

*FIFTEEN NEW
PARADIGMS
(NO.1-3)*

ARNO & MARIANNE CLAASSEN

*A FRESH NEW CONCEPT ABOUT
CONGREGATION! (PART 2)*

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PO BOX 31288
WONDERBOOMPOORT, 0033

(012) 335 7571
Arno Claassen- 082 460 3024
Marianne Claassen - 082 412 7000

arno@lifewise.co.za

www.lifewise.co.za

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PREFACE

People who prosper and thrive in life are always willing to learn from other people's experience, because they know it is unnecessary for everyone to discover everything with his or her own effort. The Lord is moving and we must make sure that we keep up with Him in the direction that He is moving. The Lord moves by means of his body and not through one individual only. Let us all move together into the direction that He is leading his body.

One principal has to remain clear. What I am writing here is not necessarily the new orders from head office. It is purely my experience of what I'm hearing! Each person, and particularly congregation leaders, should hear for themselves from the Father about the way in which they should be going. We are all in the same Kingdom, but in practice everyone is on their own individual road with the Father. Only the Father can confirm for you which new adjustments you are to make. I am writing these things for you, because I believe that it is an important halting point where we all have to pause and help one another to make the right decisions. I welcome any correspondence with regard to this matter and I am very open to any positive input or ideas.

We have all read the story of what happened amongst the Bhojpuri people. It remains noteworthy and worthwhile to study. The story is so thrilling that one cannot wait to reach the end in order to find out how it all happened. It makes you want to change to be part of another such a beautiful story. Who knows, maybe you or all of us together will be in the next story which the next generation will be reading about.

THE FIFTEEN PARADIGMS

Please remember that these writings are my own interpretation of what I believe happened in India. It is not David Watson's own words and must not be ascribed to him should it not be a hundred percent correct!

As I studied the story, I came to believe that there were fifteen paradigms that differed from the way we generally do things today. But it is also different from the way I have done things over the last few years. The word 'paradigm' means that you have become used to viewing and experiencing a matter from a certain angle, but suddenly you see the same matter from a totally different angle and you experience results that are totally different. If the difference in viewpoint is drastic, it will be called a 'paradigm shift'. In this story I noticed several paradigms. Maybe you have personally already seen it this way for a long time, then it will not be any paradigm shift to you.

1) DO NOT PLANT CONGREGATIONS, PLANT THE SEED OF THE GOSPEL IN HEARTS!

It is clear in the Word of God that everything in life is a Person, namely Jesus Christ! He is our righteousness, salvation, freedom, provision, future, etc. I Cor.1:30. God never came to give us something; He came to give us a Person, namely His own Son, Jesus Christ. In God's Kingdom everything flows from a relationship with Him through His Son. Look for relationship with the Savior and salvation will be yours!

Likewise, in the Word there is no instruction to build congregations! The creation of congregations is never the

focus or purpose. The whole purpose and focus is the Father who wants to make Himself known to mankind. The forming of a congregation is a byproduct resulting from that which is the main point. Our purpose in the world is to sow the seed of the Word and to give it water. God will make it grow. We must keep ourselves busy with the sowing process. The Father will busy Himself with the growing process – 1 Cor 3:6-8. Congregations automatically come into being where the seed has taken root in people's hearts. Congregations automatically come into being when more and more people accept the Father into their lives.

The creation of a congregation may never be a purpose in itself, because any congregation is only a means to a purpose. The purpose is the expansion of the Kingdom (let Your Kingdom come) and not only to care for believers. Expansion takes place when more hearts accept the seed and not when we guard the seed in the hearts of those who are already converted! If being a congregation is only the means to a purpose, it may never receive the main focus, attention, time and energy. Please note: We are not in reaction or polarization where something has to be proven wrong before we may have an answer. God is a Father and His family on earth is His congregation - the body of His Son, Jesus Christ. We are the bride of Jesus, and that gives us a very important position. The right of the bride lies in the Bridegroom, but our purpose on earth is to find those who also form part of the bride! Let us not live for ourselves, but for those who are still searching!

2) NO CULTURE TRANSFERENCE!

The Gospel is transferred from person to person and we all know that no two persons on earth have exactly the same frame of reference, background or culture. On the one

hand this factor easily brings about misunderstandings amongst people, but on the other hand it also lets people want to make everything the same so that we all look the same and understand one another more easily. As they say, birds of a feather flock together! It is important that we make sure that we have *Biblical values*, but in functioning, style, building process and structures we will differ because we are all different people with different cultures and gifts. Every household and congregation must have Biblical values of honor, respect, love, acceptance, forgiveness etc. Some people call it the culture of the household, but it is in actual fact the Biblical values for all believers. When we talk about culture transference, we are actually referring to the culture of a nation, the religious culture and the Christian culture!

When we are working amongst people with the same language, culture and nation we do not have to take the matter of culture transference too seriously. The Gospel must *contextualize* wherever it goes. That means that people will start building and living their language, culture, habits, education, lifestyle and rituals out of the Gospel. There is no way that we from the West will ever understand the Eastern culture with its Hinduism, Buddhism and Muslim religion if we did not grow up with it. How can we go then and dictate to them how they should build their congregations and hold their church services. We can live values and pass that on, but we cannot pass on our style and way of doing things. In its arrogance the Western church went to reproduce itself in the East. Who said that they should listen to our songs and build congregations in the way that we are doing it. Besides, the Western examples are not very successful, except that we know how to organize and centralize. In most cases our relationships and types of leadership leave much to be desired. It is time to reconsider all this.

