

LETTER TO LEADERS

BY

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Dear Friends:

I am writing to you again this month because God has given me a love for you, a leader in God's church.

This is the third monthly letter I have sent. It is written not to ask, but to give to you.

READ THIS LETTER! It may help you.

The Lord called me into the ministry in September of 1968. I first pioneered and pastored a church. Then He called me to teach, then to be a missionary at large. I have learned slowly by experience. But what I have learned is real (to me). It has set me free from leadership frustration.

LOVE AND CHANGE

When the Lord called me to pastor, I knew that God had called me to "change people so God could love them." I met many people who had wrong ideas about God. I knew, if I could change their ideas of God, they would love Him more. Therefore God could love them more.

HARSH GOD?

People imagined God as a God of wrath, judgment, and anger. They were persuaded that God would not hesitate to send sickness, poverty, and difficulties to teach them, keep them humble and to guide them.

GOOD GOD!

Therefore, I saw the need to change their image of God. If I could get them to see God as a God of healing, prosperity and good things, they would lose their fear of God. They would love God more, and God could therefore love them more.

CHANGE OTHERS?

I then set about the task of changing people. I began to teach the Word of God. At first I taught with some hesitation for I had heard few others teach what God had given me. But as time went on I taught with greater confidence.

At first it seemed people would not receive from me because I was not confident in my teaching. If I did not really believe what I taught, how could they believe it? As I gained confidence, I was surprised that people seemed not to receive because I was too confident, even proud in my confidence. Besides, they had Bible and a brain. They could figure things out for themselves. They did not need my help.

My frustration drove me to God. "God, you called me to change people so you could love them. But God, YOUR people will not receive from me."

God gently replied, "Bill, I did not call you to change people so I could love them. I called you to love people so I (God) could change them."

With that word from God my purpose for serving God began a change that is still in progress. God loved me so much, He spoke a word that is continuously echoing in my heart. God has set leaders in the church to love His people. God has never made His leaders responsible to change His people.

That, however, does not mean that God does not use teaching and preaching to change people. God does use your teaching and preaching. If we teach for the purpose of changing people, they will sense our motive and resist the changes. If we teach and preach to show forth the goodness and love of God, men's hearts will be opened and the Holy Spirit will be able to effect changes in men's lives.

After God told me I was called to love people so He could change them, I began to teach and preach for a different reason. Even though I taught the same subjects; even the same material, I began to teach to show the people God's love and goodness. The teaching may have sounded the same, but my purpose, my motivation began to change. I began to love people. They sensed the difference in my heart somehow. They stopped resisting and began to receive.

The difference was not in the people. The difference was not so much in the message. The difference was in my attitude. Love made the difference. THE DIFFERENCE IS LOVE. Everyone in the world and everyone in the church needs to be accepted. Everyone needs to be respected. Nearly everyone feels, "I don't get no respect," as one carnal comedian often says. It is true everyone needs love.

GOD LOVES ALL

The Bible tells us that God loves us; even while we were yet sinners, God loved us. This is true. Not all, however, are persuaded of this.

God has set leaders (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) in the body of Christ to bring people into maturity and ministry. They come to maturity through change. We all resist change unless there is love abounding.

Not until we know God has good things for us, will we yield to His changes for our lives.

As leaders we must release the love of God toward people so they will receive from us and allow the Spirit of God to change them.

LOVE REQUIRES FELLOWSHIP

Love cannot exist and will not be manifest by relationship alone. Love requires fellowship in that relationship. Relationship without fellowship will provide no means for love to be manifest.

GOD SO LOVED!

God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son. God could have devised a plan to establish relationship without fellowship. In a sense of the word, this was true with the Old Covenant and the law.

Relationship-without fellowship, the Old Covenant, was not sufficient in God's eyes. He sent Jesus to add fellowship to His relationship.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us to reveal love for us. That love would persuade us to change.

Now we who are flesh are becoming word to dwell among others. Thereby the love of God will be revealed to them through us. By this love, people will receive the word that will change them. It will make them more like Jesus.

In your position as a leader, establish a relationship with those who God sends to you. Let that relationship come alive through fellowship. The more fellowship you have, the more they will see God love through you to them.

In His Love

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