

## FATHER SON ORDER AS A TOOL FOR DISCIPLESHIP

The greatest tool for discipleship in the world today is the understanding and implementation of father/son order. It offers the assurance of not only impacting the lost but also discipling every saint, an assurance that no other method, past or present, has been able to accomplish.

Today there are approximately six billion people in the world. That is an almost unfathomable number. It is impossible in any one lifetime to know even a small fraction of those living, yet the Lord knows each of us intimately and with far greater understanding than each of us know even ourselves. We are at the time when the number of people alive today exceeds the number of people who have ever lived upon this earth. These are numbers that stretch the mind's ability to comprehend. We can picture a thousand, we can possibly grasp a million but it is almost beyond our mental abilities to accurately appreciate numbers that reach into the billions. The following may perhaps provide some help in this area:

To speak just the first name of a billion people would take a person over thirty years, speaking one new name a second, 24 hours a day. At this rate to complete the role of the names of each person on earth would take a continuous 160+ years.

The last ten thousand minutes of our life cover about 7 days. The last one hundred thousand minutes would take us back about two and ½ months. A million minutes ago would find us back in time almost two years. Were we able to travel back in time a billion minutes we would find ourselves alive at the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> century church.

If we think about a billion in terms of money we could use the following comparisons to understand how large a billion is. A billion dollars would be enough to build 250 elementary schools. A billion dollars would be enough to give every man, woman and child in Madison, Wisconsin or Chattanooga, Tennessee \$5,000. It would be enough to give 10,000 people a yearly salary of \$100,000 or it would be enough to give 50,000 people a new Mercury Marquee automobile.

A billion is a lot and yet there are over six billion people in the world today and at the current rate that number will increase in the next 50 years to over nine billion

people. Many modern evangelical and bible churches are continually theorizing, even sometimes agonizing over how to reach such vast numbers of people with the gospel. Numerous traditional churches have solved this perplexity by broadening their definition of salvation to include all “good” people of all religions. A kind of “many ways to God” mentality. Of course if we searched the scripture we would see that it is God who adds to the church daily *such as should be saved*. Some in the Church have forgotten that although the saints have a role to play in saving the lost, it is the Lord who saves, not us, and He never fails. Is there a disparity and a contradiction in a church world seeking the salvation of the lost but not seeking it's own sanctification with the same zeal and purpose?

Yet what vehicle can possibly reach the growing mass of humanity needing God and not only reach them but disciple them, according to His command, as well. Could it be that if the church were willing to submit itself to the order of the Spirit, it would have no difficulty in accomplishing every task given it by the Lord? Is it possible that the Lord has no problem saving the lost but has difficulty, so to speak, with a Church that is unwilling or unknowledgeable in ordering itself after the Spirit?

God, I believe, is dealing with our lack of understanding, prejudice and shortsightedness, as to what the Church of God is and what and who constitute the local assembly. If we look even curtly at our local churches we can readily see many things we do in the way of organization and worship that are done purely because of tradition without regard for understanding a biblical order or premise in their operation.

It comes as a surprise to many that the average paying membership of a local church body, not visitors, is less 100. Yet the professed goal of most church bodies would be the salvation of their cities and indeed the entire world.

There have been many attempts to “win the lost” throughout the history of Christianity which have met with a varied amount of success. Most have involved the establishment of Church systems, at times even resorting to physical force and warfare on the part of some to “save the world for Christ”. The evangelism movement that grew out of the reformation has been actively employed in one form or another for several hundred years yet has failed to reach the entire world or even a large portion thereof. Even in this past century the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements which have reach large numbers of people using the promise of the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit through faith as a means of reaching the lost, have come nowhere close to achieving this purpose. Some have employed methods of revivals or Word training, or massive outreaches through Crusades with the same lackluster outcome.

Although there have in some ways been benefits, and without doubt there have been many who have come to know the Lord, the Church has not come close to approximating even the effect of the early church, much less reaching the entire world with the gospel. Some it seems have resigned themselves to believe that what we are experiencing, with all its glaring inconsistencies, is the promised move of God. Many see the Church as being past its zenith with only the harsh judgment of God yet to be unleashed, while others believe God, in a fashion, will just snap His fingers

and supernaturally bring to pass what the efforts of the entire church age has been unable to produce.

Every year 78,000,000 more people are born than die. The Church is in no way even keeping pace with the birth rate. Just for the Church to keep pace would require the salvation of a city larger than Cincinnati, Ohio or Kansas City, Missouri each week and this would do nothing to reach the billions yet untouched by the gospel. The majority of pastors dream of shepherding a church with a thousand members and never see it. The small number who pastor churches of two thousand or more, (so called mega-churches); usually do so as a result of great personal sacrifice. All who give their hearts to the people of God in feeding and nurturing the saints of God are deserving of honor and the reward of God. If however, we left our prejudices and personal desires behind and looked objectively and openly at the circumstance of the modern church we might gain some important understanding.