The purpose of apostolic input is not to *dictate* form and content, but to be dynamic examples thereof. Apostolic input is meant to open up new territories and serve people there on a personal level. The believers have to be left on their own with the Father so that they can decide exactly how they are going to build the upcoming congregations. Apostolic people do not have authority *over* people, but authority *in* people's lives due to the intimate relationships that they have with them. People have the idea that if they copy something that is successful, their effort will also be successful. It is the heart of something that makes it successful and not its structure, style or culture. Can we as apostolic leaders really trust people to hear for themselves from the Lord how they should package the Gospel for the people around them? The matter of culture is much more relevant than what we think. Our own western church culture is not to everybody's liking anymore, because it is strange, incomprehensible, passive and the language is 'Christianese'!

We must not only stop reproducing our own culture, we must also search our own hearts and become honest about why unbelievers do not like what we as believers are doing. The best way to stop reproducing the culture of a nation is not to invite newly converted people to your congregation, but to simply start new congregations and to serve them in their newly formed congregations! In this way we will always be in the 'go forth' mode and not in the 'come here' mode! Everyone must honestly reconsider and analyze their own church culture to see if anything in it boils down to strange culture for others and thus prevents the spreading of the Gospel?

3) THE DISCIPLING OF UNBELIEVERS!

The first two paradigms are much more serious than what we realize, but still tame in comparison to what is still to come. The serious main instruction that Jesus gave to his disciples just before He ascended into heaven, was “Therefore go and make disciples of **all the nations and...**”. The instruction to this group of believers was not to go and disciple the existing believers, but to disciple all the nations! Discipling and the unbelievers go hand in hand in the Word! Discipling and believers goes hand in hand with our church way of thinking. We go and collect people in the world, bring them into our church programs, and then call that discipleship. We are partly succeeding, depending on whether you see discipleship and programs as the same thing. The only problem remains that after discipleship, few of these disciples ever get involved in the lives of unbelievers again, because they have lost the ability to communicate with unbelievers. We disciple them in such a way in the presence of believers only, that they don't even know any unbelievers anymore, neither can they communicate with them!

According to statistics, if any one has spent two years of his life in a church culture, he usually won't have any unbeliever as friend! It also says that the average believer does not read one chapter of the Bible per day and does not even disciple one person per year! Our current discipleship in the church is so ineffective that believers do not disciple even one person per year! We as congregation leaders will have to start being very honest with ourselves. In the Kingdom the only program that counts is discipleship and nothing else. It is of no use if we do ten things well, but the right thing we practically don't do at all.

David Watson solved the problem by no longer discipling believers as the main focus. In principal it means that you

stop all courses and programs for believers and especially for the newly converted, and involve them all with the main command as given by Jesus, namely the discipleship of the unbelievers! In principal the newly converted will then be discipled whilst accompanying us as we go and disciple the unbelievers! The instruction was “Go forth to the nations” and not “Come here, sit still and listen”. Discipleship is not a program being driven by a full-time team. It is a movement or lifestyle being lived by ordinary believers. Discipleship is a lifestyle for all people!

The idea to disciple unbelievers is very strange for most believers, although they have unconsciously already done it. All believers disciple their unbelieving children several years before these children accept Jesus as their personal Savior. In principal, discipleship means to attain discipline in your life. It ought to be easier to disciple believers, but nothing prevents you from discipling unbelievers. Discipleship is not a process which starts after conversion, but something that leads to conversion! We will have to start changing our thoughts about the matter or we will always remain caught in a form of congregation that revolves mainly around believers. There is only one main program in being a congregation, and that is the discipleship of the nations and all other matters must be planned according to that. This is one of the main reasons why such a rapid planting of congregations could occur amongst the Bhojpuri nation.

It is easy to determine the priorities of your congregation. Just look at the budget of the congregation and the daily program of the congregation leader. How can we spend 80-90% of our money on buildings and believers, and then convince ourselves that our main purpose is the discipleship of unbelievers? It just does not make sense. How can the leader of the congregation spend 80-90% of

his time on the organizing and care of believers and then convince himself that the passion of his life is the discipleship of unbelievers? I am asking myself these questions. You will have to resolve this matter for yourself before the Lord. If you are also searching for a solution, I recommend that you read the follow-up studies.

SUMMARY

- 1) Each and everyone must hear personally from the Father which road he should follow in his personal life, house, finances, etc.
- 2) Live for the purpose and not the means!
- 3) We sow and give water, but only God can make it grow!
- 4) There are Biblical values which are meant for all people on earth.
- 5) The Culture of a nation and Christian culture prevents the planting and spreading of the Gospel and may not be reproduced.
- 6) Leaders must reproduce values and not their own church culture!
- 7) The big command was to disciple all the nations and not all the believers!
- 8) The whole education system is actually about the discipleship of unbelievers!
- 9) Solutions only come when you are willing to become brutally honest with yourself.
- 10) The budget of your congregation reflects the true vision of the congregation. You spend money where your heart is!