilling soldiers. They are to be willing and eager servants of the body of Christ, rather than having to be coerced and chided into service.

"Not for dishonest gain" - the Greek word "aiskrokerdas", means to lead for any kind of personal gain, which is sought in a selfish way. It certainly covers the

idea of serving to obtain financial gain, but when it is realized that first century elders were not salaried, it is clear that this word covers far more than just financial gain. Peter warns about using the office of elder for any personal selfish reasons, whether it is the exhilaration that comes from knowing that you can control people to your own ends, or the ability to manipulate people so as to protect your own personal goals for their lives.

"Be examples" - "Tupos", from which we get "type". To be a pattern, example, model, or standard. It means to so portray the *image* of the Servant, the Lord Jesus, that others are drawn to follow your pattern or example and do the will of God.

Then Peter goes on, in verse 5, to encourage the younger members of the flock to "submit" themselves to their eldership. The word submit - "hupotasso", is a significant choice of words to use. It means "to lose or surrender one's own rights or will voluntarily, rather than as a result of compulsion." While followers are admonished to submit voluntarily, leaders are not given the authority to coerce, manipulate or seek through any means to control those under their rule, or secure their submission. Their only means of obtaining such a following is by humble service and love. This of course does not preclude legitimate biblical discipline for those clearly sinning against the body of Christ, but even here it implies that the leader will not administer discipline in a way that reflects his personal displeasure or manifests his frustration with being rejected or sinned against. It is significant too, that Peter goes on to say that whatever this submission is, it is not primarily an inferior to a superior, as much as it is an equal to an equal, with everyone willing to submit to everyone else as a demonstration of love and humility. What a tremendous anecdote to overbearing control by leadership. They can only hope to gain a following as they lead by loving example and themselves submit to those who are commanded to submit to their leadership. When leaders submit to their flock in humility it then releases the Lord Jesus to grant grace and exaltation (verse 6). Those who would ever demand that they be exalted and obeyed, simply because they possess an office of leadership show by their doing so that they in fact do not possess that office but are rather grasping at it in selfish desperation.

Jesus' style of leadership is one that creates a sense of equality, and if any other sense is created it is that the leader is beneath his follower as one called to humble himself and serve the followers' needs.

Listen to Him in John 13, where He washes His disciples feet and forever blows away their concept of leadership being ones to be served.

John 13:13 (NKJV) "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. 14 "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. 16 "Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. 17 "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

It is the job of every leader to so manifest and create this impression in the lives of those he leads that they are convinced that he really believes Jesus' words

apply to him.

In Western Church culture leaders have allowed and often encouraged a thinking in their people which causes the people to see themselves as under their pastor, in terms of value and respect, rather than equal to him. Leaders tolerate their flocks taking a subservient role before them. Just as John, in the book of revelation was rebuked for bowing down to the angel, as if he were the Lord, so leadership today need to so guard against encouraging their flocks to bow in body or spirit before them. Leaders need to accept the responsibility to help their flocks realize that the only difference between them is not value, but calling, and no one calling is more valuable than another. The pattern of exalted leadership in the local church must come to an end. It can only be turned around by leaders directly teaching, repeatedly, that their role is not more significant than any other role in the church. They must address this problem head on, and refuse to allow anyone in the church to treat them as if they were exalted ones.

Peter's words make it very clear that the tendency of leadership is to allow their ego's, personal insecurities and pride to get in the way, and become something where they rule by intimidation rather than humble loving service.

- b. Katexousiadzo - Foerster, in Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, comments on this word's meaning: "It's primary sense is that they exercise power over them. There is no earthly government without the use of force. But if the reference in "those who are great" is not merely to the political authorities, it is likely that the word implies the **tendency towards compulsion or oppression** which is immanent in all earthly power, and not merely in political."

Mat 20:25 (NKJV) But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great **exercise authority over** them.

Luke, in his parallel passage uses the word "Exousiadzo". Parallel in concept, just not using the "kata" preposition.

This word is not used anywhere else in the New Testament, but this one use alone speaks volumes. This is the danger in possessing authority in any dimension of life. To use that authority to compel others to fulfill the leaders agenda is clearly immoral. It is a violation of the integrity of the follower.

One can almost hear the disciples speak up, "But Lord, how do we get anyone to do what we want them to do if we don't use some compulsion or force to move them towards our goals." And if you look real closely at Jesus you see that look that must have spread across His face so many times, "You guys just don't get it do you?" "But Lord, it could take forever to get anything done. If we could just get this building finished by Spring we could harvest so many more people. If we could just get the deacons to do what we want done there would be so much more unity in the Church. If we could just get the people to give more money we could send out so many more missionaries. Lord, at this rate, of just lovingly serving the people and refusing to use any coercion, it could take years to make any progress at all!" And if we look again at Jesus we might see that look that says, "True, and would you really want to get it done any other way? What do you gain if you steal the people's joy from them by manipulating and forcing them to do your will through preaching

fear and intimidation? If you build big buildings and send out many missionaries, and slowly but surely you erode the people's love and trust for you have you really gained anything. My way may not be as fast as yours but it regards the integrity of My people and expresses trust in My Holy Spirit to motivate My people to do what I want done. Your job is to love and serve, My job is to inwardly compel. There are just some things you can't do and get away with it. One of them is to use compulsion and oppression."

However we are to lead and get the job done it isn't to be any different than Jesus did when He was on earth. He didn't force any of His disciples to do anything. He didn't use compulsion or oppression or manipulation to accomplish anything. He didn't get much accomplished in His three year ministry, as some would count accomplishments. He barely kept 12 rag tag disciples from defecting and one of them gave up before He left. But because He modeled the kind of loving service and non coercive leadership that He did they so loved Him that they went out from the upper room ready to give every ounce of their life's strength to building His kingdom. Now what other leader do you personally know who has used that little coercion, and that much loving service and seen that great of results and dedication in those He led?

