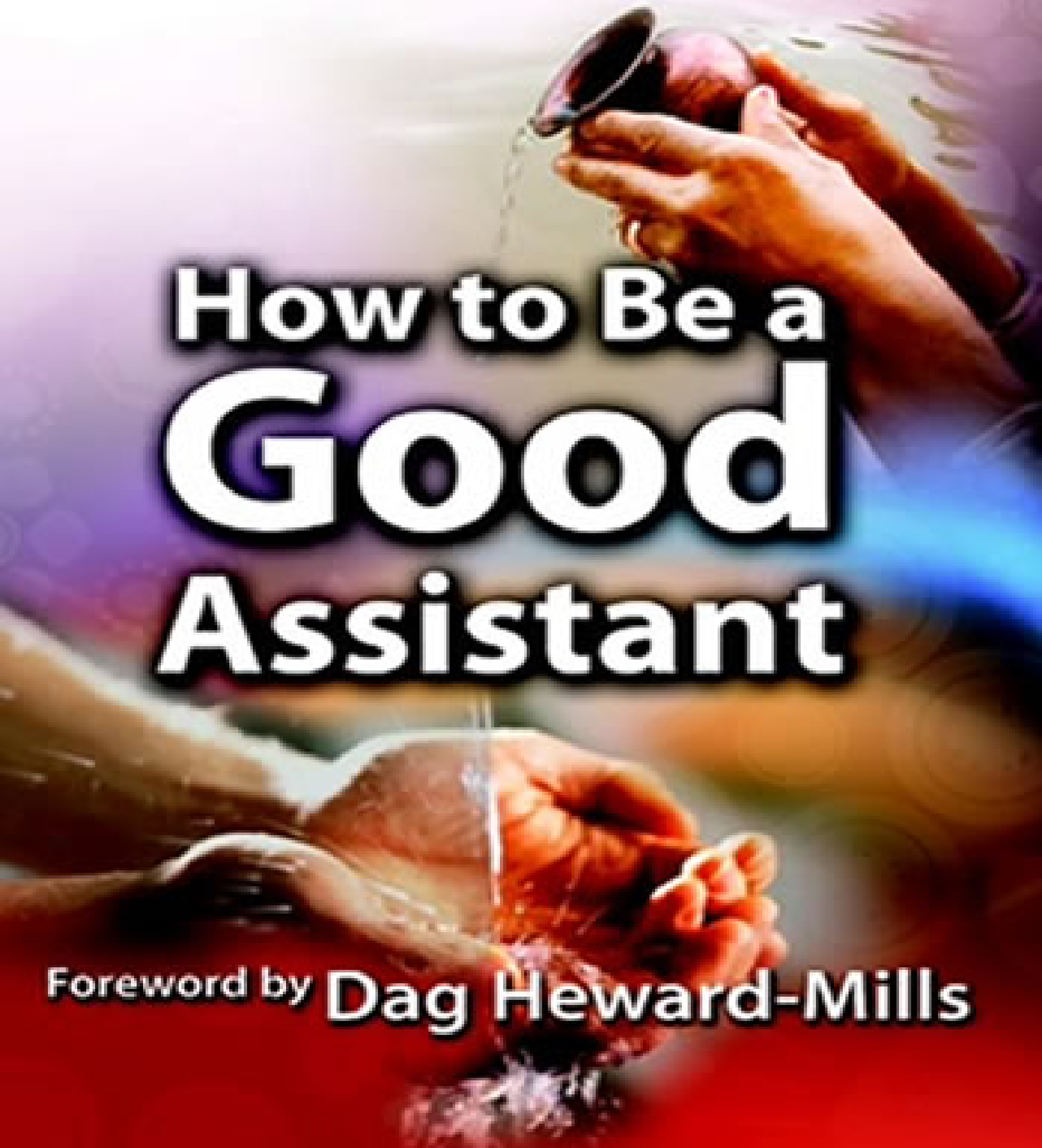
