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1 - Authority to care and Submission in receiving that care is the life of God

To understand the way to live - to express the life we have been given - we look at our God, for we are made in His image. We are meant to be like Him, and He is taking us to that goal.

We have seen how Jesus Christ is the Prophet, who mediates the word of God to us; making a revelation to us of God as his - and subsequently ours - Father. We understand that Jesus is also our Priest, gathering up in his humanity all that is ours and presenting it to God on our behalf - He takes our worship and our offering to God for us. Jesus is also our King, for with Him, in his person, comes the gracious rule of God over us. He draws us to submit ourselves to God and to obey.

We have seen what it is to "have a Head" who has both made us and redeemed us. He has done this at the cost of laying aside his eternal glory and taking flesh such as ours and living and dying for us. All this so that we might be reconciled to God in his death and be returned to the fullness of the humanity that God had intended for us. We are free to become what we ought. We have submissively received what our Head has achieved for us - He is our salvation. So we have come to see that our life is to honour this head.

In this way we have begun to connect a cluster of ideas that arise out of the relations which are expressed within the Godhead. These are "authority" - which speaks of Someone who has taken the initiative to care for us because He is kind and good in Himself and also knows who we are and what is best for us. This authority is an "authority of/to care". It springs from, and has an origin in the very Person of God. It is concerned with his own self - it arises from Him and so expresses his heart and will for us. From our side we understand this authority as fatherly care. To receive this care means that we also receive God's Person, for the two can be distinguished but not separated - they are one. For us to be caught up, through Christ, in the sharing of the life of God means that we do well to have some understanding of how the Father, Son and Holy Spirit inter-relate.

That is, we study the evidence within the Scripture for that material which shows us how the Trinity of Persons within the Godhead relate to One Another in Their respective dealings with One Another. We see, in effect, what They "do" - and we draw a conclusion about what we shall do in the light of what we see Them doing. In this way, we can move immediately from observation to practice in the matter of love for one another. For, in all Their operations with Each Other - as the Scriptures reveal Them in action - it can be said that "God is love" (1 John 4.16).

2 - Statements: the form of "the servant" and the "of the Son of God".

We need to understand the way to read certain statements which are made concerning Jesus' understanding of Himself both in relation to his Father and also of His understanding of Himself.

For the Gospels record the coming as man, of One Who was, and always is, God. With this in mind, we need to read with care. And as a starting point we begin with a distinction found in the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men." (Philippians 2.5-7. ASV)

Augustine was bishop of Hippo Regius, of ancient Carthage, in Northern Africa. He lived from 354 - 430 A.D.; and he uses this passage from Philippians to understand how we shall read of Jesus Christ Who is man and

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God. Writing in his book "On the Trinity" (De Trinitate) Augustine uses this passage from Paul to show that the Logos (the eternal Word of God), when He took on Himself the "form of the servant" did not lay aside the "form of God". Augustine understands the "emptying" to be the humbling of the divinity by its union with the humanity. He doesn't mean that He entirely divested Himself of the divinity, nor even that in the humiliation there was a total non-use of it. This is to be remembered as we consider the following excerpt from Augustine's De Trinitate: Book 1, chapter 7.

... on account of the incarnation of the Word of God for the working out of our salvation, that the man Christ Jesus might be the Mediator between God and men, many things are so said in the sacred books as to signify, or even most expressly declare, the Father to be greater than the Son; men have erred through a want of careful examination or consideration of the whole tenor of the Scriptures, and have endeavored to transfer those things which are said of Jesus Christ according to the flesh, to the substance of His which was eternal before the incarnation, and is eternal.

They say, for instance, that the Son is less than the Father, because it is written that the Lord Himself said, 'My Father is greater than I' (John 14.28). But the truth shows that after the same sense the Son is less also than Himself, who 'emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant'. For He did not so take the form of a servant as that He should lose the form of God, in which He was equal to the Father. If, then, the form of the servant was so taken that the form of God was not lost, since both in the form of a servant and in the form of God He Himself is the same only-begotten Son of God the Father, in the form of God equal to the Father, in the form of a servant the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; is there anyone who cannot perceive that He Himself in the form of God is also greater than Himself, but yet likewise in the form of a servant less than Himself? And not therefore, without cause the Scripture says both the one and the other, both that the Son is equal to the Father, and that the Father is greater than the Son. For there is no confusion when the former is understood on account of the form of God, and the latter as on account of the form of the servant."