- c. Exousia - similar to katexousiadzo, but missing the "kata" preposition. The absence of the "kata" removes the "against" element. It is authority, but it isn't necessarily authority in opposition or against someone else.

This word is the most frequently used word in the New Testament for "Power" and "Authority". Foerster, comments once again, "It is the right to do something or the right over something." It carries with it the sense of **reflected authority**. The right or freedom to accomplish a certain thing because of the power behind the one attempting to accomplish that act. In this sense Jesus' authority on earth was reflected authority. He even says so in John 5:

John 5:19 (NKJV) Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. 26 "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, 27 "and has given Him **authority** to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. 30 "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

It is the power to *Decide*, and as such reflects the invisible power of God whose Word is a creative power. It manifests itself in the authority of the State whose power is a reflection of God's divine power on earth amongst men, to create order and harmony. The word of the ruler is to reflect the Word of God and is to therefore be obeyed. We see Paul declare this relationship in Roman 13. When Jesus commissions His disciples in Matthew 28:18 He takes His reflected authority and reflects it into them to be an expression of His authority in the earth. It was not their authority, but rather His, and was to be used with serious regard to its origin.

When, in Acts 8 Simon wishes to obtain the power or authority that is working in Peter, verse 19 "that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit", Peter reacted violently because he recognized the carnal desire of man to operate in the authority of Christ without being duly submitted to Him first. He resisted all manipulative use of the authority of Christ to accomplish one's own independent will.

Jesus in Mark 13:34 makes it very clear in His parable that the authority we have is authority He has given us, and as such our use of it is always to reflect His will and direction. Since we already know that He never uses it to manipulate or coerce people for selfish purposes, then we see once again the awesome responsibility to handle this reflected authority properly.

When you connect the concepts of the authority or power in a declared Word, with the sense of reflected authority, you begin to see the danger that there is in an independent usage of power, apart from direct divine leading. People are brought into the bondage of false teaching by submission to their leadership's authority, and are then unable to become free from such teaching when new and more accurate teaching comes along. When people place themselves under the authority of leaders who are using their authority in a way that is less than fully submitted to the will of God they teach people the commandments of men and make it very difficult for the people to come out from under that authority and accept accurate doctrine that reflects the true Word of God's authority.

We therefore note a very delicate balance that is necessary. On one hand all believers are to submit to the authority of their leadership, but only so as their authority reflects Christ's and not the leadership's own separate authority. Thus Peter has a spirit of obedience in Acts 5:29, but it is first and foremost in submission to the authority of Christ. And Paul, in Galatians 2:1-10, while being willing to submit his teaching to the scrutiny of the leadership in Jerusalem, was unwilling to do so to the degree that had they disagreed with the revelation he had received of Christ he would not have yielded to them and stopped teaching it.

However leadership is to function in the local church, it must never be overbearing to the point where the people are intimidated into obeying the teaching and commands of the leadership when their own spirit's tell them that the will of God is otherwise. Now certainly this can create precarious situations where immature saints believe God has told them one thing while the leadership believe another, but the leadership are not allowed to step over the line of gentle exhortation and teaching, into the sphere of intimidation and coercion. People must be allowed, by the Grace of God, to experience the error of their own thinking when they oppose true doctrine. To force, by intimidation, the flock to obey rigidly, all teaching from the leadership, ultimately encourages them to disconnect from a direct relationship and responsibility to Christ, and become blind followers of blind guides. This is certainly delicate, but it is critical. People must be allowed to make mistakes. People must be loved and encouraged who believe they are to do something that the leadership oppose. Obviously there are limitations to this, as regards the impact of people's decisions upon the body as a whole. It would not be congruent with grace to allow someone to teach the church false doctrine just because the leaders didn't want to over control them. Yet one the other hand, when members of the body believe things in opposition to the leadership, and do so for the most part privately, in the final analysis all the leadership can do is defer to them and allow them to walk out their beliefs, yet still loving and blessing them.

Certainly there is a place for excommunication as seen in 1 Cor.5, but those times are to be handled with such brokenness and humility, and hopefully on such rare occasions of extreme and unrepented sin, that for the most part leadership are not seen in that role.

We see Paul's gentle use of his power, and his awareness of the danger of abuse

in this area. 1 Cor.9:12,18 He could have tried to coerce them into paying him a salary, but he chose not to, so as to in no way be able to be accused of misusing his authority. Paul had such a gentle approach to his authority.

In 2 Cor.10:8 Paul makes it clear that his concept of his authority is that it is to be used for edification, not destruction. He realizes that if he wields his authority too imperiously, with this Corinthian Church, that he is going to hurt them. They simply can't take too strong of a leadership approach. He is willing to use extreme gentleness even though he is so deeply concerned that how they are handling themselves is greatly endangering them. When you realize how seriously messed up this church was and then see the beautiful spirit of gentleness that Paul exhibits it is clear that he knew how to handle authority like Christ. Leaders must be patient. If they let their agendas and their concerns override their sensitivity to the body's ability to respond to their leadership they will end up losing far more than if they had just been willing to love their flock and wait for the Lord to change the people. He quotes what appears to be a pet leadership authority phrase again in 2 Cor.13:10 "Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me **for edification and not for destruction**. Misuse of authority doesn't just hurt some people, it destroys some. What a thought!

Finally, in 2 Thess.3:7-9:

2 Thess.3:7 (NKJV) For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, 9 not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

Paul was a grace man!

d. Epitagay - it means an authoritative spoken word.

It is generally translated "command or commandment". In almost every case it refers to an apostolic commandment which was received directly from Christ and passed on to the church. It does not refer to a pastor's right to create his own set of pastoral commandments for his local church and then declare them authoritatively. Rom.16:26; 1 Cor.7:6,25; 1 Tim.1:1; Titus 1:3.

