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# Shepherd the Flock or Tend the Institution

By Dudley Hall



In these transitional days of world tension and spiritual anticipation, God is offering a window of opportunity to church leaders - the chance to be a leader in possibly the greatest move of God of all time. Those who will renounce their sectarian ways, embrace the truth and reality of the government of God, becoming jealous for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, will soon receive understanding of the mysteries of the kingdom. Those who will share the Lord's concern for the whole church will receive an expanded vision of His whole purpose, and will be used to bring it to pass. These will be used to build the body of Christ in love, and will see the harvest.

There is a fresh breeze of vision that is being released throughout the church. The traditional, institutional, "my church" mentality, simply cannot contain this vision. Those whose fears and insecurities compel them to continue in their spiritual racism, denominationalism, legalism, idealism, liberalism and fundamentalism, will soon be shunned as enemies of the risen life of Jesus in His church. Liberty is about to be proclaimed throughout the land with true kingdom authority. Those who respond to the proclamation that God's government is present to reign in the hearts of men, will be the living stones that make up the church that generations of righteous men have longed to see.

Those who reject the call of God to walk in His freedom and to set men free, will fall to the cultural gospel, marketed to spiritual "consumers" instead of true believers. This is part of the deluding influence spoken in II Thessalonians 2. The leaders of this delusion will be those who refuse to cast off their man-made traditions and will spend their time tending religious institutions instead of the flock of God. Because God cares for His sheep, He will not bless that which scatters and starves them, but the devil will! The seeming success of some institutions will be the delusion that keeps men in bondage to them. A great choice must soon be made: ***serve the institution or become a part of the family.***

Jesus died to make His people one. He has made them one by receiving them into His family. When a church ceases to be a family and becomes an institution, it ceases to be His church. The true church has one Father, and one access to Him through Jesus Christ. The Lord will not indulge selfish shepherds who divide His family by methods, structures, doctrines or personalities that are devoted to serving their own selfish ends, but He will judge them by allowing them to go their own way until there is a full revelation of their evil nature.

Major changes are presently going on in the heavenlies that will be reflected on earth. To those whose vision is centered in their institution, their "church" will remain rigid and inflexible, except for the cosmetic changes intended to keep it "consumer friendly." But to those with kingdom vision the shepherd is arising to tend His own flock (Ezekiel 34:11-16)--the Lord is going to be the Head of His church. The message and the structure of His church will match His purpose, becoming increasingly flexible and responsive to His own directives. In this way a new "living leadership" will replace the dead spiritual bureaucracy of "institutional Christianity" that is a contradiction in terms. This message will be the good news that God's government replaces Satan's government in the lives of men. The Lord's methods will foster relationships where men learn to rule and reign through serving in love, not just technique.

True shepherds use power for the love of men. The false shepherds use men for their love of power. This distinction is about to become increasingly clear. As it was with Jesus when He walked this earth, groups of twelve who are faithful will accomplish far more than those who can sway the multitudes. The faithful pastors who devote themselves to making disciples who are loyal to the King, regardless of their numbers, will see their fruit greatly exceed that of those who gave themselves to serving institutions. The window of true spiritual opportunity is now open. Those who go through it will find the most exciting and fulfilling journey!

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