



Anointing the New Order

How long will you mourn for Saul...Fill your horn with oil and be on your way ...

1 Samuel 16:1

Many are currently *networking* the old instead of *anointing* the new.

Let me explain: because of his unbroken inner life the kingdom had just been taken from Saul and promised to one better than he—to David (1 Sam 15:28). His days on the throne were now numbered.

But Samuel mourns for Saul, unable – emotionally and mentally – to make the transition to the new order. Although he was the prophetic agent announcing the judgement on the old he faltered at anointing the new.

Why was this? Because even in the prophet's eyes Saul was an impressive king: he was “an impressive young man without equal ... a head taller than any of the others” (1 Sam 9:2; 10:23).

Human reasoning

It would appear that the strength of the natural man is such that human reasoning influenced even the prophet. Remember, Israel, governed by their natural thinking, had cried out for a king so as to be like all the other nations (1 Sam 8:5). Surely, Saul was the man, despite the failings of his inner life. In physical appearance he was “head and shoulders” above his peers. How could God choose someone else less impressive?

This natural reasoning so influenced Samuel that when he did finally go to anoint the new king he was immediately attracted to David's older brothers. The Scripture records:

Samuel saw Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord.' But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'

1 Samuel 16:6-7 NIV

And so his *seeing* and his *thinking* govern man, in his estimation of spiritual things; Samuel 'saw' Eliab and he 'thought'. He was wrestling, at this point, within himself as to whether he would be governed by *sense* knowledge, or rather – as a prophet – by *revelation* knowledge. Except for our obedience to the Spirit, our thinking is fed by our five senses, and therefore, by outward appearances. “*Surely*”, Samuel thought, “*if Saul is no longer 'the man', this impressive young man is*”; but apparently not—because “*the Lord does not look at the things man looks at*” (1 Sam 16:7). Man looks at the visible: the outwardly impressive; he measures by success, popularity, and position.

But the Lord looks at the invisible, at the hidden condition of the heart. He sees through the outward pretence of human things – of prestige and position – into the inner man. On losing the kingdom this inner condition in Saul is exposed. Rather than breaking, he cries out to Samuel, “*please honour me before the elders...and before Israel*” (1 Sam 15:30). He was more interested in his *dignity* rather than his *deliverance*. Such is the case with the old order.

Changing *mindsets*

In making the transition from the old order to the new the difficulty the prophetic person faces, as with Samuel, is a change of mindset. Apparently it is possible to pronounce God’s judgements on the old and even proceed to anoint the new but still be governed by the old; by old mindsets that judge after the flesh rather than after the Spirit; by dependence on Saul—a human king who is distinguished by superior strength and stature.

Surely, this is the current situation in the church. Like ancient Israel we have cried out, “*Give us a king like all the other nations*”. And we have become like the world, judging the things of God after the flesh; and therefore, depending on human *programmes* over God’s *presence*, on *activity* over *adoration*, and on man’s *structures* over God’s *Spirit*.

But the temptation the ‘Samuels’ – the transitional prophets and reformers – face is operating out of the same spirit even as they preside over the transition.

How subtle is the deception of our own hearts! As Jeremiah complained, “*Who can know it?*” (Jer 17:9).

Networking the *old*

And so, we have many ‘networking’ the old rather than ‘anointing’ the new. Now many of my ‘networking’ friends are not going to like this. But even those of us who are hungering for community transformation and are desperately desirous of moving into a new order of things, and even those who are called to prophetically preside over this transition are often only ‘networking’ the old—perpetuating Saul’s reign. How can this be?

Before I answer, please don’t misunderstand me – I believe in networking, in unity, and community transformation – I am involved in all of these; but our ‘networking’ of pastors, of community transformation and even of the prophetic will not do it.

Of course we need to be communicating and connecting with one another – that is a given – but this in itself will not move us into the new. Because the Saul-system is a *spirit*, or a mindset, before it is a *structure*, we can actually network a new structure but still be of the old spirit. We can even network a new apostolic or prophetic movement out of the old spirit. Or conversely, we can network old structures in an old spirit. Many citywide pastors’ networks in reality are merely a networking of the old—a networking of the existing order; of denominationalised consumer driven franchise-churches. At the end of the day the prevailing success, growth, and consumer values of the Western church prevail, demanding the loyalty of pastors. They are controlled by the expectations and demands of the *status quo*; and central to this is their financial security. While these new networks are undoubtedly being raised up by God and are integral to the transition to the biblical paradigm of the city church they will stall if the root

issues are not confronted. All our networking will be reduced to merely rearranging the deck chairs on an already sinking ship.

It is therefore time to fully comprehend the radical, in fact the revolutionary, departure of the new order from the old.

The Saul-spirit

Integral to this is the revelation of the ‘Saul-spirit’. This is where even Samuel momentarily faltered. Seduced by the impressiveness of Saul, by appearances, he grieved over the passing of the old and could not fully identify with the new. It is easier to work with the old, with that which in the eyes of men is esteemed and respectable, with the successful and powerful. To anoint a David, young and unknown, was too radical a departure. Not considered by even his father, David, however, had been seen by God.

And so, there is a point where the ‘Samuels’ must align themselves with the choice of God; when they must fill their horn with oil and anoint the new; when in heart and will they make their break from the security of Saul; when they have no choice but to go with God. God’s choice will never be popular; he inevitably chooses the foolish things to confound the wise, and the things that are not to bring to nothing the things that are (1 Cor 1:28).

The emerging kingdom & the new Davidic order

This is the hour for the emerging kingdom; for men and women after the heart of David; for brokenness of heart; and above all else—for the pursuit of God’s *presence* over our *programmes*.

As with Samuel the time has come to shift gears: to be aligned with the new Davidic order; to anoint those who have a heart for the presence and who play to an audience of one; to judge only after the Spirit and go with the move of God.

It is time to fill our horn with oil and be on our way.

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