

DISCIPLING THE NATIONS-A BIBLICAL MATRIX-Let's Talk

We have a world wide crisis brewing! Recession, terrorism, climate change, Enron-style greed-capitalism, modern-day slavery and global crime syndicates. We have sown to the wind, and now we are going to reap the whirlwind.

But God has been raising up an APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

In Acts 19 Paul builds a base in Ephesus, he is sent out as an apostle, plus he sends others out on his behalf (Acts 19:21-22).

But in his home base, Ephesus, he also concentrates on reforming church life (Acts 19:1-10), social structures (Acts 19:17-19), and economic powers (Acts 19:24-27).

Nehemiah is also a PATTERN of the apostle (1 Cor 3:10; Eph 2:20).

Once the city walls are completed Nehemiah is still concerned for building in three areas:

- the spiritual-the house of God (Neh 13:11)
- the social-marriage (Neh 13:23)
- and the economic- trading on the Sabbath (Neh 13:15).

He is involved in rebuilding to God's PATTERN given to Moses and to David (Note Moses in Nehemiah 8:14 & 10:29; and David in Nehemiah 12:36 & 45).

Nehemiah remembered the poor and represented God well (Nehemiah 5:15).

The Apostolic Church needs to speak prophetically, and change behavior in the social and cultural area, plus the area of economics and justice.

We need the motivation and reward of free market CAPITALISM and the COMPASSIONATE heart of Christianity.

God's desire is to bless us with wealth (Deut 8:18), and He requires that we don't forget the poor (Deut 15:10). His plan is not

higher taxes or endless handouts, but a PARTNERING with the poor (Lev 19:10; Deut 24:19).

The apostolic mandate is to disciple the nations, but clearly includes not forgetting the poor (Gal 2:10).

This is neither the prosperity doctrine nor the social gospel, it is neither Kingdom now, nor Liberation Theology, but it is nation building according to Kingdom theology.

COMPASSIONATE CAPITALISM is the way forward.

The separating of church and state does not mean the separation of the sacred and the secular. It means that the leader of the church should not be the leader of the state, and vice versa. But our beliefs must impact of living. Big business has lost its moral compass because we have separated our belief system from our governing.

GOD'S WISDOM

God's plan has always been for the church to proclaim his wisdom and to dethrone the worldly philosophies and ideologies (Ephesians 3:10) In this way we are to occupy the high ground on the battle field of ideas, or the "Commanding Heights" as they have been called ¹(see Ephesians 6:11).

In the 1970s the world was in an economic crisis. The short supply of oil and the rise of inflation caused economic stagnation, "stagflation" as it became known. A radical new solution was needed.

"In the late 1960s, a young Conservative politician named David Howell was charged with working out a plan, as he put it, "to unravel Britain's huge state sector and at the same time widen capital ownership in British society." Scouring the United States

¹Yergin & Stanislaw, The Commanding Heights, 2002,p.xii

for ideas, he ran across the word **privatization** in the work of the economic and social theorist Peter Drucker..... he deployed it in a 1969 pamphlet, “A New Style of Government.” But then, as Howell put it, the idea lay “dormant,” until Joseph and Thatcher picked it up”².

Amazing, Peter Drucker, a Christian has the idea to privatize the government sector. It is picked up by Thatcher and then finds its way back into the USA, under Regan’s leadership. It then literally changes the whole world.

Today greed is killing Capitalism. Once again the voice of the church is desperately needed in a world disillusioned with rampant capitalism and slowly turning once again to communism.

We need to wrestle with God’s word to find answers to our present problems. The “churches theological values” must “make sense to those beyond its membership” and must be “given expression through secular debate in a language understandable to a broad constituency of people”.³ . I THINK THAT THIS IS OUR GREAT CHALLENGE!

LEARNING FROM THE ABOLITIONISTS

The historian G.M. Trevelyn said that the abolition of slavery was “one of the turning points of the world”.

