

Call to Obedience #291
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
www.schultze.org

You and Your Pastor Part 2”

By Pastor Reimar Schultze

“And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount” (Exodus 19:17).

In the second part of this message, I shall briefly review the content of the last Call to Obedience and take you yet deeper into the subject.

In my last article, I alluded to the pain that is to be found on both sides of the altar. Statistics alone tell us enough about this pain on the platform side of the sanctuary. In the United States, only one out of every one hundred seminarians is now expected to retire as a minister. Seventy percent of all ministers quit the pastorate all together within the first five years of ministry. As someone has said: There is a lot of bleeding that comes with the leading. On the congregational side, multitudes of parishioners have quit churches, having been disillusioned by ministers who have abused the pulpit or failed to uphold the standard of righteousness, etc. The bottom line in this country is that every year, eighteen thousand churches close their doors. The devil loves this. God is not pleased.

Now, having presented to you the dilemma of the church, let me review the first two points on this subject:

1) Pastors Should be Paid.

The first thing that Jesus did when he called the Twelve into his ministry was to take them off the secular payroll, as even he himself quit his carpenter job when he entered into his ministry. Jesus said to his disciples, From now on, *“Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass...”* (Matt. 10:9). It makes no more sense to have a minister, once equipped or called, to run around with a hammer and a saw than for a medical doctor, once equipped, to drive a taxi or pump gasoline. In the Old Testament, the Levites and priests were paid. Jesus said that ministers should be paid, and Paul says so likewise. Yet, no pastor should ask for or demand a salary. He should simply leave this matter in the hands of the Lord with a trusting heart.

2) Pastors Need To Be Shepherds and Servants.

God spoke frequently about shepherds in the Old Testament, and he prophesied through Jeremiah that the day would come when the shepherds would have hearts after his own heart. *“And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD”* (Jer. 23:4).

Notice also that although Peter was an apostle, Jesus’ last personal words to him were, *“Feed my sheep”* (John 21:16). Consequently, later on, Peter said to the elders of the churches, *“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away”* (1 Peter 5:2–4).

Even Paul, having been an apostle, wrote most of his thirteen epistles with a shepherd’s heart. Are we not continually being fed by his words to this very day?

Feed the flock—do not fleece the flock—is the message. Pastors must not use the flock for

their own advantage. Instead of feeding the flock, too many of them press the flock into church growth and building programs that are of the flesh. Some of these shepherds do that so that they can make an impression on the bishop or on their denomination so as to be offered a larger church. They then go from church to church making every church a stepping stone, soon leaving each congregation for a “better opportunity.” These are the men who fleece the flocks. These pastors do not have shepherd’s hearts but the hearts of hirelings who are in the ministry for gain’s sake, for *filthy lucre’s* sake, for self-promotion, and for self-glory. When they leave the flock, the flock is in disarray, discouraged, emotionally and physically exhausted, and often having a large church building debt hanging over their heads.

Ministers Are Called To Feed the Flock

Now, then, what does it mean to feed the flock? The only way a flock can be fed is by the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is ministering through the hearts of the shepherds, hungry hearts will be fed. It is not Jesus’ teaching of the marvelous parables that attracted the multitudes. Some of the Scriptures Jesus used had been preached on before. What drew and fed the multitude was the Holy Spirit working through our Lord!

This again brings us to the first point: a minister, if in any way possible, should be paid so that he can spend much of his time alone with Jesus in order to become like his Master, a vessel through whom the Holy Spirit can work and move to feed the flock. Of course, if the minister wastes his precious time with busy-ness, or if he plays rather than prays, it is a very serious matter, and prayer should be made as to what should be done.

So a minister must first be a shepherd. Also notice that a shepherd has a rod and a staff. That means a shepherd must know how to help the weak. He must know how to pull them to himself and bind up their wounds, or how to hold the lambs in his arms. He must use his rod to drive the enemy away. Of course, not physically, but spiritually protecting the flock. He must spend much time in intercession to drive away the powers of darkness, *“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”* (Eph. 6:12). **A minister must be a shepherd.**

Secondly, Peter says that **a minister must take oversight of the flock.** This must not be confused with meaning that the minister should run the whole organization of the church. It primarily means that the servant of the Lord must be the overseer in a spiritual sense. The shepherd must not be caught up in the organizational aspect of the church at the expense of his spiritual oversight. He must not get to the point where he thinks he has to control and run everything. This is what Peter means when he says, *“Neither as being lords over God’s heritage.”* If and when such a lording pastor leaves the church, the church may have a great setback or collapse. When Moses tried to do everything, God anointed Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, to advise him to distribute the burden of the church. And because Moses did so, when he turned the congregation over to Joshua, Israel was strong and ready to enter the Promised Land.