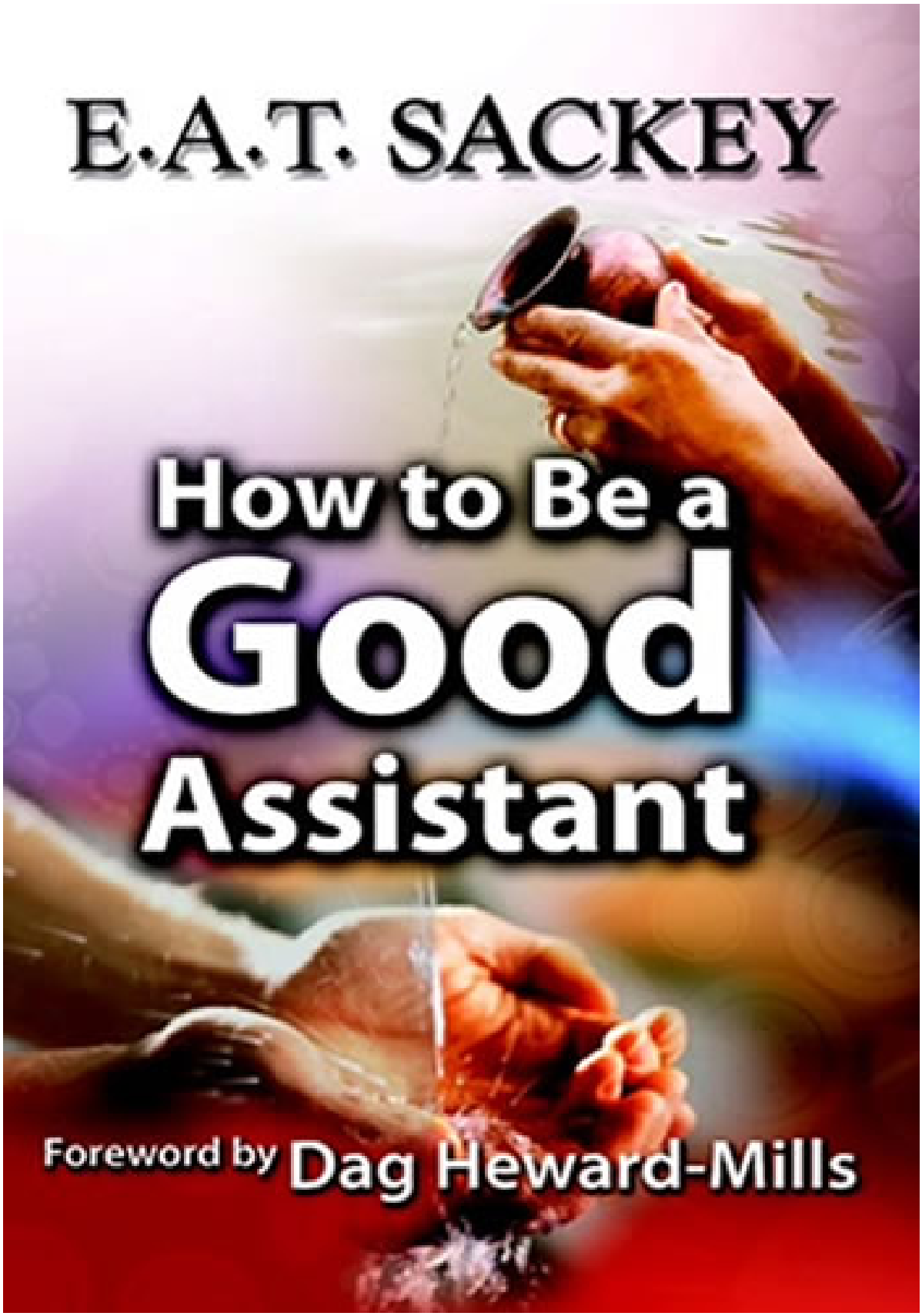
E.A.T. SACKEY



