

LETTER TO LEADERS

By

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This month I am constrained by the Holy Spirit and the circumstances to depart from my usual sharing about leadership principles.

INTERNATIONAL ATTACK

We have just returned from Europe. While we were there, on March 4th, I heard that a prominent European charismatic leader had resigned his pastorate. Over the past 20 years, God had used this man to build the largest charismatic church in Europe. His church was a lighthouse in West Berlin. He had organized many conferences in Europe, including the "Berlin '81" conference. Somehow, pressure got to him; he resigned to escape that pressure.

On Sunday, March 22nd, I read in the Berlin paper of the unfortunate situation that led to the resignation of a prominent TV evangelist in America. During our travels in Europe, I saw full-page coverage in USA Today of ministry-related news. These are not the only two leadership situations that I have heard about in the last year or so. There have been several pastors or evangelists that I know of who have experienced problems arising out of pressures in the ministry.

EVERYONE AFFECTED

These situations affect all Christians. The world thinks it has just cause to laugh scornfully at Christians. It not only laughs at those who fall, but also at other Christians who quickly come to point accusing fingers.

FORGIVENESS

Christians all agree that forgiveness is the order of the day. When those who fall, turn to God, He forgives. We should remember: the sin is not against us but against God. Therefore, we should forgive as God does.

CHOOSE SIDES

We are not required to choose sides. We do not have to champion the cause of the fallen. We do not have to join the ranks of the truth seekers and holiness promoters. We are all for God and against Satan. Even those who have fallen are for righteousness and against sin. Let us not forget that all of us, the steadfast and the forgiven, are on the side of God and Christ.

If we publicly choose sides within the Church, we will promote division in the Body of Christ to the great joy of Satan. If we see other Christians choosing sides, we cannot even speak about their choice, lest we declare which side we are on by our speaking. At this time, we must recognize God's forgiveness by promoting love and unity in the Body of Christ.

FORGIVE AND RESTORE?

Many believe that forgiveness must be accompanied by restoration. Some would say, "Even though the leader has fallen through weakness, we forgive him and want him back as our leader." Some who have been forgiven may actively seek to retain their leadership position or be restored to it.

Although forgiveness is always God's plan, restoration may not always be God's plan. God forgives all who sincerely seek forgiveness. God, however, may not restore. He understands a man's or a woman's weakness that permitted pressures and led to the fall. God, in His love and mercy, does not want any of His children to be subject to such circumstantial pressure that they must seek relief through the pleasures of sin -- any sin.

There are certainly Biblical examples of God's restoring a leader after he had fallen: Moses and David quickly come to mind. Both, however, went through significant retraining by God and learned from the consequences of their fall before God could restore them fully. There are other Biblical examples where God did not restore but, in fact, severely chastised, as in the cases of Jannes and Jambres, and Annanias and Saphira.

GOD IS THE JUDGE

We dare not even examine either Biblical case of restoration or chastisement to draw a parallel with current situations, lest we find ourselves judging others. Let God be the Judge.

PRAY

Pray for mercy, forgiveness, and unity. Be for God and against the devil. Love people and hate sin. Let God cause all things to work together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

Sincerely,

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