

# **ALL CHRISTIANS' FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL**

## **THE COST OF LEADERSHIP**

Dear brethren,

I greet you in the name of Christ Jesus the source of our strength.

As we are now entering into summer and the weather is changing, we tend to be getting tired very easily such that could affect our effectiveness in our different areas of calling. This can happen especially when we have put in hours of hard labour in our various factories or places of work. Apart this is the time when decision has to be taken on matters affecting our ministry in terms of efficiency, quality output and general growth. This is why I believe that this note would bless and strengthen you greatly if you can be diligent enough to study it carefully to grab the wisdom it teaches.

"Are you able to drink the cup that I drank, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with" Mark 10:38

To aspire to leadership in God's kingdom requires us to be willing to pay a price higher than others are willing to pay. The toll of true leadership is heavy, and the more effective the leadership, the higher it goes. The cost of every great achievement is not paid in a lump sum. Achievement is bought on the time-payment plan, with a new instalment required each day. Fresh drafts are constantly being drawn, and when payment ceases, leadership wanes. Spiritual power is the outpouring of spiritual life; therefore those who aspire to leadership may pay the price, and seek it from God.

### **SELF-SACRIFICE**

This part of the cost must be paid daily. A cross stands in the path of spiritual leadership, and the leader must take it up. "Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (I John 3:16). To the degree the cross of Christ is across our shoulders and over our backs, so the resurrection life of Christ is manifest through us. No cross, no leadership.

"Whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" Mark 10:44-45.

Each of the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 was called to sacrifice as part of his or her service. Those who lead the church are marked by a willingness to give up personal preferences, to surrender legitimate and natural desires for the sake of God. The only thing Jesus took pains to show after His resurrection were His scars. On the Emmaus road His disciples recognised neither Him nor His message. Not until Jesus broke the bread and they possibly saw the scars did they know the person for who He was. When Jesus stood among His demoralised band in the upper room after the resurrection, He showed them "His hands and His side" (John 20:20).

Scars are the authenticating marks of faithful discipleship and true Spiritual leadership. Nothing moves people more than the print of the nails and the mark of the spear. Those marks are tests of sincerity that none can challenge, as Paul knew well. "Let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gals 6:17). Paul described himself and his burden this way: "We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair Persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifest in our mortal flesh" 2 Corinthians 4:8-11.

## LONELINESS

Loneliness seems to be another price a leader must pay. The leader must be a person who, while welcoming the friendship and support of all who offer it, has sufficient inner resources to stand alone – even in the face of stiff opposition to have "no one but God". Mountain climbers believed that life always gets harder toward the top end of high mountains – the cold gets colder, the wind stronger, the burden of responsibilities heavier. Such is the situation for Christian leader who is actually called to work in the ministry. The leader must always be ahead of his followers, he lives with loneliness. Though he may be friendly, there are areas of life where he must walk alone.

For example, it is sometimes heartbreaking to make decisions of far-reaching importance that affect the lives of beloved fellow workers – and to make them alone. Moses paid the price for his leadership – alone on the mountain, alone on the plain, misunderstood and criticised. The Old Testament prophets were lonely men. Enoch walked alone in a decadent society as he preached judgement. His compensation was the presence of God. Jonah was alone in vast Nineveh, a heathen city of a million souls. The loneliest preacher today is the person who has been entrusted with a prophetic message ahead of the times, a message that cuts across the temper of the age.

## FATIGUE

The world is run by tired men. Perhaps an overstatement, but there is a grain of reality here. The demands of leadership wear down the most robust person. But Christians know where to find renewal. "Therefore we do not lose heart, even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day" 2 Corinthians 4:16. Even Jesus grew weary in Ministry and had to rest (John 4:6). "And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him when the needy woman touched His clothing" Mark 5:30. No lasting good can be accomplished without this expenditure of nervous energy and personal power. The spirit of the welfare state does not produce leaders. If a Christian is not willing to rise early and work late, to expend greater effort in diligent study of the word and faithful work, that person will not change a generation. Fatigue is the price of leadership. Mediocrity is the result of never getting tired.

## CRITICISM

"There is nothing else that so kills the efficiency, capability and initiative of a leader as destructive criticism.... It tends to hamper and undercut the efficiency of man's thinking process. It chips away at his self-respect and undermines his confidence in his ability to cope with his responsibilities". No leader lives a day without criticism, and humility will never be more on trial than when criticism comes. Samuel Brengle, noted for his sense of holiness, felt the heat of caustic criticism. Instead of rushing to defend himself, he replied: "From my heart I thank you for your rebuke. I think I deserved it. Will you, my friend, remember me in prayer?" When another critic attacked his spiritual life, Brengle replied: "I thank you for your criticism of my life. It set me to self-examination and heart-searching and prayer, which always leads me into a deeper sense of my utter dependence on Jesus for holiness of heart, and into sweeter fellowship with Him." With such a response, criticism is turned from a curse into a blessing, from a liability into an asset.

Paul sought the favour of God, not of people. His hard work was not to please those around him (Gal. 1:10). Nor was Paul terribly disturbed by criticism. "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord" (1 Corinthians. 4:3-4). Paul could afford to take lightly the comments and criticism of others, for his heart was owned by God. (Colossians 3:22).

## REJECTION

The leader who follows high spiritual standards may find himself following his master on the pathway of rejection, for "He came unto His own and His own received Him not." Often the crowd does not recognise a leader until he has gone, and then they build a monument for him with the stone they threw at him in life. "No man is ever fully accepted until he has, first of all, been utterly rejected." The Minister needed nothing more. When, in response to the clear call of God, A. B. Simpson resigned a pastorate, he learned the meaning of "destitute, despised, and forsaken." He surrendered a comfortable salary, a position as Senior Pastor in a great American city. He had no following, no organisation, no resources, a large family to support and everyone close to close was predicting failure. He often said that he looked down upon the stone in the street for the sympathy denied him by friends he treasured.

The rugged path of utter rejection was trodden without complaint, and with rejoicing. He knew that though he.... was going through fire and water, it was the divinely appointed way to the wealthy place. To such a place Simpson was led. At his death he had established five schools for the training of missionaries, hundreds of missionaries in sixteen lands, and many Churches in the United State and Canada that exerted a spiritual influence beyond their numbers.

## PRESSURE AND PERPLEXITY

We naively think that the more we grow as Christians do, the easier it will be to discern the will of God. But the opposite is often the case. God treats the mature leader as a mature adult, leaving more and more to his or her spiritual discernment and giving fewer bits of tangible

guidance than in earlier years. The resulting perplexity adds inevitable to a leader's pressure. These are the reasons why leaders are required to pray consistently together. Prayer is an essential ingredient for supernatural discernment of God's programme for the Church. In togetherness they would be able to draw from the spiritual pool of God's wisdom when decisions are to be made. Finally brethren, I implore you not to neglect the study of these notes, for there is purpose for every opportunity created by God. He has given us His spirit to discern these opportunities whenever it comes our way. Only Him has the detail of your calling, which would be fulfilled at the appointed time. May the Lord bless and nourish your soul with His word.

Rev. T Martins  
*ACFI Senior Pastor*