

Call to Obedience #322  
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA  
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The Christian life can only operate out of abundance.

### **In Search of Ministerial Standards**

By Pastor Reimar A. C. Schultze

Let me tell you outright that I am not turning into a pope in this letter, speaking with irreversible divine authority. But I do believe that the Holy Spirit is with me in making an effort to address the subject of the ministry. Obviously, those of you who are lay persons may say, "All right, then this article is not for me." But you would be wrong: this article is for everyone. Many headaches can be prevented if the laity would understand the ministry.

Let me begin then, by sharing my credentials with you. I am a graduate of a holiness seminary and have pastored for 40 years. After 3 years in my first pastorate, I was angrily voted out. In my second pastorate, I was ignored. In my third church I experienced a split. After this, God called me to start a new church beginning with 6 adults and my family of 6. I have pastored this present congregation for over 30 years, and I am just now retired from my 40 years of pastoral work to give myself entirely to radio, writing, and teaching.

Now, here is what I'd like to pass on to young preachers and to the rest of my colleagues in this great battle for the souls of men. Please do me a favor; reserve your judgment on what I'm saying until you've read all the rest of the articles on this subject, as they will come forth in the next few months. They will cover the minister and his doctrines; the minister as a shepherd; as a counselor; the minister and the Holy Spirit; his disciplines; his home life; his finances, his problems; and how a minister is to be received.

#### **The Pastor and his Call**

*"And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples; and of them*

*he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles."* Luke 6:13

I have a hunch that many ministers in our pulpits and on the mission field never had a call of God to ministry. A number of them aren't even converted; others have entered this work for humanitarian reasons, etc. This is why, by some statistics, only one out of 100 seminary graduates is still preaching as he approaches retirement. The first thing that must be absolutely clear to all of us is this: No man has any business entering the ministry unless he has a clear call of God to do it. A renowned evangelist, Leonard Ravenhill, said something like this: Any man who enters the ministry without the call of

God is an idiot. You can volunteer for any occupation in the world, from janitor to airline pilot, and for general work in the church, but God will not accept volunteers for the leadership of the ministry. It is not *your* choice to be a minister, it is *His* choice. Consequently there is an incredible amount of backing from Heaven once Heaven has chosen you. One of the best Scriptures on this subject is from Jeremiah, chapter 1. It shows the essence of the call: *"Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child."* As you can see here, volunteer ministers are automatically excluded. The election is of God, the forming is of God, the sanctification is of God, the ordination is of God.

Here is another distinction between a volunteer minister and a chosen one. A volunteer minister will confidently offer his service to the Lord; a called one, however, will feel so humbled and overpowered that his first response will be, "I cannot speak... I cannot do it." Moses responded in this manner. If you are called of God you feel absolutely helpless to satisfy this call, and you know you can only make it by a fresh supply of divine grace each day. When you are called, you know that you are absolutely dependent on God for **everything**. Speaking from my experience, the ministry is the most difficult, dangerous, challenging and often heart-breaking work on the face of the earth. Yet I have to tell you that it is also the most precious, holy, wonderful and high calling a man can have. It is never a job that you do for financial remuneration. It is always a calling that you do regardless of the earthly recompense. It is being available to God and his people twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

In Revelation 1, God reveals the relationship of his ministers to Jesus. He addresses the seven churches and says the seven stars in Jesus' right hand represent the seven ministers. Let me ask you, what does Jesus have in His right hand? Is it the whole world? Not at all. Jesus does not hold the world in his hand - it is His footstool. He has something more important in his hand. Not a single emperor, king, governor, general, philosopher, scientist, chairman of the board, or choir leader has ever been held in the right hand of Jesus. The believers, the Lord's sheep, stand at His right hand but ministers are in His right hand. This is what the Bible teaches, whether we like it or not. If you are a minister called of God, this ought to put you on your knees in deep humility, brokenness, surrender and worship. Therefore I say: Woe unto the church people who reject or make light of God's ministers, who treat their word with indifference and continue to procrastinate in disobedience to God. Mark 6:11 says, *"And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you... It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city."* The rejection of a man called of God is plainly a rejection of Jesus Himself. However, there is woe also unto the minister who abuses his calling or maligns his sheep.

Furthermore, dear reader, never, ever let a minister's humanity overshadow his holy calling. God calls humans and will not deliver them from their earthly house till the last day. We all have some idiosyncrasies. When God chooses a man as a minister, He chooses him despite his idiosyncrasies, and you need to receive him despite his human

weaknesses that annoy you. Unfortunately, the Pharisees and others let Jesus' humanity, His eating and drinking and mannerisms, come between them and Jesus, causing them to finally kill Him. Likewise, most churches eventually allowed the mannerisms of the apostle Paul (his long speeches, his complex thoughts and examples) to get between them and God. Their rejection of Paul forced him to make tents for a living. Again, never mind the preacher's humanity: keep remembering his high calling and give him time to grow both in his humanity and divinity, and you shall be rewarded for every cup of cold water you put into his hand. So God calls the man. If your man in the pulpit is not a called one, go to one who is. It may mean moving to another church, another town, and getting another job. As far as I perceive it, it is not God's will that you live your life without a divinely chosen shepherd. Sheep need shepherds – desperately.

### **The Making of the Minister**

*"I was made a minister..."* Ephesians 3:7

Bible schools and seminaries cannot make ministers called of God. This perception is an age-old mistake. Bible schools and seminaries are human institutions, run by humans, who generally operate under a human board of regents who answer to the wide body of a denomination, etc. Generally when a ministerial student graduates, he is "installed" in a church, and subsequently ordained to the ministry by his senior colleagues, asserting that he is indeed called of God. Now I am not suggesting the abolition of all religious institutions, but I merely point out that they have their limitations. The tragedy in most cases is that the humanly trained, installed and ordained pastor soon bows down to the institution that created him. In order to keep his "job" he may compromise many of his earlier deep convictions. As long as he satisfies the desires of the institutions that created him he is promised a bright future. If, however, he keeps preaching his convictions, he risks losing favor with church leaders and his local congregation.

So let me make this perfectly clear: when God calls a minister, *He* makes that minister. He does that by alternately heating and cooling him, by tempering him, by hammering away at him, by chiseling at him, by running sandpaper over him until he is what God wants him to be: devoid of all self-glory and self-seeking. If the minister is truly called of God he must be faithful in the furnace of affliction through much prayer and praise and dying. Then he will be molded into the likeness of the One who called him. That is God's seminary. Man's seminary puts things into a minister's head, but God goes right for the heart. God still cries out as He did in days of old, *"Oh, that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always..."* (Deuteronomy 5:29) Oh, yes, it is one thing for a minister to be the product of an institution, it is altogether another for him to have been made a minister by GOD.

**I will share more on all of this in the next issues. Pray for me.**

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