How to Be a Good Assistant

Foreword by Dag Heward-Mills

E.A.T. SACKEY



How to Be a Good Assistant

Foreword by Dag Heward-Mills

Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to you, my friend and brother,

Bishop Eddy Addy.

Together we have been most honoured and privileged to assist one of the greatest and most anointed leaders God has blessed the Church world with in our time.

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Foreword

I am privileged and honoured to write the foreword to Bishop E.A.T. Sackey's book, *How to Be a Good Assistant.* This book contains a timely message and will encourage many people to walk in their true calling.

Bishop E.A.T. Sackey is the quintessential assistant pastor that anyone would desire to have. Bishop Sackey is probably the best assistant anyone could wish to have. After working with many different people, I've realised that assisting is not as natural as it may seem to be. Many people, by their natural disposition are unable to assist naturally and easily. Bishop Sackey, over the years has been able to function as someone who understands what it means to really assist.

There is a great misunderstanding of what an assistant's ministry is. Unfortunately, many people think that the assistant is someone who is unable to fill the role of the top job and therefore has to occupy a lesser position. Satan feeds on this delusion and ministers deception to many people, encouraging them to become what they are not called to be.

It is so sad to see people who are called to be assistants struggling to be the principal leader. I have seen pastors whose ministries can be described as struggling deserts because they try for years to be the principal leader when their true calling is to assist.

Your greatest calling is to be what God has called you to be. Every creature has his primary calling; to be what God created him to be. That is why fish swim effortlessly in the seas and birds fly equally effortlessly in the air. Each of them was created by God to be something and they flow in what they were naturally created to be.

The call to assist is actually a call to the helps ministry. The helps ministry is an extension of the helps ministry of a wife. A wife is the first helps minister that was created by God. That is why many women naturally function as helpers, secretaries, assistants and administrators because their natural calling is to assist.

Because the helps ministry is so great the Holy Spirit was also given the title of “helper”. If the Holy Spirit has been called the helper why would you be ashamed to be called a helper or an assistant? The mighty Holy Spirit through whom the power of God flows and through whom the Heaven and Earth were created is called the helper. This means that every man who is called to help or who is called to assist is like the Holy Spirit.

In the book of Revelation we see even the Antichrist flanked by two helpers: the false prophet and the beast. This beast and the false prophet are good examples of helpers who make someone successful. It is amazing that the Antichrist and the devil have been able to see the importance of the helps ministry and been able to function in it and create the most powerful force of evil on the earth that stands to challenge Christianity.

I highly recommend this book written by my friend and brother, Bishop E.A.T. Sackey. He is qualified to write this book for some reasons. E.A.T. Sackey has assisted me since my ministry began. In an initial meeting which I had with him, I told him that I wanted to make it clear that I was the leader and that it was not a partnership. He was very happy with this and declared that he had no intentions of being the leader. He was happy to assist someone like me who did not even have a congregation.

More than twenty years have passed since he professed his calling to assist and to help me. He has never changed his stance. He has never indicated or shown the slightest sign of being discontent with his role as an assistant.

I cannot say this of many other people who become discontent with their role of helping and assisting. Years and years have gone by and E.A.T. Sackey has proved time and time again that he wants no glory for himself but wants to assist, help and promote me.

His role to help me is not because I am perfect or good. Perhaps, he knows my faults better than anyone else and yet his love and intense desire to assist me has not diminished as the years have gone by. Years have gone by and E.A.T Sackey’s call to assist is even more intense. Every time I come up with one of my ideas he is ready to help to make it work. Amazingly, many of these ideas have a great impact on him and change his life, sometimes considerably. Yet, he wants to do whatever a new idea brings

because he wants to assist and he wants to help. He once said to me, “I see no reason why I should write a book because I see every book you have written as a book I have also written.”

I see most of the things I have done in the ministry as through, by and with his help.

Perhaps, a sign that you are being assisted by someone who is not called to assist is the feeling of tension and pressure when you are with the person. When you are with someone who secretly desires to be you or wishes to usurp your authority or take your place you feel a constant nudging and you will feel constant pressure to please the person, appease him or give him some kind of compensation for not being you.

As the years have gone by I have not noticed this pressure from E.A.T. Sackey. I have never felt that I should give him any privileges or benefits so that he will not be angry with me. I have never felt that he wanted anything that I had or that he wanted to be like me in any way. Just as we are unable to accomplish anything without the Holy Spirit, many ministries are unable to accomplish what God has called them to do because they do not have help.