This perspective we learn from the Bible is helpful. It helps us see that what Jesus was saying in respect of Himself and the Father. It not only demonstrates His submission as a careful Prophet (submittedly giving what the Father said), it also takes us a little deeper. We now see that the submission of the Word of God is involved in the very Incarnation, and that His preaching needed to express the truth concerning His own Person as being found in a place of humiliation.

3 - The Submission of the Son to The Father

If we take a journey through the Gospel of John we shall notice, as we have before, that Jesus' authority over us is based on the fact that He himself is submitted to the Father. We find that it is because He is under Someone, that He has a basis to be over others. This principle of "obedience reflects authority given" we have noticed before in other contexts.

1.14 We learn that Jesus is "begotten" of the Father. There is the notion of His subordination to the Father clearly stated. Yet, such a statement becomes the basis for Him to be able to "reveal" the Father (1.18).

1.30 Lest you thought that Jesus only was a man who was having an authority which any man could have - then the statement of John is that He is pre-existent.

2.4 Here we see that Jesus has no fear of Mary, for He is submitted to the "programme" of Another. His "hour has not yet come" - in this respect He will not beat to another drummer than He to Whom He is submitted.

3.26-30 John the Baptist indicates a spiritual principle which is the same principle which Jesus used for the test of His own ministry - "A man can receive nothing, unless it is given to him from heaven".

4.21-24 Here Jesus speaks of the worship of the "Father". He is content to express the Father's Mind about those whom He wants to worship Him, and how it should be done (verse 23).

14.33-34 Jesus states that "food" for Him (i.e. what sustains Him) is to do the will of the One Who sent Him.

5.17,19-47 Here, in prolonged discussion with the persecuting Jews, Jesus makes the following points about His relationship with the Father:

(a) He allies Himself with the working of the Father (17).

(b) He says the model for what He does is that He copies what it is that the Father is doing (19).

(c) He states that the Father loves to show Him things He does (20).

(d) The Father, having life in Himself, can raise the dead, so He commits that same life to the Son (So in verses 21,26).

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- (e) Father has given the Son authority to execute judgment (27).
- (f) Jesus teaches His dependence upon, and His submission to, the Father in all matters. The justice of His judgment - actually arises out of His submission (30).
- (g) He says that the Father has actually sent Him. He is on the earth because of the Father's command (36,37,43).
- 6.27 He is happy to have the seal of the Father (a sign of ownership) upon Him.
- 6.37 The disciples Jesus has are the ones the Father has given Him. And He has charged Him to lose nothing of what He has given Him (39).
- Here the image is that of a shepherd who has been given a delegated authority over the sheep of another. It is important that not one is lost. For this would be a dereliction of duty. We shall see this shepherding motif turn up again in the study of the 10th chapter of John.
- 6.44 No one comes to Him unless the Father draws that person.
- 16.57 Jesus is dependent upon the Father for life.
- 17.16 His teaching, is the teaching of the Father.
- 7.28-29 Jesus knows the Father (1.18) and He has sent Him.
- 8.18-19 Jesus' witness and the Father's witness agrees. If anyone knows Jesus, they will know the Father also.
- 8.26 All the things Jesus speaks, He has heard from the Father. The words of Jesus have come first from the Father.
- 8.27-28 The Father is pleased with Jesus' action. He is with Him (42).
- 8.54 The Father glorifies the Son.
- 10.14-18 Jesus makes the following points:
 - (a) Jesus knows His sheep as He knows the Father (14-15).
 - (b) The Father loves Him because He lays down His life for the sheep (17).
 - (c) He doesn't lay it down arbitrarily. He has the authority (from Father, I think implied) to lay it down and also to take it again (18). This is what Father has commanded.
 - (d) However, He lays it down on His own initiative. So here we see that He has chosen to obey, freely (18).
- 10.25-39 He states:
 - (a) The Father has given to Him those who are His.
 - (b) He and the Father are One (30).
 - (c) The works indicate that the Father is in Him (38).
- Behind this contrast between the Pharisees and the true Shepherd, Jesus, lies the 34th chapter of Ezekiel. It is important to study this for it gives us the understanding in the mind of Jesus as to how He is to be properly contrasted in His work to their failure and rejection as shepherds of those who have by their dereliction of duty become "the lost sheep of the house of Israel".
- 11.41 Jesus says that the Father always hears Him, and He did not doubt it.
- 12.27-28 A discussion between the Father and the Son recorded Jesus' soul is troubled. He recognises that He has come for the purpose of the cross. He submits to the Father in the form that He wants to see the Father's Name glorified.
- 12.44-46 He who believes in Jesus, and also sees Him, has also seen and believed in the Father.
- 12.48-50 Jesus states:
 - (a) To reject His words renders one open to judgement.
 - (b) He doesn't speak on His own initiative, but the Father has given commandment. He tells Jesus what to speak.
 - (c) What the Father commands is life. Therefore Jesus acts the way He does.
- 14.2 Jesus' Father has a house. To which Jesus is going to prepare a place for his disciples. Then He shall return for them.
- 14.6-31 These things we learn:
 - (a) Jesus is the way to the Father. And He is the only way (6).
 - (b) To have known Jesus and beheld Him, is to have known and beheld the Father (7).
 - (c) The Father and the Son co-inhere, They are within each Other. And the Father, indwelling Jesus, is the One Who works (10).
 - (d) The Father gets glory through the Son when we ask something of the Father "in the Son's Name" (13-14).
 - (e) At Jesus' request, the Father sends the Holy Spirit.
 - (f) He who loves Jesus, will be loved by the Father (21) and the Father and the Son will come and