We might come to understand that nowhere in scripture has the responsibility for winning a city been laid solely on the shoulders of the pastor. More importantly we might see that none of our efforts or plans, as beneficial as they may be, have won or will win the world for Christ. Most importantly we might see that He is capable of bringing to pass all that is spoken by His own power. We're not helping God, He's helping us! We might then come to understand that we aren't winning the world for Christ but He is allowing us to participate in and reap the blessing of all that He is doing. It then becomes a question not of what we are doing for Christ but what He will do for and through us if we are willing to come into divine order.

Now suppose a man of God were able to build a church of 10,000 members – a feat that only a very small fraction of one percent have been able to achieve. Such an effort, if accomplished in God, is indeed significant and worthy of proper recognition. To achieve this would not only require great effort but the help of many loyal and dedicated men and woman not to mention the provision and grace of God to keep it holy and God centered. If someone were to do this it would be considered a great and marvelous achievement and rightfully so. But did you ever think that as great as this might be, if it were not established in father/son order it would pale by comparison with a ministry that has been able to rear only a few or even just one son in proper order?

A local church of thousands if not founded on father/son order, will never perpetually continue in the vision and purpose to which God called its founder. This is not to say that it will not be “Christian” or do “good” things, but it will, in time, become religious not continuing in the vision by which it was brought forth. The preponderance of historical evidence speaks this fact loudly and clearly for all ministries to hear; “Only sons in right order will carry on ministry”. Even a brief look at present day Christian religions shows a wide discrepancy between the vision, call and doctrine of their original founders and the practice of those organizations that claim their fatherhood.

A man who God uses to build a church of ten thousand does a good thing for those who have been touched by His ministry but most of the work He does will never continue as intended by God if his ministry is not built upon proper father/son order. It cannot be merely a pattern of mentoring but that of father/son order or

ministry will never become generational and others in the future will have to dig wells and build walls destroyed by immaturity and neglect because of the lack of this order. Only a father in ministry can pass on the full measure of identity, purpose, inheritance, vision and blessing. To have a church of ten thousand, if done in God, is a good thing but to have just one son in proper order is a better and of more lasting importance.

Let's suppose that the founder of a Church of ten thousand goes on to be with the Lord without instilling proper father/son order in the church. To the religious and the world at large it is considered a great ministry. The thousands of lives touched, the buildings dedicated to godly uses and the programs that met the needs of many all testify to that ministry's effect. The failure to establish father/son order will however, guarantee that that church will eventually fall victim to religious methods, loss of vision and continual immaturity unless and until some future leader brings forth the order that is lacking.

Now let's suppose that another minister with a much smaller, (in the sense of numbers and religious recognition), ministry also goes to be with the Lord, with this one exception, that he successfully raised sons in ministry who learned to walk in proper order. His work though initially small, (in number and size), will continue to grow in subsequent generations and the vision given through him will grow by the maturity and order of his sons. In a short time it will far surpass the other ministry in both size and lasting effect.

This can be likened to Jesus' use of the parable of the mustard seed where He said; *The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.*

It's because a man of God sowed the seed of this order into sons that the ministry and vision given him by God will continue to grow and become established even after his physical death.

Every ministry involves more than just the rearing of ministry sons. The call and vision become the field of our spiritual work and provide a workplace and training opportunity for the ministry sons given from the Lord. Jesus established a work that was passed on to the disciples. His ministry was, in part, a training ground for the disciples and its continuation after His death became a significant part their purpose.

The proper establishment of father/son order is the only way that the gospel of the Kingdom will be preached in all the world. It's not the gospel, as defined by some, but the gospel of the Kingdom which will be preached in all the world. All the world may not follow, in our day, but all the world will be given a the witness of the gospel of the Kingdom and of course there is a day coming when His Kingdom will be established forever.

This is one reason why father/son order is the only tool that is able to disciple the entire church. Let's suppose that a minister is not only interested in reaching the lost but in bringing forth ministry sons. If, for example, a minister was given just ten people in his whole ministry and he took those ten and established with them a

father/son relationship. If he were to do as, Paul instructed and as Abraham demonstrated and as Jesus accomplished by His example, to commit ministry to *faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also*, so that they likewise would have ministry relationship with just 10 others who would themselves do likewise. Do you know that within twelve years the ministry starting with just that one man would have grown to 10,000 people who are not only saints but disciples and that in only eighteen years that ministry would have reached 1,000,000 disciples and that within thirty years the entire population of the earth could be not only saved but discipled? - Were they all willing to turn toward the Lord.

Order is a hard thing for people to grasp because it involves preparation, time and change on the part of those who would enter such order. I don't believe the Lord is going to establish a new method for either reaching the lost or for bringing the Church into maturity. The methods existent in His Word are just as capable of achieving His purposes today, than when first written. The life of Jesus is a pattern, the ministry of Paul is a pattern and even the Word itself is a pattern to be followed. The problem for the Church is not the need to devise new methods of outreach or organization but rather the need to understand and follow the patterns already established by God. For ministry, godly father/son order is the biblical pattern, which will bring forth its power and completion.

**Next Month: "Gaining Direction for Ministry"**

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