As I end my short introduction to this book, I want to describe what I call the plateau of ministry. The plateau of ministry is the place where everything tapers off and becomes flat. Nothing grows anymore. No matter how much more effort you put in, nothing changes. This is the place economists call the place of diminishing returns. In the ministry, we call it the plateau of ministry.

This plateau of ministry is caused by the absence of helpers and assistants. When God gives you people who are called to assist, you will get out of every plateau and climb to the next level where you are called to be. Many people cannot go higher because they simply need administrators, secretaries, assistants, associates, branch pastors, leaders and helpers to carry them to the next level.

This, truly, is the call of the assistant pastor – the call to break the plateaux that come to all true leaders and all ministers of the gospel.

I unreservedly recommend this book, *How to Be a Good Assistant*, to every leader. E.A.T. Sackey will not have written any book at all because he considers my books to be his books. Perhaps, this is one book that he alone could write and I am grateful to God that he has finally written and shared from his heart some of the principles, ideas and thoughts that have guided him to be one of the best assistants in the ministry.

As I conclude, it is my prayer for all who read this book that you will stay in your calling and be what God wants you to be. It is also my prayer that you would have a helper, if you need one. I pray that God will send to you pillars, labourers, helpers, assistants who can make a great difference to your life.

May you be delivered from liars, destroyers, mischievous people who undermine you and cut you down!

May you be delivered from those who assist you but secretly pray that you die or make a mistake so that they can take your place!

May you be delivered from those ambitious men whose hearts are not with you but who pretend that they love you!

This is a great day of ministry, a great day of great achievements for God.

It is a day for the release of the greatest apostles and prophets of the end time. It is also a day for the release of the great helpers and assistants whom God is raising to help these apostles and prophets.

May you be one of the greatest of your kind! God bless you and God bless all those who read this interesting and inspiring book, *How to Be a Good Assistant.*

Bishop Dag Heward-Mills

2012

Introduction

Church history is coloured by the lives of many people who achieved amazing feats for the Lord. But they were flanked by lesser known people who played second fiddle. These assistants were content and happy to play their part in the "ministry orchestra" to make sure the overall music turned out beautiful. They served as back-ups to the heroes we know of.

A lot is written and known about Martin Luther but very little is known of Phillip Melanchthon who was the fan behind the flames in this fiery man of God.

D. L. Moody, the unrefined shoe shine boy turned preacher had the highly educated and refined Ira Sankey to support him and the two shook both the United States and Europe with mighty revival.

Billy Graham the most outstanding evangelist of the last century, for over sixty years worked closely with Cliff Burrows and the music minister Beverly Shea. This team stood together to harvest millions of souls to the kingdom of God.

God has not designed His chosen men to be "James Bond" or "Demolition Man" or "Rambo" standing all alone to fight the whole world. God always calls other people who come along to assist "the public figure".

Two are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone. A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated but two can stand back to back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple – braided cord is not easily broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 NLT

Life and ministry can be very hard. No one can ride his horse and pull the cart all alone. Ministering together is exciting. Assisting a strong, spiritual

and compelling leader can be adventurous. You need to be flexible and ready to accept change. Assisting is about working for God under the supervision of a man you know God has called you to. The work of God is too much for one gifted but limited man.

May every assistant seek to understand his calling so that he can follow and flow. Remember you have been called to “ASSIST” and “NOT to INSIST”. Allow your leader to be led and guided by the Holy Spirit. I have written this book at the bidding and with the encouragement of my pastor and leader, Bishop Dag Heward- Mills.

I trust this book you are about to read will be a blessing to you and inspire you to climb higher and run faster in your calling.

Section 1

THE CALL TO BE AN ASSISTANT

Chapter 1

The Ministry of the Assistant

Most men will proclaim everyone his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

Proverbs 20:6

Throughout the Bible when God called anybody He always gave the person somebody else or other people to stand with him and assist in the call. Sometimes those called to assist are with him at the very beginning or start with him. There are times when some assist for a while and others come either to help or even take over from them as assistants. Rarely is there a time when a person stands all alone to fulfil God's calling. Even for God to be able to accomplish His most intricate and complex creation, He needed the input of assistants.