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make Their home with him (23).

(g)The disciples ought to rejoice that Jesus is going away (28), for He goes to prepare a place for them in his Father's house (3), and His Father is greater than He is (28) with the implication they ought to be delighted at the chance to meet with Father.

It is, of course, this last mentioned which they had missed. They were content to simply know Jesus and did not wish Him to go away. He was actually anxious that they should come to a place where they should meet the Father, for this was the goal for them, which made sense of His coming.

15.1-2 The relationship between the Father and the Son is that of a vinedresser and the vine. This states the dependency of a Son, the care of the Father, and the purpose of the Father as the preparedness of the Son to be used by the Father for His purposes.

15.10 Jesus keeps the Father's commandments and abides in His love. His disciples do the same with Him.

15.15 All the things which He heard from the Father He has delivered to His disciples. He didn't leave out anything which was His responsibility. [There is more to say (16.12) but what Jesus Himself had to say, He did.]

15.23 Jesus states that the one who hates Him, hates His Father also.

16.5 He says that He is going to the Father.

16.15 All things that the Father has are also the things of the Son - Jesus states that the Holy Spirit will reveal these matters to the disciples after He Himself has gone.

16.23-28 Here there are a number of things:

(a)He promises (again) that what they ask the Father for, in His name, He will give.

(b)He speaks of a future time, when the disciples will be asking the Father for things, and He Himself will not necessarily ask for them. This is so because the Father Himself loves them - they can deal direct with Father for themselves.

17.1-26 This prayer to the Father contains much:

(a)Both the Father and the Son mutually glorify each other in the passion of Jesus (1).

(b)Jesus has authority from the Father, over all mankind, and to give life to those from among them whom the Father has given to Him (3).

(c)He states that, having come to the time just before the cross, He has accomplished the work which the Father gave Him to do - it is mission accomplished! (4) And it has brought the Father glory.

(d)He states that there was a glory which He had with the Father before the world was made (1.30). (The implication is that that glory has been temporarily laid aside - see Phil. 2.5-11)

(e)This mission accomplished is delineated as: (i) manifesting the Father's Name to men. (ii) Giving the words faithfully which the Father gave Him (8).

(f)He asks that his disciples have a oneness which is the same as He and the Father have (11).

(g)He says that His "sending" of his disciples is as the Father sent Him (18).

(h)The oneness which the disciples are to have is of a sameness which Jesus and the Father have (21). There is also the truth that the disciples are in "us". This is seen as The Father in Jesus, Jesus in them and this is the basis of their unity (23).

(i)He states that the Father has loved Him before the foundation of the world (24).

19.11 To Pilate Jesus states that he has no authority over Him unless it had been given Pilate from above.

20.17 Jesus speaks of ascending to the Father. He calls the Father his "Father" and his "God". He does not lump His relationship with the Father on the same level as the relationship which He sees for His disciples with their "Father" and "God".

