

## **Ministry or Personal Kingdom?**

by Rene Brown

Dear Brother,

May the Lord bless you and keep you in this season when we remember His sacrifice for us. We are spending a quiet weekend in our home with old friends who are also Christians. Today we shall all take communion together and tomorrow enjoy fellowship with the local congregation to celebrate His resurrection.

Brother, I pray that you are more and more developing in Him as Lord, as Savior, as our beloved friend who loves us more than we could ever know or understand. You are a young man with many years ahead of you for the service of the Kingdom. I began ministry when I was more than 40 years old, and you are not nearly so old and already really engaged in kingdom work for the Lord. Take every opportunity to reach out for Him, to serve Him, to be advancing the kingdom in accordance with His every desire.

So often those who minister desire to build their own "kingdom" whether it is a local congregation or a group of congregations with a name the person has given it or some ministry. We do it for our own glory, not for His. I admonish you, my beloved brother, make yourself useful to aid men and women in achieving what God has called them to do and not in building your own kingdom. It is so easy to fall into building a kingdom for yourself and convincing yourself it is all for the glory of God when indeed, it is only for our glory.

We need to see with His eyes, hear with His ears, and through that, see what is to be done to aid those around us in achieving what God has set for them to do. In so doing we shall be achieving what he has set for us to do. So often men care only about achieving what they perceive is their calling and not at all caring for any other man and his calling. In fact they endeavor to enlist every man they meet in their movement to achieve their goals and not at all caring about men who have a vision of their own. God has given every one who believes something to achieve in Him. I think we are to be about assisting such men as we meet in achieving their calling, their vision in the Lord.

Now I know we have a gift and a calling too - and we need to achieve it in Him. But we cannot do it at the expense of crushing down those we meet to convince them to help us achieve our goals at the expense of their own calling. Many men have a corporate vision that has no room for the individual visions of others and we may even discourage them from trying to achieve their vision from God in order for them to have the time to help us achieve our own. This is sin!

If God has given us a corporate vision for His body, He is well able to fold into it the visions of individuals He sends to us. These individuals need not lay aside what God has called them to do in order to fit our corporate vision. And even if such be true, it is up to us to assist such men in finding a place other than with us where they can fit in and achieve what God has called them to do while also being a part of that corporate vision. Corporate visions (of a congregation or of a larger work) need not be achieved at the expense of individual callings of God. If we only take time to see it, there is a way for it all to fit together and all of God's plan to be achieved in His time and in His power and strength.

My beloved brother, the Lord tells us to "work out our own salvation". That is a broad statement. Certainly in the eternal sense, we are saved through our faith in Him through His grace. But there is also a daily salvation and part of that is to move in the gifts He has given us to achieve the vision He has put in our hearts. We are to live out our entire lives in Him, working with Him, walking with Him, loving Him, communing with Him.

Part of your work is to call men and women to draw so close to the Lord that they begin to hear His voice, to perceive what He is calling them to. So often we are content as leaders to just be happy with

people coming and fellowshiping with us in something we call “church”. We are happy they come every week to listen to our learned messages. Granted, these messages may be of real value in their lives but finally what we teach must materially change their lives. It must draw them so close to the Lord they begin to think in terms of what they can do both with Him and for Him. They begin to learn what it is to “sit in His presence”.

One of the greatest weaknesses of the church is the concept of “clergy” and “laity”. Men who love to be called “pastor” just enhance this mistaken concept in the church. Granted the church is supposed to have apostolic leadership as noted in Ephesians chapter 4 where it lists the five ministries of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher. [Ephesians 4:11 - 12 “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry,] However, we must see the purpose of these gift ministries which is plainly shown in verse 12 - “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry,” So then, the saints (members of His body, that is, members of the church) are to do the work of ministry. These leaders are there to equip them to do just that.

So often leaders twist their role in the church to that of being overlords, rulers of people for their own purposes, to build their own kingdom. Some in leadership find their fulfillment in having people sit at their feet and listen to them, in having people to direct for their own purposes, in having people to rule over. What sin! What evil! I find men in both Africa and in America whose greatest joy is being called “pastor” or “apostle” or “prophet”. We have taken on titles which the Lord forbade us to do.

Matthew 23:6ff “They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, <sup>7</sup>greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, <sup>8</sup>But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. <sup>9</sup>Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. <sup>10</sup>And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. <sup>11</sup>But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. <sup>12</sup>And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

And so those who do this have built themselves their own kingdom in violation of Christ’s direct command. And they look upon the sheep as someone to sit and watch and listen to great oratory on the word of God, someone to idolize them, the great leader!! But the Lord Himself warns that those who do that will be humbled and so often that is exactly what happens. Such leaders are there for a while, and then we find them falling into sin and disappearing.

So my brother, make it your aim to lead, to guide, to direct; all for the love of Christ, all for His glory. Make it your purpose to aid men in finding their calling by the Lord Himself, to discover their gifts, and then to assist them in putting those gifts to work to fulfill the work of the Lord. Never mind if you ever have some special name or place. The Lord is your reward. Let Him reward you in His own good time and in His own way. Make it your aim to please Him just as Jesus made it His aim to please the Father in all things.

And so I bid you my very best.

Rene

\*\*\*\*\*End of Lesson\*\*\*\*\*