When the above is noted then Paul's one use where he exhorts Titus to counsel with this kind of spoken authority, in Titus 3:15, we can conclude that what Paul is challenging Titus is to not back off on any of the clear commandments of Christ, when it comes to leading his church in Crete. While the leader's authority is reflected authority, Christ's words are absolute and the people must be brought face to face with truth and then let them decide what they are going to do with it. The leader is not to dilute or change the power of His Word. The people may not always like it, but when it is a clear commandment of Christ we must all stand aside and let God be God and every man a liar who disagrees with Him. Yet even here, the tendency to use strong and impressive tones, so as to indirectly create a fear and respect for the leader, must be avoided. Jesus' Word is powerful enough on its own without the leader shouting and terrorizing his flock. If the truth were known the stronger commands of Christ are better communicated softly and with brokenness than with powerful challenge and exhortation.

- e. Huperokay - it simply means those who are in prominent or authoritative position.

Used in 2 Tim.2:2 for kings and other public dignitaries. It refers to proper respect for those who occupy the place of leaders within society.

2. Rule - derived from several Greek words:

- a. Arkay - a word that is either translated "beginning" or "principality".

Mt.19:4; Rom.8:38

It either refers to a preeminent position in time or a governmental position in society or the heavenlies. It is never used of church leadership. It is interesting that it isn't, because it would be the supreme title for a ruling authority who is in an exalted position seeking worship or respect. Paul could make no use of this term when talking about church leadership, because it was so lofty a term it would have served to virtually eliminate the servant nature of the leader. No principality would at the same time function as a servant.

- b. Brabeuo - to judge or function as an umpire in decision making.

Col.3:15 Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.

It is never used of church leadership.

- c. Poimaino - to exercise shepherding leadership and authority.

Mt.2:6 a reference to Christ in His Shepherding leadership of Israel.

It generally refers to the role of the Shepherd feeding those he leads. John 21:16; Acts 20:28.

In the book of Revelation it refers to the exalted role of Christ as the Ultimate Shepherd who leads or rules his people with an iron Shepherd's rod.

It is never translated "to rule" when referring to church leadership.

- d. Prohistami - This is probably the preeminent word used in the New Testament for church leadership.

According to Reicke, in Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, it means to preside in the sense "to lead, conduct, direct, and govern." There is also the thought of "standing or going before someone or something in protection." Out of this comes the sense "to assist, to join with, more precisely defined as, to protect, to represent, to care for, to help, to further."

It was used in reference to a woman being given to her husband in marriage as to one who would look after her and care for her.

The sense of "protection" arises again and again in ancient non-biblical usage.

It is a compound word made up of two words "pro" and "histami". "Pro" means to be *before*, and "histami" means *to stand*. Thus this is one who stands before the

people to provide care and protection. "The sense of overbearing power or authority is entirely absent in this word's meaning."

In Rom.12:8 the meaning is "to care with zeal". A leadership that is zealous to care. The whole passage is speaking of the gifts of grace imparted to different office-bearers, so that these leaders are a special group separated by the Spirit for the primary task of caring for others.

This thought carries nicely into 1 Thess.5:12 "And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are **over you** (are leaders in caring for you) in the Lord and admonish you." The idea is that of being responsible to watch and care over them. "The emphasis is not on their rank or authority but on their efforts for the eternal salvation of believers."

This word is used in 1 Tim.3:4 when referring to the qualifications of an Elder, he is to be one who knows how to care for his family. This is clearly seen in vs.5 where Paul goes on to say "for if a man does not know how to rule (care for) his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?" So also it is used in 1 Tim.3:12 for the deacon's responsibility to care for his family.

1 Tim.5:17 "Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine." Reicke goes on to say, "The context shows that the reference is not merely to elders who rule well but especially to those who exercise a sincere care of souls. This is not to deny that here, too, the leaders have a special dignity and play a leading role as elders. In all instances however, the verb has in the New Testament the primary senses of both "to lead" and "to care for," and this agrees with the distinctive nature of office in the New Testament, since according to Luke 22:26 the one who is chief is to be as he who serves."

In both Titus 3:8 & 14, the idea is to devote oneself to good works of care.

- e. Hegeomai - It means to lead, to think, to believe, to regard as, to esteem, to value highly

It carries with it the sense of appropriate respect and appreciation for those called to lead the flock.

It is significant that Jesus has earlier framed the attitudes of those who would wear this title "Hegeomai - Governor- Leader". Luke 22:26 he is to be one who serves. A servant leader. Not a power leader, but a servant leader. So that when we come to the passages in Pauline literature where the flock is called to submit to these men, the men they are to submit to are to be those whom Jesus described in Luke 22. If they aren't, then it is questionable if they should be leaders in the first place, and secondly if the people should submit to them. Paul assumes that the leaders who will be chosen will be Luke 22 types, but unfortunately this is not always the case. All too often we raise up to leadership those who manifest valued giftings, before we have allowed them to learn to love serving and caring for the body of Christ. We do not do them a service by doing so, and we certainly don't help the body.

It is used to refer to people of "renown" in Acts 7:10; 14:12; 15:22.

It is used to refer to expressing "esteem" in Phil.2:3; 1 Thess.5:13; Heb.11:26.

It is used to refer to "careful consideration" in Acts 26:2; 2 Cor.9:5; Phil.2:6, 25; 3:7,8; 2 Thess.3:15; 1 Tim.1:12; 6:1; Heb.10:29; 11:11; Ja.1:2; 2 Pet.1:13; 2:13; 3:9,15.

It is used to refer to those in "leadership capacity" in Heb.13:7, 17, 24. In each of these cases proper esteem is to be placed on those who lead with the type of character described in Luke 22.