20.21 He sends them as the Father sent Him. The relational way of carrying out His orders is the same as He carried out the commands of His Father.

4 - The Submission of The Holy Spirit to The Father and The Son

The evidence of the Scripture, here as we study the gospel of John, is that the Third Person of the Trinity, in a functional way, is subordinate to the Father and the Son. There is a mutual submission within the Trinity.

14.16The Holy Spirit comes because Jesus asked and the Father sent Him.

14.26The Holy Spirit brings to remembrance the things which Jesus said.

16.7-15The Holy Spirit:

(a)Is sent by Jesus (7). Testifies to the work of the other members of the Trinity.

(b)Testifies to the truth of the work of the other members of the Trinity (9-10).

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(c) Does not take His own initiatives - He is submitted to speak what He hears. He will disclose the things of Jesus (14) and therefore things of the Father also (15).

For other statement of the action of the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead laid out in Scripture; study the respective work of Each in passages such as: Eph. 1.1-14, and 1 Peter 1.1-21.

5 - The Source of Jesus' Authority among men

We notice that Jesus has a remarkable testimony being constantly spoken of Him in the Gospels. It is that He is one Who speaks and teaches "with authority". From our study in the Gospel of John we see that it is because He was under Another that other people submitted to Him. The authority of Jesus consists in that He does not do the will which is His own, but is submitted to another. In this way we learn something precious - it is that, within the action of the Trinity, to obey is as divine a function as it is to command. Both are seen in God.

So, in His life when Jesus speaks, it is not just something which remains spoken, but it affects what it says, eg. He calls disciples (Mark 1.17), He commands spirits and they obey because they recognise not His personal force but His authority (Mark 1.23-28), He forgives sins and heals bodies (Mark 2.10-12) and He subdues and commands the natural elements (4.39-41).

Jesus committed this authority to his disciples (Mark 2.15, John 14.12, John 20.23, Mark 16.17-18), yet, since their authority is the same as His, it has to rest upon the same basis of submission to the Father, and also be exercised in the same way.

6 - Jesus' Command to His Disciples

In the study of the Gospel of John 15.1-21 Jesus lays down some important statements:

(a) We are "in Him" as a branch to a vine (1); we are in a dependent relationship - and we are committed to the purpose of the vinedresser (Father) to be fruitful.

(b) We cannot bear fruit for the Father if we do not sustain (abide) our obedient relationship with Jesus (5).

(c) To be loved by Jesus, after the manner in which He expresses His love for the Father, is to be introduced to obedience. The secret of joy is the fruit of obedience (10-11).

(d) His commandment is that we love one another. And the model for this is the way He has loved us - He has laid down His life for us (12-13). This demonstrates what Jesus understands by loving friendship.

(e) Being a friend of Jesus simply means that we obey Him. These are the terms of friendship with Him (14).

(f) This does not mean that we are slaves: for we are privy to what our Master is doing - we understand the program.

(g) Discipleship to Jesus arose out of His authoritative call (16). We are not, primarily, disciples by our choice, but because He has exercised His choice, which, because it was in submission to the Father, was the Father's election (16).

7 - The Example of Service

Just as we have seen that the command of the Lord is to love one another, if we turn to John 13.3-16 we shall see there that the way the disciples are to love one another is to serve each other. This is the example of Jesus that He specifically applies to the relationship of mutual service.

Similarly, in Luke 22.27, we see that Jesus is greater than the disciples and He is among them to serve. In this way the nature of Christian authority has to do, not with the aggrandisement of the one who exercises it. It is not so that he may establish his own position at the expense of others but rather that he may serve, care, feed and nourish others in the faith. God wants his people to mature into what He wants them to be through the mature self-denial of their leadership (1 Peter 5.1-3).

8 - Authority is recognised by people: not forced upon them by leadership

As the example of the Trinity shows, when three co-equals Who are love, work together there is a mutuality of submission evident, and there is a functional Leader [an Origin, Initiator] among them.

So with Jesus' leadership of those around Him - it works through the free recognition and consent of those who are subject to it. He called and then relied upon the inherent authority of his call to elicit the free response that he sought. He did not speak truth in a dogmatic fashion that required people to believe it because He said it. Rather, He spoke the truth in a way which caused people to think for themselves and then He trusted for the convicting power which would win discernment, consent, and decision.