Two hundred years ago slavery was common, “well over three quarters of all people alive were in bondage of one kind or another, not the captivity of striped prison uniforms, but of various systems of slavery or serfdom.....Slavery had existed before money or written law.”⁴

² Yergin & Stanislaw, *The Commanding Heights*,2002,p.96

³ Charles Villa-Vicencio, *A Theology of Reconstruction*, 1992,p.4

⁴ Adam Hochschild, *Bury the Chains*,2005,p.2

Many different individuals and groups formed an integrated and united assault against Abolition.

In 1784 “the leaders of the Quaker campaign-an informal committee of six who met every two weeks to concert their publicity in the London and provincial press- were all businessmen and, they liked to think, hard of head if tender of heart.”⁵

Later the campaign was joined by Anglicans like William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson. Preachers like John Wesley and John Newton also got behind the campaign and so did businessmen like Josiah Wedgwood, the potter to the Queen.

The Clapham Sect gathered as an informal support to Wilberforce. This was depicted so well in the “Amazing Grace” movie.

They were a team of Christians made of from ministers, members of parliament, directors of companies, and authors and scholars.

Now, once again, we need the coming together of pastors and saints with an apostolic mandate to reform our nations.

CIRCLES OF INFLUENCE

We need to create Circles of Influence i.e. round table gatherings in Clapham Sect fashion, or Clapham Circles as someone has called them. I think that we need three basic groups represented: local pastors, apostolic team and the saints. Each party influencing and learning from each other. The majority of the circle needs to be the saints. NOT creating a committee, but gathering those saints with influence in their own circle, and then equipping the saints for the work of the ministry **in their own circle of influence.**

Wilberforce was equipped for parliament not local church! Dudley always said that our leaders training was to train leaders for **all sections** of society. This Circle of influence is not so that influential people can come together and work on a new project together. It is to better equip all to be more effective in their own sphere of influence. Some are already doing this in their churches and are showing amazing results.

⁵ Simon Schama, Rough Crossings,2005,p.204-205

Note that it was this informal structure that gave the Abolitionists there momentum.

Note also that it was this same structure that Giuliani used in a formal way when he was mayor on New York City with an annual budget of \$40 billion. He also managed to bring down the crime stats drastically and stopped Big Apple from rotting.

“The morning meeting was the core of my approach to managing. It served numerous purposes –decision- making, communicating, even socializing-but most of all it kept me accountable. The morning meeting was where the chief executive was responsible, and could hold everybody else responsible. Those present could go back to their agencies and act in a similar way. Instead of trying to protect themselves against the risk of a bad decision, they were willing to make decisions knowing that a few might end up being wrong but at least things got done, and in reasonable time.⁶”

Jesus called a team, not only political activists like Judas, or government representatives like Matthew; not only religious reformers like Andrew and others who followed John the Baptizer; but marketplace people like the common fishermen, Peter and John.

The apostle Paul, who was trained as a religious lawyer, also built a team of fellow workers or coworkers (Philemon 1 & 24; Colossians 4:11; Philippians 2:25 & 4:3; 2 Corinthians 8:23; Romans 16:3, 9 & 21; 1 Thessalonians 3:2).

He also chose ministry people as well as marketplace and government people to be on his team:

Luke was a doctor (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24), Priscilla and Aquila were tent makers (Acts 18:2-3; Romans 16:3), Erastus was the City Engineer or Treasurer (Rom 16:23; Acts 19:22). Also involved were Zenas the lawyer (Titus 3:13) and Lydia, the trader (Acts 16:14).

Plus the ministry people like Silas, the prophet; and Timothy and Titus the apostles.

⁶ Leadership, Rudolph Giuliani,p5

If we want to impact our city and disciple the nations, we need to have people who can bring about change at the highest level.

The example of William Wilberforce is still one of the best.

Slavery was so entrenched, and of such an economic benefit to those in power, that it was not going to just slip away without a fight. That fight needed a REVIVAL, under George Whitefield, and a REFORMATION of church life, under John and Charles Wesley, before the national climate was right for an assault upon the laws of the land through parliament.

There is much we can do if we form ourselves into influential teams linked in relationship to an international Apostolic Team.

Already some local churches have done this with good results.

LET THE KINGDOM COME!