Heb 13:17 (NKJV) Obey those who **rule** over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

3. Submit, subject, obey.

- a. Hupotasso - As we described before, it means "to lose or surrender one's own rights or will voluntarily, rather than as a result of compulsion."

It is composed of two words "Hupo" and "Tasso". "Hupo" means to "come under" and "Tasso" means "to arrange in an orderly and respectful fashion". Add to this the voluntary dimension and it becomes clear that the implication is that the believer is to willingly and voluntarily (not by constraint) arrange his life in an orderly fashion under the leadership authority of servant leaders.

Because this word is used in a variety of contexts, we will limit our discussion of it to passages dealing with leadership.

It is used of believers submitting to servant leadership in 1 Cor.16:15,16 and 1 Pet.5:5.

It is used of believers submitting to the leadership of God in Heb.12:9; Ja.4:7.

It is used of wives submitting to their husband's leadership. Eph.5:22; Col.3:18; 1 Pet.3:1,5.

It is used of Christ being in submission to the Father's leadership. 1 Cor.15:28

- b. Hupakouo, and Hupakoa - these words are compound words made up of "Hupo" and "Akouo". "Hupo" means to come under, and "Akouo" means to hear a voice, so the two in combination mean to "Hear a command and come under that command."

It is interesting to note that this word is never used with reference to believers hearing the verbal commands of leadership and coming under those commands. It is interesting also, that this word is never used of wives submitting to their husbands. Husbands are never allowed to bark commands or demand things of their wives. This is an abuse of power and will weaken or destroy the relationship between a man and his wife.

It is used for children and slaves, but not followers of church leadership.

This undoubtedly provides an insight on leadership and their attitudes towards their

own authority. So often leaders have felt that it was their role to give commands and the people's role to listen and obey, but apparently the Holy Spirit missed an opportunity to agree with them and inspire the apostle to use this word to convey that thought. Leaders are not to think of their flocks as their children or slaves to command. Not that abusive leadership is allowed towards children and slaves, but certainly it is a stronger form of leadership than is appropriate for the flock. The flock are not my children or slaves, they are my friends, my fellow sojourners on the way to a heavenly city.

- c. Hupako - a compound of "Hupo" and "Ako". Again "Hupo" means to come under, and "Ako" means to yield. The two in combination mean to yield under the authority of someone else.

It is only used in Heb.13:17, and carries the idea of yielding to the servant authority of those over you in the Lord.

Heb 13:17 (NKJV) Obey those who rule over you, and **be submissive**, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

- d. Pathometha - which means to be obey as a result of being convinced and confident in the correctness of what is being said.

This interesting word is used in Heb.13:17, for the word "obey." This word does not command blind obedience. In connection with Hupako this verse is teaching that the believer is to yield and obey as a result of being convinced and confident in the correctness of what is being counseled or taught.

Heb 13:17 (NKJV) **Obey** those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Leadership are not allowed to command absolute obedience just because they are leaders. They are responsible to present their character and their wisdom in such a manner that they inspire confidence in those they lead.

This is the only place where this word is used in relationship to leadership. In every other case it is always referring to either persuasion or confidence. It is used 30 times in these ways. The following are just samples - Mt.27:20; 28:14; Acts 19:8; Rom.8:38; Phil.1:6; 3:3; 2 Thess.3:4

It also carries the strong idea of "Trust", in such passages as Mt.27:43; Phil.2:24; Heb.2:13.

Every other place that this word is used for "obey" in each case the element of obedience as a result of being convinced by something or someone is clearly evident - Acts 5:36,37; Rom.2:8; Gal.3:1; 5:7.

For leaders to think they can lead without first having established trust and confidence in those they lead is nothing short of arrogance. It takes time for people

to trust. It takes repetition of gentle serving behavior to relax the sheep enough to follow peacefully. Those who violate this principle in favor of "getting something done", ultimately lose much more than they ever gain.

f. A combined translation of Heb.13:17:

Because so much weight has been placed on this verse, over the years, it is significant to see the expanded and intended meaning of each of the three authority words in this verse.

Heb 13:17 (NKJV) **Obey** (as a result of being convinced and confident in the correctness and spirit of what is being counseled or taught) those who **rule over** you (who are esteemed due to manifesting a gentle non-coercive servant's heart), and **be submissive** (yield to the servant authority of those over you in the Lord), for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you."

As is so often the case with New Testament Greek words, they come out of a culture and a pool of meanings rather than being easily reduced to one simple word. Each word carries with it an expanded meaning. These three words, as defined, indicate a far different meaning than is generally ascribed to this verse.

This is not blind obedience to power hungry leaders, but rather it represents the type of obedience and submission based on the kind of leaders they are to obey. Far from allowing for abusive and coercive leadership it calls for those who can only anticipate obedience as they have been successful in being gentle teachers of truth, having convinced and created confidence in those they desire to lead. They must be leaders who clearly manifest a humble servant's heart and whose leadership inspires confidence and yielding on the part of those who follow. If the people are not convinced, and if the leadership have not inspired their followers by their conduct and character then in effect their leadership is null and void and their only recourse is to take the time to create such confidence and yielding in their flocks by so lovingly serving them and setting an example of a gentle servant that the people in time relax and follow their lead. To use any other means or technique, whether it be salesmanship or abusive authoritarianism, is to disqualify the leader in the eyes of God and his flock. Not a permanent disqualification, but an evidence that time and growth is needed to adjust the leaders concepts and character.

Summing up the principles we gain from these basic word studies surrounding Authority, Rulership and Submission we note the following elements of New Testament Authority in the Local Church:

1. Leadership is first and foremost to be the result of loving service to those whom they are over.
2. Leaders are only allowed to pursue a following by gracious service and the example of love.
3. The leader is forbidden to exercise authority against someone for the leader's personal advantage.

