

*FIFTEEN NEW
PARADIGMS
(NO. 4-6)*

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*A FRESH NEW CONCEPT ABOUT
CONGREGATION! (PART 3)*

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PROLOGUE

Not only do we live in challenging times, but in a time of reformation. Everything is changing, but the church has not managed to keep pace with the times. Our times are called the electronic revolution. The television, internet, computer and cell phone have made incredible things possible! However, the problem with this revolution is that it is primarily external by nature, such as many new things that come into the market. Unfortunately, these things have a clear impact and burden on our inner capacity to deal with relationships.

The church world is supposed to help us upgrade and manage our relationships, but instead of the church specializing more and more in relationship, we specialize in organization and programs. There is nothing wrong with it, as long as it serves the purpose for which it exists. Organization and programs are not wrong, as long as it serves the purpose for which we exist. Whatever we do should draw people to the Lord and bring Godly discipline in their lifestyles.

For example, we have so many lovely marriage courses, but in practice divorce statistics have not necessarily changed. It remains a transfer of knowledge and does not become an integrated new lifestyle. However, the solution to the problem should be simple, for God's ways are available and applicable to all. In view of that, let us consider the next three paradigms that David Watson did differently from how we normally do things.

THE FIFTEEN PARADIGMS

Let us consider the following three paradigms of congregation that can help us in our fresh new concept of church.

4) NO PREACHING AND TEACHING AS FOUNDATION MINISTRY!

This paradigm is very radical and should be considered and understood objectively. First, I should make it clear that the Word mentions definite preaching and teaching and it is good to make use thereof. Perhaps the time has come to reconsider even that. Preaching in the Word was usually mentioned in connection with unbelievers, where it also proved most effective. Preaching as we know it on Sundays is not wrong, but not a typical, Biblical practice either.

David Watson approached the Bhojpouri people the first time with preaching, which caused the death of his first six disciples because the country does not allow preaching amongst its Hindu citizens. Preaching could therefore be good, but is not necessarily the correct or wisest way when forbidden as in Muslim countries! The more than six million people that were converted got to know the Lord without any preaching and teaching as we know it in the West. Even the believers do not practice preaching among themselves as a general foundation ministry! We should also understand that the Bible was not originally available in their language. The translation was only finished after four years. Originally, the Word was taped on audio cassette and played to the people. (There is a website where you can find 400 audio translations in different languages for free in mp3 format –

www.faithcomesbyhearing.com It is especially helpful to people that have difficulties reading, but everyone should benefit from listening to it constantly.)

The question remains how they managed what they did without preaching. The answer lies in their discipleship process. That does not mean you should stop preaching and teaching, but the average congregation will cease to exist without preaching and teaching, for all other ministry is built on this foundation! In the West we are accustomed to the *model of teaching where people sit in rows in a classroom and only one person speaks and explains everything*. This model originated with the Greeks and is completely foreign to the Word that has a Hebrew culture as background, with group interaction as the norm. Teaching in the Bible takes the form of a workshop where people sit in a circle, a problem is presented to them, and together they seek answers and work out a solution! Teaching in the Biblical context is far more interactive than one person giving all the revelation.

This is important for a very good reason. Word received from a preacher may be excellent in content, but always remains secondhand revelation when the listener has not processed and internalized it as a lifestyle. No one can grow on secondhand Word. It should be discovered firsthand and personally in the presence of the Father before it becomes revelation that brings growth! Our Western congregation leaders produce an incredible amount of secondhand word through sermons, cd's, dvd's, books and magazines. That is why, according to statistics, the average believer does not even read one Bible chapter per day and does not disciple one person per year! That is terrifying! No wonder we are not progressing, for only the fulltime shepherds bear sheep and the flock is apparently unfruitful.

Another reason why preaching and teaching is not used as a foundation in ministry, is that it produces critical people (I Cor.8:1). These believers have much knowledge, often accompanied by pride, are constantly busy giving their opinions and no longer live according to their hearts! This in itself kills any small group ministry, for everyone has an opinion or teaching to give for every comment or problem shared from the heart. Christians in the West flourish on revelations and every leader must constantly produce a better revelation to keep up with the 'waves' of teachings, otherwise he soon falls into disrepute. Unfortunately every preacher only has a certain amount of revelation about one or two subjects, and it is never enough to keep those satisfied who comes to listen every Sunday like spectators to the newest revelation! Preachers have nightmares about producing new revelation for every Sunday! We will have to take out preaching as a foundation ministry of congregation, discipleship, conferences or any other meetings. Christians no longer know what to say or do when there is no speaker! Everything is built around the speaker, but it does not appear to be as successful as we claim it to be. Especially if we measure in terms of the command to make disciples!