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However, once a person had become a disciple, it was a matter of clear obedience which are the terms of the discipleship. This mirrors our own life. When we were called by God to see the Kingdom of God, and we respond, by grace to this gracious invitation, then we discover that there is a point of entry into a relationship where we come under the rule of the Kingdom - which is another way of saying that we personally submit to the King. At the consideration of this point of entry, Jesus is non-pushy, although urgent. He seeks to recognise the ones the Father is giving Him. In this way He makes clear that the call is to "whosoever will..."

However, there is a very different position given us once we submit to that rule. It is like the day a man joins the army, the minute he signs his paper, the authority of the army takes him at his word. So it is with us. The initial submission brings a chain reaction as to the life we lead and the ongoing obedience we render. In this sense, and at this place, Jesus is demanding - and rightly so, for He has taken us at our word, we have submitted to Him.

Authority among God's people rests upon the fact that they are called by God. Jesus had a call of God. And we shall see similar principle at work in the appointment of deacons (Acts 6), and the commissioning of some missionaries (Acts 13.2-3).

There is also the authority springing from the fact of one who gives himself to God for others. This is the mark of our Lord's work. He became obedient unto death, and hence was exalted (Phil. 2.5-11). See also the context and study John 10.7-15. Christian authority is never derived from any institutional power or personal magnetism, rather from the sharing of love which causes a person to lay down his life for the sheep.

9 - Mutual Submission one to another

(a) Structural Order

It is noteworthy that the New Testament speaks of submission in many settings:

(a) Submission to God.

(i) by Christ 1 Cor. 15.27-28;

(ii) by us Heb. 12.9; James 4.7; Rom. 8.7; 10.3.

(b) Submission to Christ. 1 Cor. 15.27; Heb. 2.8,10; Phil. 2.9-10.

(c) Submission by wives to husbands. Discussed in Col. 3.18; 1 Peter 3.2; and in Eph. 5.21-33 where the submission of the wife is discussed in reference to a husband who shows the love of Christ to her.

(d) Submission to parents. Luke 5.21; Romans 1.30; Eph. 6.1-3; Col. 3.20.

(e) Submission to employers. Titus 2.9; 1 Peter 2.18.

(f) Submission to civil authorities. Romans 13.1,5; Titus 3.1.

(g) Submission to leaders in the church. 1 Peter 5.5; 1 Cor. 16.

It is helpful to see that the Person Who states how he wants His children to operate is the King. In this way, the king sets the relations to the rest of the people for you. You are no longer your own. In this way, He has a method of certain "authority lines" which express his order both within the human and the angelic sphere. We might like to think of this as his relational order. This insistence of the King, to speak into the lives of His subjects in reference to the way they shall conduct their affairs with fellow humans and spirits simply reflects His overall sovereignty, and the relation of being accountable to Him. He is not vague, but accurate and distinct, in these relations.

Notice that what is involved here is not a statement of the worth of the individuals by the king, but a way of relating when they do so. Authority simply has to do with the Author - it is the fact that there is One Who has a mind about how we should do certain things when we are called upon to do them. In this way, we are called to ask in any given relation at any moment, "What is the mind of the Author about this position? Are there any 'standing instructions' that set my relating at this point?"

Notice also the breadth of these "authority relations". They have to do with God, Christ, marriage, family relations, work relations, civil government and the church. That is to say, every sphere of life; whether personal, private, social or civil life. We cannot, meaning we are not at liberty to, rebel against the King in these matters.

These relations come about from the Father, and because, in the Spirit, we are given to share in the life of God through the Son. We are drawn into the life of God here.

10 - Mutual Submission one to another

(a) Openness to Give and also to Receive Ministry.

There is a basic humility required of us as we live together. It is the willingness to prefer one another,

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and at the same time to be prepared to give and receive ministry. In the context of charismatic ministry - which is the ministry done by the operation of charismatic gifts through faith - it is vital to be prepared to submit to the Lord in the way that we are open to receive from one another. What this comes to mean in practice is that we depend on one another's faith.

Submission here then comes to mean that we are actually prepared to admit our need and interdependence of one another. This is vital for true growth of the body as well as every individual member. Make certain that there is no person from whom you would not receive ministry. This is what is at stake in 1 Corinthians 13, a chapter placed between the discussion of the use of charismata in 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14.