4. The leader is never allowed to pursue the control of those who follow him so as to fulfill his personal agenda for their lives, rather than truly seeking the mind of Christ for them.
5. Leaders are not to lead with selfish goals in mind.
6. Leaders are to be a pattern, example, model or standard in the image of Christ.
7. Leadership in the body of Christ only functions when the people willingly and voluntarily follow them. Coercion is not an option for leadership.
8. Leaders are to reject their every tendency towards compulsion or oppression to achieve their goals.
9. Leadership requires a patience expressed towards the body. A leader is to hold his every goal lightly, trusting the Lord to fulfill His goals, and not leaning on manipulation to accomplish his will for his people.
10. All authority in the body of Christ is reflected authority. Only as Christ leads through us do we have any authority. He always leads patiently and lovingly. The leader is not allowed to press for his personal agenda.
11. Leadership is to be gentle and often deferring to those who are weak and insecure in the face of a leader's authority. It is better to lay aside one's authority in favor of serving than to demand submission and wound the sensitive believer.
12. The only place for strong leadership authority is when declaring the clear commandments of Christ.
13. Leadership is more than anything else a call to lovingly care for the flock, not exercise control over.
14. The leadership that the body is called to obey and follow are those who carry their leadership like Jesus taught His disciples in Luke 22. All others have no divine authority to lead, even if they hold a specific office and are ordained to it. Title does not confer authority, example and heart attitude does.
15. Submission must be a voluntary matter, not something that can be forced.
16. Leadership hasn't been granted the right to command, but being a leader demands of the leader the responsibility to serve and be an example.
17. Submission is to be anticipated when the follower has seen sufficient love and wisdom to convince them of the accuracy of their leadership.
18. Only as the body trusts and has confidence in a leader does he actually have authority in their lives. Authority derived through any other means is stolen authority and will destroy all confidence in leadership.

If these concepts form the philosophy of pastoral leadership they will undoubtedly change the concept of leadership in the local church. They will create an environment of grace and patience that inspires a joyful submission and service on the part of those who follow.

It must be recognized that this form of leadership requires of leaders that they have a deep abiding trust in the Lord to inspire His people to move them towards His goals for their lives, at the gentle pace that He leads them. It will always resist the temptation to set goals and then impatiently push the people to achieve them on the leader's own personal time schedule. It requires a recognition that it is more important to create a sense of love in the people for their leadership than to complete a specified set of goals. To achieve those goals without doing so through gentle servant leadership is to have destroyed the people's trust for leadership in the process and the achievement of the goal diminished due to the methodology of having achieved it.

It also requires of leaders that they be men and women who are secure in Christ. If their sense of self worth requires the accomplishment of their goals, or their ability to motivate their people to achieve their vision for their church, then they will use manipulation, control and intimidation to achieve those goals. If they know that Jesus' way is slow and gentle, and that He does not require His leaders to push His people towards His goals then they can patiently wait for the people to follow. If a leader has to achieve his goals so as to prop up his self esteem by all that his church has accomplished then inevitably he will push his people towards his goals rather than gently lead them.

Leaders may see all the values of completing building projects, building great programs or sending out a multitude of missionaries and evangelists, but if they fail to inspire their people by love, service and devotion to them, then they have used a Gentile method of leadership. All goals achieved by a Gentile methodology lead the people away from the joy potential of the local church and turn it into nothing more than a religious factory where production and performance are the highest values. For too long people have come to church expecting to be sold, cajoled and manipulated into serving and giving of time and finances so as to satisfy the desires and goals of their leadership. They have gone away either guilty for not sensing God's leading in it, or drained for having succumbed to their pressure. But, their joy of anticipation for local church has been destroyed by all of the manipulation and pressure.

It's time for leaders to seriously acknowledge Jesus' words and example in Luke 22. Jesus never pushed His disciples to accomplish His goals. He so inspired them by loving devotion and service to them, that when He returned to heaven they were so charged up that they were all willing to die for His vision. They completely walked away from their life goals, embraced His, and gave everything they had to the fulfilling of His will. If church leadership doesn't effect a following exactly like He did then that following is a pseudo following.

Why aren't our churches exploding with growth? Why, when we have the greatest message on the planet aren't our churches exploding? Why aren't our people out feverishly sharing the gospel? For too long we have asked this question, but left it unanswered. Could it be that most church people go to church, not so much to fall more in love with Jesus by coming to know Him better, but because they are just glad they aren't going to hell and want to be sure they don't lose their salvation?

Where is the joy that saved believers should have that reaches out and grabs the lost and tells them, "You have just got to meet my Jesus, and you have just got to come to a people called church where the joy of the Lord is so manifested that your life will be radically changed."

Something is wrong when the general consensus of people, certainly outside the church, and often within the church, is that church is a place where we are shamed about our

sinfulness, shamed for our lack of giving of time and money, and pressured by the leadership to conform to their vision for our lives.

Church should be a place where people come and meet the same Jesus the disciples met, and result in people willingly giving up sinful lifestyles and happily giving of their time and money to build the kingdom of God. Any other methodology to effect the accomplishment of the leadership's goals is a counterfeit of the real thing and will never have the power that the real would have. Church needs to become a place where people are loved, truth is spoken, and the work of changing and motivating is left up to the Holy Spirit who does a far better job anyway.

When national statistics tell us that people feel pressured and used in the local churches, and leaders feel burned out by the stress of trying to accomplish all of their goals and motivate their people towards the completing of these goals, then we need to wake up and recognize that a lot of people have bought into a system that does not represent the mind of Christ. I'm nobody's Savior, and I'm not responsible to accomplish Christ's goals. I don't have to coerce my flock into becoming more Holy, more motivated, more active and more faithful to the church's vision. I don't have to push for 100% commitment as though church were some worldly corporation where flow charts of increase and growth were our primary goals.