Perhaps you do not agree with everything I say, but it will all come together as soon as we discuss the solution and its practical implications. Of course, when you down-scale preaching, you have to put something in its place that gives even more revelation. Remember, a paradigm shift means we shift from one pillar to the next. When a pillar is removed, it must be replaced by a better one, otherwise the building will collapse! It is time to be honest about the main pillars of our ministries and congregations, even if it is confronting and even threatening for us as leaders!

5) EVERYONE IS CONNECTED TO JESUS AS THE HEAD!

The next paradigm has equal potential for confusion. All believers should be connected to Jesus as the Head of the body and not to human leaders. About this issue people become quite heated, for it is closely related with what defines us as leaders in the body and how our leadership functions. The subject is so serious that a separate study guide will be written about it later. However, it is clear that the Word specifically mentions leaders and elders, although they are not the Head of the body, neither are everything and everyone dependent on them. Without leaders, nothing will be initiated, but if everything falls flat in the absence of leaders, we have definitely built in error.

I am definitely in favour of honour, respect and submission to leaders, but leaders are not “untouchables” that merit unconditional loyalty. If he has built well, a leader will disappear in the movement and the momentum will no longer depend on him. David Watson has been gone from India for 10 years and the movement has since gained even more momentum! I do not read of leaders in the Bible that was always there, managed everything and when they left, everything collapsed. Most renewal congregations cannot function without a main leader, even after years of training and equipping, and when he is replaced by someone else, it normally means even more problems! I am a novice in these things, but I salute what a man like David has accomplished. We should learn from him without being caught in a critical mode of teaching that simply degrade or write everything off as third world and simple people who do not know any better. Our congregations are not the solutions they are supposed to

be. Let us be open and allow the Father for once to be absolutely honest and straightforward with us.

This paradigm does not mean leaders are worthless and no longer necessary. Neither does it mean that we should have less honour and respect for leaders. On the contrary, we lack more of it. The problem lies in the way leaders function and apply their leadership. In the church planting in India, leaders are not the workers that keep things together and functioning. The workers are the believers and their biggest task is not in the first place to minister to people, but to *facilitate the presence of the Father*. They are not the Father or His voice. They merely facilitate the meeting for the Father to appear, speak and do the work! They do not preach to the people and tell them what the Father says, but rather lead the people to the presence of the Father for Him to minister and give answers to His children! The leaders do not carry the burdens of the people and attempt to sort out their lives. They simply introduce people to the great Shepherd and Saviour who does everything.

Perhaps to you it only sounds like words that make no difference. However, it does make a huge difference. There is a good reason why 90% of all fulltime ministers do not remain in ministry until they are at the age of retirement. Because of the form of leadership they apply, they have to do all training, inform every one of the Father's latest revelations, and carry the burdens of the people as well as the responsibility of the structure and organization. As leader you are everything in the congregation. Nothing can exist without you, not even for a year, and you are the man of power for the hour with the latest revelation to solve every problem. That is why we so gladly import a famous preacher and does everything to obtain his cd's, while we have the Word and voice of the Father in and with us, but

constantly neglect it. The lives of the believers prove that we as leaders have replaced God and prevent Him from getting in a Word edgewise! In the West we are very proud of our leaders and preachers that keep us going with the latest revelations from the Father, but in India the believers of the Bhojpuri nation pray that our leaders never reach them, because then all the believers will also become passive and do nothing further! Our Western congregation leadership does not believe that the Father can do a more excellent work through the ordinary believers than through our fulltime personnel! We do not believe in the office of the believer, because then the ordinary believers would have fulfilled the main roles in the congregations. How then do you build a congregation where everyone is primarily bound to Jesus, but definite leadership also exists without replacing Jesus in any way? This question has been bugging me for many years and if you bear with me, I believe you will also discover the answer!

