



An Open Letter to Pastors and Lay Leaders

(From One Who Has Been There)

Or: ***“Lessons from the Top Ten Mistakes I Have Made in Ministry.”***

Empowered - Part Three

“My Personal Journey”

All leaders understand the stark contrast between the valleys and the mountains.

I remember well when I was leading a large church, how in the predawn hours on Sabbath mornings I would furtively make my way to my church. There in the faint light of the morning, kneeling in the center aisle, I would pray my way from the back to the front. Pew by pew, I would intercede for the families and then fall weeping before the altar for power, for wisdom and unction so that I would be able to spiritually feed and lead my congregation. Oh! Those were days of Mount Carmel experiences, of divine power and miracles but someplace along the journey, I got caught up in pastoral administration and management. Working with committees and ministries and massaging the organizational structure filled my days. My natural heart tends to gravitate toward micro-management and, as a result, slowly the spiritual tide recedes and the empowered life dries up.

Stephen R. Covey, in his book *First Things First* talks about the Pareto Principle, or the 80/20 Rule, which simply states that 80% of unfocused effort generates only 20% of results, and that the remaining 80% of results are achieved with only 20% of the effort. If leaders spend 80% of their time on management issues and 20% of their time on spiritual issues, it is that 20% spent that produces 80% of the results.

But God is gracious to us and there is always a turning of the tide when we come to the stark realization that we have abnegated our responsibility as spiritual leaders in favour of organizational management. When the heart is open, the ever present, ever patient Holy Spirit brings to our soul the realization of our great spiritual need that only comes from the power of a life given to prayer.

I realize that my greatest struggle in my Christian experience has been that I am not the praying leader that I should be. Like many Christians, I am good at praying the endless prayers of petition- *“God fix this, change that, do this, straighten out that”*, but these selfish prayers are nothing like those I have known from the experience of deep intercession, of communion with heaven, being lost in intercession and weeping for lost souls. Therefore, I am more convinced and convicted of the power of the hidden life than I have ever been.

“I tell you frankly that Jesus and the power of His grace are being left out of the question. Results will show that mechanical working has taken the place of piety, humility, and holiness of heart and life. The more spiritual, devoted and humble workers find no place where they can take hold and therefore they stand back. The young and inexperienced learn the form and do their work mechanically, but true love- the burden for souls- is not felt. Less dwelling upon set forms, less of the mechanical, and more of the power of godliness are essential in this solemn, fearful day of responsibilities. 4T. page 601

Next Week: The Business of Spiritual Leadership

Blessings, Ken Crawford