Leadership in the local church needs to be so radically different from the way it is done in the world, that people are literally blown away by the gentle, non-coercive, loving environment that they come into; where people give because they want to, not because they are pressured or shamed into it. It would be better to shut down the children's Sunday school program than push the congregation to get involved in something God hasn't spoken to them about, or effected a willingness in their spirit for. It would be better to meet in a simple gymnasium, without all of the benefits of a fancy new sanctuary that will seat another 500 people, than to pressure the flock into giving what they don't feel led to give because the pastor has a vision for another 500 to a 1000 people. Sure it's great to want to get people saved and harvested into the church, but who says it takes bigger buildings and fancier programs to accomplish it. Only the big is better, corporate image, says such things. It is time we recognize that smaller, more intimate, more transparent encouraging environments better reflect the thinking of the early church, that did more to evangelize their world in a short period of time, than the church has ever done since. It's time to recognize that the greatest harvest that is taking place in the world, in China, is taking place in small simple, loving, joyful house churches, not in America's mega church.

This isn't to say that God can't work through the mega church. He can, and is. But what it does say is that the healthiest churches are those that utilize some form of house church environment, where relationship, transparency, love and accountability can truly take place.

The church in America has often bought into the very system of thinking about leadership and church growth that Jesus rejected in Luke 22.

Leadership in America need to be less concerned with titles and power and more concerned with loving, servant exemplified leadership. Listen to Jesus in Matthew 23:

Mat 23:8 (NKJV) "But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. 9 "Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 "And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 11 "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 "And whoever exalts himself will be

humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

It's not time to throw stones at leadership who have violated these simple teachings of Jesus. It's time to invite them to His rest once again. It's time to take the burdens they carry off of their backs. They have told themselves for too long that they aren't pleasing God if they don't accomplish all of their goals for their churches. Leaders need to be returned to the simplicity of the faith. Their job is to teach, train, nurture, love and serve their people, not take on the burden of making them holy and getting them to do everything they think a church should do. It's to recognize the separation of powers. Leaders have no power, except reflected power, and the power Jesus reflected into them is not a power to wield to get their people to do what they want them to. Jesus' leadership is slow, patient and trust building. He inspires confidence by loving service rather than impressive displays of fear creating oratorical skills.

It's time for leadership to enter into the rest Jesus promised in Matthew 11:

Mat 11:28 (NKJV) "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

When we build mega churches that require leaders to be master motivators and salesmen, to keep it funded and staffed, then we have opted for the worldly corporate methodology for building Christ's kingdom. When we have to send out letters to our congregations, after snowstorms or floods, that kept them from making it to church, to be sure and send in their tithes, because if they don't we won't be able to pay the bills, then we are feeding an Ichabod system.

When leaders tell the people they need to give big because the more they sow the more they will be blessed, and the reality is that if they don't give big the church programs will shut down, then a false motivation is corrupting the message. We say we trust the Lord to provide for what He is calling for, but then we pressure our people to give beyond their abilities. We try to make the people think that if they drain their savings accounts that God has provided for the church vision. People end up looking at one another and thinking, "No He didn't. I provided for the church, and stole from my family." It's one thing to seek God to bless us and be willing to give the increase to Him, but it's another thing to pressure the people who have not experienced additional increase to drain away their savings. After awhile the people wake up and realize what is going on and move on to another church, distrusting leadership and more committed to selfishness than ever before, but we got our churches built or mission programs funded. How sad! What a worldly system we often promote. Paul went to the churches of Asia Minor and Greece and asked them if they would be willing to give to the starving church in Jerusalem. He only asked them to give what they could afford to give, and not to impoverish themselves. He only expected those who said they would give to give what they had committed. He didn't create a ton of apostolic leadership pressure. He just presented the need and left it with the people. Because of his approach most gave beyond what they could really afford, and the selfish Corinthians were only admonished to give what they had promised.

All too often our leadership methodology is to use shame to get the people to do what we want them to do. This must stop. It may have worked in the Old Testament, but the cross changes this approach to a grace oriented trust in the Holy Spirit to motivate His people.

If we hope to build churches that attract the heathen to the goodness of the Lord we need

to believe God to help us role away the reproach that hangs over the church due to its manipulative leadership methodologies.

Church should be an environment where people love to come, and have been more drawn to the person of Jesus Christ than they were when they came, more anxious to get out and share the good news than they have ever been, and more conformed to the image of the One they met when they were there. The challenge of leadership is to assist the Holy Spirit in creating just such an environment, not having as their primary goal to build big churches with expensive programs that require maximum manipulation to fund their goals.

In closing, perhaps the most impressive manifestation of leadership, other than the Lord Jesus Himself, is to be seen in the Apostle Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians chapter two:

1 Th 2:1 (NKJV) For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. 2 But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. 3 For our exhortation did not come from *error or uncleanness*, nor was it *in deceit*. 4 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, *not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts*. 5 For neither at any time did we use *flattering words*, as you know, nor *a cloak for covetousness*; God is witness. 6 Nor did we *seek glory from men*, either from you or from others, when *we might have made demands as apostles of Christ*. 7 *But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes* her own children. 8 So, *affectionately longing* for you, we were well pleased to impart to you **not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives**, because *you had become dear to us*. 9 For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for *laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you*, we preached to you the gospel of God. 10 You are witnesses, and God also, how *devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves* among you who believe; 11 as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, **as a father** does his own children, 12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. 13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, *you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God*, which also effectively works in you who believe. (Italics and bolds mine, to emphasize the wonder of some of Paul's incredible statements of the expression of his leadership.)

