

OF LEADERSHIP AND PANDEMIC:

That our world has been thrown into, and for months now been looming in an overwhelming darkness owing to its being eclipsed by the thick dark clouds of Corona virus, otherwise called COVID19, is a news that has over saturated the atmosphere and is common place. The outbreak, prevalence and reach of this disease, has fired and injected so much fear in the hearts of governments and peoples all over the world. Leadership just like the led has been turned aimlessly restless as we do not seem to get it, much as we try.

Governments fearing for their nations and citizens and individuals fearing for themselves. Governments all over the world making concerted efforts to contend with the situation. With every measure and means humanly employed however, the situation by the day, is just ever getting worse for it. With the number of infections ever rising and standing at about 2, 000,000 as at today 15th April 2019, and the number of survivors 507, 890 and deaths over a 132, 000, the scare of this virus has gone beyond the face and the surface, to penetrating the bone marrow. Desperate as humankind is for a cure which seems hard in coming and which none certainly seems yet in view, a divide has emerged: the godless verses the godly divides. The godless and man dependent looking to man, while the godly and God dependent looking up to God.

This development has come along with leadership test. Every leader both spiritual and political today stands in the dock. The leadership principles you implore and deploy as a leader, go a long way to influencing and determining how the led behaves and lives through this severely trying season. Leaders, who do not know God, hinge their counsel on human wisdom and knowledge. They go it in the manner of the flesh. They push God to the side and think it all about science and technology and then medicine. Yes, while these are true and needful, they, a gift of God in themselves, do not suffice. With God left out, these leaders leading in the wisdom of the flesh, hang and operate on deficient wisdom. This may be the reason why as I write this day, science has not produced the answer and therefore the cure to this plague.

This then, has rubbished and left to futility the wisdom of man. Godly leaders however, in addition to science, technology and medicine, seek God's face. Their counsel to the despaired and desperate followership in trying times, exudes and streams from their time with God. They speak the mind of God to the heart God's people. They encourage the people, fan their faith to flame and give them hope. They trust God for a solution either directly or through the knowledge of science and technology and by medicine, yet have a crown for this in their absolute faith in God, without whom nothing is possible. What a leader believes then, affects his words and deeds or actions. Everyone in leadership position, whether a father, mother, teacher, a community leader, spiritual leader-pastor and or political and traditional leader, is critical to the positive and progressive movement of his people or otherwise, through life. All leadership in whatever form, is about the protection, preservation and promotion of life. It implies then that all with the privilege of leadership must prove themselves those who place high premium and are ready to lay down their lives for the lives of the led. For Jesus said "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends"(John 15:13). And

while those in political leadership position may afford to protect their lives maximally and be careless about the life of the led, leaving vulnerable, those called to Christian leadership, are without such a pleasure.

Like the watchman in the watch tower, they are called to a hind-full, insightful and intelligently times matching relevant leadership. Ever sitting in the watch tower, without the pleasure of slumber or sleep, they must be proactive, looking out and all round for the enemy whether physical or spiritual; but much more, having the fort, the place of refuge and safety ever set for the retreat of the led. Christian leaders must not toe the line of the 66 year old Gerald Glenn, the Bishop of the New Deliverance Evangelical Church, Chesterfield Virginia U. S. A. whom The Ven A. C. Chukwuocha quoted reportedly dying of "COVID19" on the eve of Easter. He is said to have refused to implement "Social Distancing" and conducted congregational services until as late as March 22 in flagrant flouting of government orders. He had declared that "God is larger than this dreaded virus," it is alleged. Equally, it has also been said that he had made some profound assertions which seem like forth telling his death with the rhetoric question "Why did God let this, (COVID19) happen? It makes us look at our own immediate mortality," he had given the answer himself. And indeed before long he was dead and because of "the dreaded virus" which he did not dread.

For those in leadership position, who see danger coming and do not seek a shield to protect both themselves and those with them against it, put God to the test and naively, proudly ship themselves and others to destruction. For biblically, contending with plagues, has had science and technology crowned by faith in action, bringing about the stop. For example Numbers 21: 4-9. The making of a bronze snake (science and technology), lifting it up on a pole, and the exercise of faith by the real snake bitten looking at it and living.

Our carelessness and insensitivity in the heat of this COVID19 pandemic could within the twinkle of an eye make a mass grave of the church under our watch. We therefore owe it a responsibility, and will do well under God, to keep the congregations under our charge by pointing them away from danger both real and spiritual, thus saving them today, so we have them tomorrow. When as leaders we make bad models of ourselves, we mislead the led, leave them confused, without direction and an endangered species. And mark you, the minister of the gospel is called to keep and to preserve life both spiritually and physically, and lead God's people to salvation. And that begins here and now and not just an end product. For it is what you make through the production line and the process that emerges as the end product. Salvation therefore is a process that begins here and now. Jesus had said to Zacchaeus "Today salvation has come to this house..." (Luke 19:9). That wasn't the end. He and his household, having been freed from sin, were to go ahead and begin to live and continue to live as those who were saved and yet still being saved. And explaining to the Jews his power as the Son of God, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my voice and believes him who sent me, has eternal life, and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life" (John 5:24). Meaning, the moment you hear and believe the word of God, you have eternal life and begin living eternal life right away, and with the grand and everlasting life in view. It is therefore godlessness and spiritual emptiness that culminates in insensitivity to have people drawn to

Christ only to be careless about the preservation of their souls and have them pointed away to destruction by being charlatans and getting them destroyed. The Lord save us from throwing him off the driver seat of our lives and privileged leadership positions and having self planted and seated there on. Amen.

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