

Message Six

Leadership in the Lord's Recovery

Scripture Reading: Neh. 8:1-10; 13:14, 29-31; Matt. 20:25-28; 23:8-13; Heb. 13:7

I. In God's New Testament economy and in the Lord's recovery, leadership depends upon spiritual capacity; the leadership is not official, permanent, organizational, or hierarchical—1 Thes. 1:5; 2:1-14; 5:12-13; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24:

- A. The Lord's concept of leadership is the opposite of the natural concept; among God's people there is actually no leadership in the natural sense—Matt. 20:25-28; 23:8-13:
 - 1. In God's New Testament economy, leadership means slavery; anyone who would be a leader must be willing to be a slave—Mark 10:35-45.
 - 2. A leadership is shaped by the growth in life and is an issue of the need; if there is no need, no leadership can be manifested—1 Pet. 5:1-3.
 - 3. In order to set aside the human concept of leadership, God ordained that the leadership among His people should depend always upon spiritual capacity—Acts 13:2, 9; 14:12; Gal. 2:11-14.
 - 4. There is no organized leadership in the Lord's recovery, and there is no unifying organization; instead, there is one Head who gives orders to all the members directly, and there is one organism, the Body—Eph. 1:22-23.
- B. According to the New Testament the authority of the apostles is spiritual and is in their ministry of the word—Acts 2:42; 2 Cor. 13:5-6; 1 Thes. 2:13:
 - 1. They have no authority in position to interfere with the church affairs; only the word ministered by them has authority—Col. 4:16; Heb. 13:7.
 - 2. The churches follow the apostles because the apostles have the New Testament teaching—Phil. 2:12; Acts 20:17-36.
 - 3. If a church goes astray or is misled, the apostles have the obligation and responsibility to deal with the situation according to God's word, which has authority—vv. 26-27; 2 Cor. 10:6; 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:2.
 - 4. The leadership is produced, strengthened, and restricted in the apostles' teaching—Titus 1:9.
- C. In the New Testament there is one ministry with one leadership—Acts 1:17, 25; 2 Cor. 4:1:
 - 1. Today's Christianity is divided because there are so many leaderships.
 - 2. Because the ministry is one, there should not be more than one leadership.
 - 3. There is one leadership since God, the Lord, and the Spirit are all one—Eph. 4:4-6.
 - 4. The one leadership is for the keeping of the oneness of the Spirit for the Body of Christ—v. 3.
 - 5. The New Testament shows us God's delegated authority in the leading ones in the ministry, an authority that is for building up—2 Cor. 13:10:
 - a. God's delegated authority was in the teaching of the leading ones—1 Cor. 4:17b-21; 7:17b; 11:2; 16:1; 2 Thes. 3:6, 9, 12, 14.

- b. Teaching the same thing everywhere in every church was the demonstration of Paul's delegated authority—1 Cor. 4:17b.
 - c. The leadership in the New Testament ministry is in the New Testament teaching more than in the leading ones of the New Testament ministry themselves—Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:10.
6. The leadership in the New Testament ministry is the leadership of a controlling revelation, not the leadership of a controlling person—Acts 26:19:
- a. In the Lord's recovery we have the leadership of the one controlling revelation in the one ministry through those who bring in the revelation—Eph. 3:3-5.
 - b. The leadership in the Lord's recovery is the leadership of the God-given revelation that restricts us, directs us, and controls us so that confusion and division are avoided—Prov. 29:18a.

II. The central and crucial point of the recovery books of Ezra and Nehemiah is the proper and adequate leadership—Neh. 8:1-10:

- A. Only under the leadership of such persons as Nehemiah and Ezra could Israel be reconstituted to be the testimony of God, the expression of God on earth; this is a type of what God wants the church to be today—13:14, 29-31; 1 Tim. 3:15.
- B. Nehemiah was the perfect leader, the best leader in human history; it is surely worthwhile for us, especially the leading ones in the churches, to consider his example—Neh. 5:19; 13:14.
- C. Although Nehemiah was the ruler, he was altogether not ambitious; this is indicated by the fact that in reconstituting the nation he recognized his need of Ezra—8:1-10; Phil. 2:3-4:
 - 1. Nehemiah knew that without Ezra he could not reconstitute the people of God:
 - a. In reconstituting the nation, Nehemiah realized that he did not know God's Word.
 - b. Ezra was renowned for his knowledge of the Word of God, and Nehemiah was willing to turn to him for help.
 - 2. According to the divine principle, the proper representation of the Body is always by those who are matched with others—1 Cor. 1:1; Exo. 4:14b-16:
 - a. To be alone is to be individualistic, but to be sent forth with another is to be sent according to the principle of the Body—Luke 10:1; Acts 13:1-3; Rom. 12:5; 1 Thes. 1:1.
 - b. To act individualistically is to violate the principle of the Body.
 - c. In the Lord's recovery there is an urgent need for the true work of building up the Body; however, this building work can be carried out only by co-workers who have been matched—Phil. 2:19-22.
- D. "The Lord has shown me that He has prepared many brothers who will serve as fellow slaves with me in a blended way. I feel that this is the Lord's sovereign provision for His Body and the up-to-date way to fulfill His ministry"—Witness Lee, March 24, 1997.