May the Lord grant to those who serve Him in the capacity of leadership the same spirit or attitude that Paul manifested. How desperately the church is waiting to see it again.

When we look at the church in America, we note that the corporate image concept has taken a preeminent position in the minds of many leaders. The mega church is a sign of a successful pastoral administrator who has successfully articulated and administered a powerful mission statement to the point where he has created a church that is much like a local shopping mall. There is something for everybody, and the environment is as posh and comfortable as if you had entered an exquisite hotel.

Have we taken the "Bigger is better" concepts of AT&T and Microsoft and brought them into our churches to the point where what we have gained has caused us to lose what we can't afford to lose. Perhaps no one could present a case in which they provide proof that Jesus Christ will not work through the mega church, but if the truth were to be known, there are

really very few things that Jesus can't make some use of. Just because Jesus works through many of the mega churches in our land may not be evidence that He is pleased with the system.

All too often the temptation to pressure, coerce and manipulate the people of God, to provide sufficient service to and money for the expensive programs of the mega church, is a great temptation. After all, the bills have to be paid, the staff expects it's paycheck. I'll have to be as honest as I know how to be. My experience tells me that no one that I have ever seen has handled well the pressure to become manipulative when so much money is needed to keep the machine oiled. All kinds of incredible justification is developed to excuse the pressure and the frequent mentioning of the churches financial needs. Somebody has to pay the bills, and the pastor and his leadership team feel the pressure the most acutely. What are they going to do with their creditors breathing down their necks, tell them to trust God, we just aren't going to pressure our people? Not likely. When the pressure to present a good image of Christians who pay their bills, to the financing bank, becomes great enough then a lot of elaborate rationalization must take place to explain to the people why they just have to come up with enough tithe and offering money to get the elders out of their jam and pay the bills. Scriptures of God's promises to bless the liberal givers begin to fly. A call for 100% tithers becomes the barker's bark. Messages on tithing and commitment to the local church become more and more regular. Messages on the submission to the authority of the leadership and their vision becomes essential, otherwise unless the people are sufficiently intimidated they won't give enough. Giving is no longer a joyful expression of a thankful people, it is an expected due that is to be paid for all of the benefits received. While that may be appropriate at the local mall, I seriously question if it is appropriate in church.

More warnings about money were given by Jesus than about any other subject matter. He knew that we would have the greatest trouble there. And from my church experience, I would have to say that the greatest challenge to honest and upright leadership has come in the area of money. Over the years I have watched leaders use their authority to cajole the flock into completing building projects that the people for the most part couldn't really see the need for, until scores of them left the church tired of being harassed about money every Sunday. What damage has been done to them, in comparison to the value of having completed the building project? Will they ever again be able to trust leadership? The mega church runs a tremendous risk of destroying the lives of its flock by creating so much pressure upon them until they finally either give in and give the money or blow up and leave the church altogether.

Is there a way to have large, expensive programs and churches, without succumbing to the temptation to use leadership position and authority to manipulate people into giving? Perhaps there is, but after 27 years of observing church life and the way things go in churches that just have to have bigger building and programs, I would have to say that I have yet to see any church, anywhere in the world avoid the pitfalls of abusive authority surrounding the funding of these things.

I have watched men become slaves of policies and beliefs that they don't hold because their staff position was more important to them than to take a firm stand against abusive leadership. I have watched men sell their integrity to a senior pastor who held the power of influence to remove them from their staff position if they didn't stop opposing him. When men are more afraid of losing their jobs than they are of violating their integrity and going along with a policy that they believe violates the integrity of the flock, then you can know that they have become hirelings and not true servant leaders. When men so love the honor of their position that they would sacrifice truth to keep that position then something is

wrong. Money buys more than just things, it has the power to buy integrity, submission to error, commitment to programs that keep them away from their families for too long a stretch of time, etc..

Somehow the early church avoided the trap of paid staff positions, and expensive building and programs. Have we really progressed beyond the early church? Are our mega churches with high powered budgets and ministries really accomplishing what we tell ourselves they are? Or have we sold our birthright for the prestige that big brings with it?

Is the answer a staffless, buildingless church, where money can not be a temptation to leadership abuse? Or is the issue of integrity of leadership the bigger issue, and one which if carefully scrutinized can function in mega churches as well as home churches? Can we hope for a leadership that is sufficiently spirit controlled that they won't little by little compromise integrity and begin to slip into worldly methods of leadership once the church becomes large enough to require a staff and support for an extensive program budget? I guess I would have to say that in theory it has to be possible, but my experience tells me that the better part of wisdom will teach us that you can only push redeemed fallen man just so far before his integrity will begin to buckle when faced with enough financial pressure. Scheming, rationalization, justification and then spiritual manipulation usually follow those who dream of mega churches. Maybe it doesn't have to be this way, but unfortunately it has been the norm.

Did Jesus intend for the church to become a business? Do we see any hint of this in the apostles teachings? If so, I am at a loss to find it. Do they all warn about the tendency of leadership abuse when money enters into the picture? Definitely! Then why has the church in recent years run so fast towards the red flags that Jesus and the apostles raised? What about our day has so encouraged men to believe they could stay away from the dangers they referred to? And if they are as successful as they say they are why is there such a hue and cry amongst the people of toxic faith and abusive leadership in the land? These matters must be given much more serious consideration.

Probably the answer is not to mandate the house church, but at the very least a moderate position that supports smaller churches over mega churches would be leaning to the safer side of things. If perhaps more were discussed of churches of 250-500 than 2,500 to 50,000, we might see a lifting of some of the curse of stress on leadership and a whole new integrity to their leadership returning.

When budgets are closer to \$100,000 per year than \$10,000,000 maybe we would see something of a 90% return to healthier and happier churches. It's just a theory mind you, but one I think that church leaders would do well to take a deep inward look regarding.