The pastor’s oversight must be in the spirit of a servant. **The minister must be an example of servanthood.** He must wear the apron of humility as Peter puts it (1 Peter 5:5). He must not cry in the streets as Jesus put it (Matt. 12:19). He must *“be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient”* as Paul put it (2 Tim. 2:24). That means, if the elders or the deacons of the church board do not agree with his ideas, the pastor must not become contentious. He must not push or press or cajole or threaten. He must remember to feed the flock. He must know how to back off and let God work things out in his own time. He must realize that the battle is the Lord’s. He must know that God never works through a domineering spirit, but through a humble and contrite heart.

But there are times when the Lord temporarily may put the mantle of a prophet or that of a watchman on the wall upon the pastor. Paul says to Timothy, “*reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine*” (2 Tim. 4:2). Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, did this a number of times with his apostles, didn’t he? Do not despise the chastening of the Lord when it comes your way through his sent ones. Remember, the final call of any shepherd is to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus (Col 1:28).

It must be realized that the flesh, with its affections and lusts, will kick and scream and get mad at anyone trying to bring hearts to perfection. Therefore, few congregations are prepared for what may occur when a true man of God comes to their pulpit. It is as Rev. Loran Helm has stated in A Voice in the Wilderness, page 158:

“For this reason, whenever God sends a true servant to any congregation, that people will begin to experience unusual struggles and upheavals. Whenever God is truly endeavoring to accomplish His will, Satan will be there trying to stir up strife, create misunderstandings, and cause jealousies among the people. Few laymen are prepared for the battles which they will encounter once God sends a true servant their way.”

Can you see more clearly now the phrase in the parable of the nobleman going away to a far country, leaving a steward behind, when people said, “*We will not have this man to reign over us*” (Luke 19:14)? Susanna Wesley said that Self-will is the cause of all misery and sin. Self does not want to surrender to anyone.

And this gets us to the laity.

The Layman’s Ministry

As the pastor has a challenging ministry toward the laymen, so do the laymen toward their pastors. When each one fulfills His calling, great things are about to happen. First, in review, **the layman must realize the high and holy calling of the man sent from God**. In The Revelation 1:20, Jesus indelibly links himself with his sent ones when he explains the mystery of the seven stars. “*The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand...are the angels of the seven churches...*” The word *angels* here, coming from the Greek, means *ministers*. Jesus does not have the whole world in his hands. No, it is his ministers. The right hand of kings and lords is the hand of government, of power and authority. So, when you meddle with one who is in Jesus’ right hand, you meddle with Jesus himself. When you meddle with the one sent, you meddle with the one who sent him. Be careful not to touch God’s anointed one. When a man of God is clearly out of order, the Scripture admonishes us not to rebuke him but to entreat him as a father in the presence of two or three witnesses (1 Tim. 5:1, 19). Preferably, it should be done by men who are older and seasoned in the Lord who have the wisdom, the carefulness, the gentleness, and the fear of the Lord to deal with him without hurting themselves. If their hearts are not trembling when they approach the servant sent by Jesus in a corrective way, they had better just pray. It must be realized that there has never been a true servant of God with whom people did not find fault. Men even found fault with Jesus. Carnal Christians look at the faults of ministers, but the Lord may say about these same men, “*How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*” (Rom. 10:15). It is very unusual for a layman to truly understand the work of the ministry to the fullness he needs to in order to judge properly. That is the order of things. Realize that God will deal with his men, and it won’t be easy for them.

Second, **the layman must understand the powerful ministry of presence**. Fundamentally, nothing is more important in the call of the laity than to be present when a man in the right hand

of Jesus ministers the Word of the Lord. If the layman is present, he acknowledges the divine call of God's servant to be his shepherd. If he skips and misses, he does not understand the seriousness of that call, or it is an indication that he doubts the call of God upon his servant. Of course, what is true in the spiritual world is true in the secular world. What is the most important thing to your employer but that you show up? Everything else will flow out of that.

Many times, I have made hospital calls and agonized over the correct bed-side prayer and Scripture. But without fail, later, parishioners told me, "I don't remember what you prayed or what Scripture you read at my bedside, but your presence meant everything to me." Turn this around, and you know why your presence means so much to your pastor. Jesus dwells within me and you, if we have forsaken all. Does Jesus have to talk to you all the time or most of the time? Of course not. There is no need for continual conversation or words between you and him. It is the ministry of his presence that means so much to you. For in it is healing, comfort, assurance, encouragement, support, and transformation.

To be continued in the next Call to Obedience...

Call to Obedience #291
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
www.schultze.org