Perhaps I should once more emphasize something. I am writing these things because I hear the voice of the Father in my own life. If it means something to you, I am glad, for the idea is not to criticize you for what you are doing. For the first time ever, congregation life has opened up to me in its fullness as a fully sufficient, organic being with the ability to conquer the world. The answer is a Father that reveals Himself via congregation to the world and we must discover the full manifestation thereof. Remember also that the complete answer lies in the practice of a lifestyle and not in the redefining of concepts. This new form of congregation will be built by the entire body and not by one new preacher with all the answers. It will take an enormous amount of cross pollination to realize.

6) THE FATHER DISCIPLES HIS OWN CHILDREN!

Before His ascension, Jesus commanded his disciples to disciple the nations as His followers. Many people become followers of preachers and teachers and their message, but someone can only be a disciple by following Jesus Christ! Although Paul encouraged people to be imitators of him, he made nobody his disciple. A disciple is someone who lives in the discipline of Jesus! We should make disciples, not of ourselves, but only of Jesus.

Therefore, we should do something that will cause people to live in obedience to Jesus. It is obvious that we could not even get ourselves to do that in our own power, except by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and we will not be able to make anyone else obedient in our own power either. Therefore, we are not really discipling anyone, because the Father wants to disciple His own children through the Holy Spirit and the Word! I John 2:20 +27 "But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. But the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as His anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true and no lie, and as He has taught you, abide in Him."

Our responsibility is to create the process through which the Father can disciple his own children. As believers, we have to see that people become disciples, but we cannot force them in our own power. Only the working of the Father through His Son and Spirit can truly disciple people. Believers shy away from discipling others, for they know deep down that their chances of success are not very good.

In light of this, the Father writes the following in Matt.23:8-12 "But you must not be called Rabbi, for One is your

teacher, Christ, and you are all brothers. And call no one your father on the earth, for One is your Father in Heaven. Nor be called teachers, for One is your Teacher, even Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever shall exalt himself shall be abased, and he who shall humble himself shall be exalted.” There is only one Father and one Teacher, and that is definitely not us as leaders. As believers we have a role and responsibility of fatherhood in people’s lives, but in essence we are nobody’s father. There is only one Father, namely God the Father!

Once more, the Word is clear that there are teachers in the congregation. How then should we teach someone without being his teacher and without him becoming our disciple? The solution once more lies in that we live out our ministry in the congregation without making people dependent on us and us leaders not becoming the alpha and omega with the final vote in everything! In the average congregation today, the leader becomes more and more indispensable as the members multiply! An effective leader should lead in such a way that everyone eventually becomes leaders and nobody needs or misses him anymore. Eph.4:11-13 – “And truly He gave some to be apostles, and some to be prophets, and some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. And this until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;” Biblical leadership work themselves out of their roles and what they have planted, flourishes when they are gone! Biblical leaders bring believers to their full potential and not to the ministry of the leader!

Discipleship has nothing to do with how much knowledge and revelation YOU should transfer. Discipleship has nothing to do with how YOU should minister to someone, but to lead someone to the Father and into His presence. Everything is found in the presence of the Father and not in the presence of the leader! Any undue focus and consciousness of earthly leaders is not Biblical fatherhood, but self glorification. Leaders do not proclaim and establish their own ministries, but that of the Father through His Spirit and Word!

SUMMARY

- 1) Western congregations are built on preaching and teaching. For that you need a studied, professional preacher and teacher.
- 2) Believers attend churches on Sundays to be fed and ministered to from the Word. They are consumers that go with the purpose of receiving and not so much of giving.
- 3) Mere new knowledge puffs up, but Word personally received from the Father brings growth, because it is revelation in you!
- 4) We need more leaders than we have right now in congregations. Leadership should be accessible to all.
- 5) All believers should be under the covering of leadership, but should firstly be bound to the Head. Only Jesus is the head of the body.

6) Apart from Jesus, no leader paid anything for the body, and for that reason, no leader possesses or controls the body!

7) The most important role of leaders is to facilitate the presence of the Father and not to replace Him or to speak or minister in His stead!

8) As believers, we have a role and responsibility of fatherhood in people's lives, but in essence we are nobody's father. There is only one Father and that is God the Father!

9) We do not really disciple people, for the Father discipled His own children. It is our responsibility to create the process through which the Father can disciple His own children.

10) Biblical leadership work themselves out of their roles and what they have planted flourishes most when they are gone!

11) Discipleship has nothing to do with how much knowledge and revelation you must transfer. Discipleship has nothing to do with how you minister to someone, but to lead someone to the Father and into His presence.