It is one to another. The submission is mutual. If sometimes person A submits to B when B is exercising some ministry or function; then it is also true that B will submit to A when A exercises ministry or function. The whole body submits to each member, and each member submits to the whole body.

11 - The Power of Submission in Ministry

The real importance of this Biblical teaching is that it not only, yet most importantly, brings honour to Jesus; it also sets free the body of Christ to function in such a way that it sustains its direction and drive whilst it goes forward in harmony and unity.

When brothers and sisters can so function that they recognise the movement of the dynamic Spirit of God working among them - then He can really have his way in an ordered and beautiful way.

Further, the leadership of a body of believers is then able to grow in leadership - for they are set free to actually lead the congregation. This makes for power and also purpose.

In personal ministry, working two and three in agreement, it makes for the variety of the movement of the Spirit.

Just as we saw in the Trinity of Persons, so it is true that the Unity is preserved - there is leadership and also there is diversity. Each is useful to the concerted functioning of the whole. So in the Church of God, there is the same unity and diversity - this is the mark of growth and shows people are being established in the life of God.

12 - Disciples of Jesus Only, Not of One Another

In Matt. 28.20, we see how the risen Lord stated that all authority had been given to Him over the nations. He said to make disciples of the nations - and that His disciples were to preach the gospel and to baptise and teach. However, the thing to which this leads is that they are to be taught to observe all that I have commanded you. In this is clearly seen that there is to be a passing on of **the call to obey Jesus** as we see the early apostles did.

Jesus alone is our Master - we are all brethren (Matt. 23.10). When the rest of the NT goes on to speak of disciples then it does not mean persons who are in a dependent relationship to some human leader, but rather are members of the Church who are in subjection to Christ. (See Acts 6.1; 7.9 and in 11.26 disciples = Christians.)

13 - Functional Leadership

Notice that throughout the discussion - it is a functioning leadership and submission which is really so dynamically used by God in the church. In this way, we should see that where there is great love, the charismatic gifts can flow and be used by God mightily. We see submission only in practice. Yet, leadership may well imply an office. Where an "office" is a public acknowledgment of a personally relating which all recognise to be functioning. This is an order of doing things - yet once we are doing, then the mutual submission begins to release the variety and diversity of gifts.

14 - Humility of service eases reception - and therefore submission.

While it is true that we cannot receive the service of a person without receiving the person themselves, it is vital to understand the grace of the Gospel reaches us in a specific order. It first asks us to be receivers of what God has done for us in Christ before it asks us to do anything. What this means is that God's grace reaches us in our need with a gift which is free and may be received or rejected. In keeping us free to accept or reject lies the mark of the humility of God's service to us - even though He is a great Authority in Himself, with enormous power.

What many people do, who understand this principle of receiving a person, is that they ask us to receive them, in a way that emphasises the submission to their person as paramount. Rather than allowing us a freedom to receive what it is that God has given us to say or do as a service to them - and so approaching humbly in regard to themselves - they put their person as the matter of first importance and then service as something that arises out of that.

This is to make a double mistake. First, it asks for a personal recognition before the practical service may be brought to bear on the matter of their need. In this way the offerer declares himself as the person of greatest

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significance and honour, and that in a self-serving way. This marks the service as essentially not "other centred" but blatantly self centred.

The second mistake is that the source of the service is not honoured. For we are not the origin of the service itself - God is! And humility is very much in order for there is nothing in our hands to bring to another's care unless we have from Him - all that we offer we have first received.

The great evil of self promotion is rife in the 21st century western church. It arises out of a desire to want people to come and receive what the advertisers of an event, or ministry, consider to be good and well worth people coming to share. A global view of events and their participation has changed much that would previously have been simple in advertising a matter. For instance, a person may not be well known to an audience to which they travel to, so some introduction is warranted.

What is often the mark of these matters however is :

[a] a shameless incentive to come involves the singing of the praises of the person who is central to the ministry of the event in a way that promotes the person as the basis for considering the ministry. This militates against a humility - if not in the person themselves, in those who promote them.

[b] this marks the ministry as person-centred instead of something the Lord's people would expect to find from Him Who is always present when his people gather to Him.

One result of this is that people gather to the person of the minister before they know to test that the Lord is the author of the service he/she brings and whether they have been sent by Him. This leads to the personality cults which Paul is so disturbed about in 1 Corinthians 1-3; and so keeps the body infantile in its maturity and unable to make spiritual progress.