

With much prayer I put together this article. Many times I asked the Lord if I should send it out or not? For a time I felt not to then with the advice of other dear brethren I felt a release to do it. I present this message to you not to condemn but to encourage those with an open heart. I do feel we are entering as the church a desperate time. I feel this is just one of many principles that will help us in the upcoming battle. I thank those who take time to read this.

## **AM I A DREAMER?**

***"For they all seek their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus." Phil.2: 21 NASB***

There is a problem that is plaguing the Body of Christ today; it is blocking evangelism; separating brethren; creating competition, strife and jealousies. It was already an issue in the forefront of the church in Paul's day; men were dividing the Body of Christ for gain. They were speaking evil of Paul, not permitting him in their churches or to visit brethren he himself had begotten in the Lord. You can see the anguish in his heart when he wrote: "For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers..." 1Cor 4:15 NKJV. Political control was an issue in the church. Paul had spoken strongly against greed and covetousness, which were just some of the motives for this sin. It would be no different if Paul lived today.

From the very beginning when certain men saw groups of believers come together, their only interest was how to profit from the situation. They were not just seeking after financial benefits, but also after prestige, titles or position of notoriety. They wanted to be the ones seen and greeted as the mentor of the group. Jesus already warned against such desires, and of the judgement that would ensue those who sought after such things (Mk.12:38- 40). No matter what great attributes a man may have, if he is motivated by such considerations, he will actually be working against the principle of humility. The cry is heard: "I am innocent of such. I do not want to be lifted up or create anything around me and my personality", and yet, this is exactly what we see happening ALL AROUND US.

Selfishness is already a serious sin, but when it operates in the Body of Christ it destroys the very principles that protect us from the devil. When we want something for 'just our own', that is, our own self, our own family, our own church, or our own ministry, it will only bring a spiritual deadness. We become occupied with 'self' and what we are. We want Jesus to be manifested, but it must be through what we are doing or else we don't accept it. We could care less what God is doing somewhere else, we are only interested in what we are doing. This is a deceptive spirit and hinders God from doing what He wants to do in us as individuals or as a Church.

We were once invited to bring a small evangelistic group to a village that had a couple of very small Christian Fellowships. In the central part of town, there was a coffee bar with a number of people sitting and standing in front of the place. There were few, if any people, anywhere else in the town. As our street team started setting up the P.A. System in front of the bar, the brother who had invited us stepped forward and told us that we could not preach there. Instead, we had to go to the other side of the village. We pointed out to him the fact that the only people around were there in front of the bar. He informed us, however, that the other fellowship in town held their meetings near the bar. He was concerned that if we preached there and someone were to get saved, they would go to that fellowship and not his own. The great interest was not the salvation of souls, but where they would fellowship. This is a good example of men seeking "their own interests, and not those of Christ Jesus". This attitude may not always be so openly stated, but it exists all the same in the church.

Unless this attitude changes, we are not going to see a great move of God. Our hearts must be convicted and purified of such selfishness, so that we may experience the wonderful presence of God in our midst and see souls come to the truth. A baptism of love is also needed, where we begin to care more for others than ourselves; where Fellowships come together out of no other motive than love for one another and to work together, not caring who 'profits' or what can be gained. When the Holy Spirit moves on us in such a way, we will start loving people more than buildings, positions and salaries. Our eyes will become focused on what pleases God and not on ourselves.

I am waiting with an anxious heart for the day when brethren and fellowships will come together, motivated by nothing else than the desire to love one another. I'm not speaking just about a group of pastors coming together and making the right motions that never move beyond the meeting and impact the common man. I refer instead to meetings where no one is worried about sheep stealing or who will get the tithe; where everyone's eyes are focused on Jesus and not on man. Won't that be great?

When the Spirit of the first church truly falls on us and we become one as the Father and the Son are one? When brethren sell what they don't need to help others? When brethren who are better off spontaneously take care of those who are in need? When our security is not in what we possess, but in how we may use and give what the Lord has blessed us with? When numbers mean absolutely nothing; whether two are united together or two thousand, there will be the same spirit of love and unity? When the world knows that we are true believers, not because of our denominational name tags or elevated doctrines, but because of the love we have for one another and the sincere care shown to all?

Our children who have grown up in the Church need to see such a powerful manifestation; only so will they return to the love of Christ. So many believers feel by giving their children material security and education that they will be bettering their souls, but it doesn't work that way. Once again the seeking of 'self' is being manifested. Many of our young people are not following us to Church for a reason; and many of those who do, from what I have seen, don't always have the most sanctified of appearances and conduct. It isn't that we are not modern enough or that the music doesn't appeal to them; the problem goes much deeper. Is our fellowship seeking its own interests or those of the Kingdom of God? If we do not get our kids attention through a move of God among us, then I guarantee the world will; it has many things to offer them. This alone should shake us from our apathy and send us into the arms of one another.

Am I just a dreamer or could there be others with the same desire? I believe so. In fact, I feel there are multitudes tired of going through the Evangelical forms and rituals that bring more boredom than conversions. Even in the most modern of meetings, the emptiness still prevails. Why? Could it be we are only seeking our own interests?

Would it be too great a miracle to believe that whole groups would just cancel their own meetings and visit other fellowships, of whom in past times, they knew very little about? I am not talking about ecumenicalism, but of true sincerities. We need to enjoy the richness of our diversity in Christ and truly have open hearts to one another. This must become a way of life in the Church and not just another method or message for the moment that eventually creates more division. Is this possible? I feel so, but if we don't do it voluntarily, God just may have some surprises for us all.

I want all the blessings and strength I can receive to prepare me for what is going to come upon the church. These principles could be the beginning of what we need when the purging begins, and for sure, there is going to be a purging of believers. We all know the teaching of Jesus about the sheep and the goats (Matt 25:31-46). I want to be on the right side of the fence, and to have as many as possible with me. I feel these principles I have brought out are a good start for what is going to be needed in the future.

Maybe I am just dreaming, but please, don't wake me...

Bro. Clark Slone, Christ is the answer Italy



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**CHARLES H. SPURGEON QUOTATION:** "Let us cling to the great truth of the vicarious sacrifice, which is the chief teaching of this sacred book. Take this away, and I do not see anything left in the Bible at all which can be called good news."