The less church is concerned with money, and the more it is concerned with lifting up and revealing Jesus, the better. The more our people come to hear about Jesus, and less about how much money is still needed for this project or program, the better. The more confidence that our people have to bring their friends and new converts to church, knowing that they won't be pestered about giving their money to that church, the better. The more leaders aren't so dependant upon the local church to provide their entire salaries and thus run the risk of becoming hirelings and compromising their integrity to maintain their position, the better. This isn't to say that leaders shouldn't be paid, or that money should never be mentioned at church, but churches have become imbalanced and it's time for adjustment. It's time that more servant non paid leadership functions in the local church. It's even time for less of an emphasis on leadership and more of an emphasis on each believer developing an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. The church has come to believe that

they need to run to their staff leadership to solve all of their spiritual problems, after all that's what we pay them for isn't it? If we de-emphasized leadership, and magnified Jesus perhaps we would need less paid staff in our churches and leaders would be less stressed out by all of the demands on their lives. If leaders are more leaders because of their example, than because they receive salaries and have titles and offices, we might find people less dependant upon them. Leadership needs to become much more casual and joy filled, than worn out by over use. The multiplication of staff meetings and time demands must stop. If we hope to have our leaders be strong leaders in their homes then we have to leave them enough time for their own families, instead of driving them so hard to meet all of the needs of the local church. Take the professionalism out of leadership and we might find more people volunteering for it in the local church.

Church isn't to be a well oiled machine where programs are brought off with the smoothness of a Madison avenue production. It is to be a place for simple folks to come together in a simple manner and simply love Jesus and one another. Church is to be a place where people come less to spectate and more to enter into the life of its community. Church is to be a place where relationship is the big word and leadership is the small word, where love is the big word, and money is the small word, where Jesus is the big word, and the pastor is the small word, where sharing and caring and relating is what characterized local church, not fancy programs costing mega bucks and high powered leaders trained to drum it out of the people.

Paul says it so well in 2 Cor.11:3 "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity and purity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!"

Where is the simplicity that church life was meant to be, that the early church was characterized by? I suspect we are lifting up another Jesus before our people. He said He was meek and lowly, we have Him as the great promoter of our mega programs. He was a servant, our leadership tend to expect the flock to serve them. He was unofficious, our churches have become garish, expensive and lavish. What is the spirit of our churches? Are they places filled with joy and power or are they places of shame and intimidation. What spirit does the church portray to the world in our day? Immoral, power hungry, money hungry, possessive, controlling and abusive. What gospel or message are we sending from our churches? The message has become less good news and more pressure. The message is money, power, control, submission, shame, and fear. Jesus anticipated that the message that would come from the church would create righteous, peace and joy by an emphasis on the Holy Spirit's ministry of revealing Jesus. Has it? Not by what most people say about their church, and certainly not if the evidence of it happening is a people charged with excitement for evangelism. Until the church sees explosive growth again it must take an inward look and ask the question, why? When people find something that is wonderful and life changing and has brought them great joy and freedom from bondage they will tell people about it. If they aren't telling people we need to be asking what message we are bringing that has killed their enthusiasm. We must not stop asking this question until our people are on fire. We must stop pointing shaming fingers in their faces for not being excited about evangelism, and ask them what has killed their joy. People who are excited talk, its just that simple. People who find great restaurants tell their friends and the lines to get into those restaurants are a mile long at meal time. When our people aren't sharing and the lines into our churches aren't a mile long then we need to take a look at what we're serving and perhaps adjust our menu. Simple love of Jesus is a powerful drawing. Fancy buildings and high powered programs

often to tend to obscure Jesus. It's time to lift Him up and Him alone to the people of God. They are telling us by their inactivity that they are bored and hungry for the real thing.

I believe the cry of the Holy Spirit is **RETURN TO THE SIMPLE!** If we build bigger buildings because we think bigger is better, or fancier buildings because we are the Kings kids and think it will impress the world we are foolish. If we build bigger buildings it should be because we have maxed out the use of our present building and to continue to max it out means to wear out the saints who have to keep on tearing down one usage of that building so that another usage can take place within it. Who cares if the church down the street just built a big fancy building and the community is impressed with it. If the church with the smaller and less fancy building is more filled with the love of Jesus, guess where those who are hungry for Jesus are going to end up? We don't value simple enough. It is time we do. This doesn't have to mean shabby or bland, but it needs to be as unobtrusive as possible, and built in such a way as to create the greatest sense of community and relationship as possible. Personally I favor a flat, square building, with stackable chairs, so that the chairs can be moved into circles, stacked up for some toe stomping, rug hugging worship, and kept simple enough that it exists to keep the people protected from the weather. Let the sound system be excellent yet simple, so as to enhance but not create a false sense of worship due to over magnification. Keep the platform low to the main floor so as to keep those who minister on the platform just as close to the people as possible, and keep the leadership off of the platform until it is time for them to function.

Let the preachers stay away from melodramatic oratory, and focus on simple humble broken declaration of the truth. Jesus didn't shout in the streets. Why should we shout in our pulpits, unless it is because we are so filled with joy we can't contain it. We need to see simple, transparent, real leaders communicating in ways that reveal they are far from "There". None of us are "There" yet. We're all just going "There." It is so simple and refreshing to hear a pastor admit his weaknesses and frailties. It's so helpful for the people to realize that he hasn't got his act altogether either. Less emphasis on fancy style, and more emphasis on clear, honest declaration of simple truths is what the people need.

In every way, when it comes to the gospel, the church and leadership, simple is better. Let First Interstate Bank have its elaborate buildings and expansive programs, with incredible budgets and high tech everything. What those leaders are needing come Sunday is a place to get away from it all and just meet the simple Christ, both in spirit and in His people. This should be their experience when the church meets to worship Jesus.