God Needed Assistants

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Genesis 1:26 -27

There is no way any minister or ministry can go far and accomplish varied things without the valuable input of assistants.

The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.

Psalm 68:11

Adam's Helper

God gave Adam an uphill task to name all the birds of the air and the fish of the sea as well as all the animals in the garden. However, Adam alone could not fulfil this assignment so God in His infinite wisdom provided Adam a helper.

And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

Genesis 2:18

The blessing to be fruitful and multiply was given to both Adam and his assistant or helper: "Then God blessed them and said to them be fruitful and multiply and subdue the earth..." (Genesis 1:28).

Father Abraham's Assistant

When God called Abraham out of his father's home, to a land that was later to be an inheritance for him and his children, Abraham left with Lot his nephew, possibly for company and fellowship. Note that the calling was directly to Abraham but Lot was supposed to stand by and with him.

Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.

Isaiah 51:2

When Lot moved out of his place he ended in disaster, disgrace and embarrassment.

Moses Was Helped by Aaron

Moses was a fugitive shepherd in the wilderness when God supernaturally called him to lead His people out of bondage into the Promised Land. This call was directly to Moses alone. However, there was no way he was going to fulfil this calling without the input of Aaron who later on served as Moses' spokesman. God knew Moses' limitation; that he was not an

eloquent speaker, yet it was Moses who had the calling and not the eloquent Aaron. Aaron only came along to assist Moses fulfil the mandate given him by God.

And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

Exodus 4:10

And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.

Exodus 4:14

Joshua as an Assistant to Moses

When Joshua led the people of Israel to fight the Amalekites God gave them great victory but it was through the intercession of Moses, the de facto leader that real victory was wrought.

David Had an Assistant

When God called David He provided for him a trusted and reliable friend Jonathan, whose input and advice delivered him time and time again from death and eventually he found himself on his throne even long after Jonathan was gone. Jonathan had the eyes to see the gift and calling of God on David and he set out to protect and promote this gift even sometimes at the peril of his own life.

And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David.

1 Samuel 19:1

Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee.

1 Samuel 20:4

And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?

And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.

1 Samuel 20:32-33

Jesus and His Assistants

Jesus Christ the perfect Example of a pastor had His call affirmed at His baptism when a voice from Heaven said, “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.” However, even He knew the importance of having other people to support and stand with him in ministry so He could truly serve His people and fulfil his calling. That is why He spent several hours in prayer before selecting twelve people to be trained to assist him to carry out His Heaven-given mandate. Among the twelve there were the three who were even closer.

Paul Was Assisted by Barnabas and Timothy

Paul, the latter day apostle, had a divine encounter to send the gospel to the Gentiles and to venture into new territories. And yet he needed trustworthy assistants like Barnabas and later Timothy and indeed several others to help him.

These are but a few of the different men who stood with “God’s chosen men” and together they saw God's purposes accomplished and fulfilled in their day.

How Does an Assistant Pastor Receive His Calling?

There is no doubt how God calls His servants. The Bible is filled with examples of different ways by which God has called the men He has chosen to accomplish great feats. It is important to understand that the call to assist is also as legitimate and as authentic as any other call you may have heard of (for example the call to be a prophet). There are several ways an assistant minister may be called.

1. An assistant pastor may receive a direct call from God.

Aaron was a direct choice by God. Moses did not have anything to do with his being chosen.

And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.

And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do.

And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

Exodus 4:14-16

2. An assistant pastor may be chosen by his Senior Pastor.

Joshua and Caleb were chosen among others by Moses to go and spy the land and thereafter Joshua became his assistant.

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Send thou men, that they may search the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.

And Moses by the commandment of the LORD sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men were heads of the children of Israel.

And these were their names: of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur.

Of the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori.

Of the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh.

Of the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph.

Of the tribe of Ephraim, Oshea the son of Nun.

Of the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu.

Of the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi.

Of the tribe of Joseph, namely, of the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi.

Of the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli.

Of the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael.

Of the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi.

Of the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi.

These are the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun Jehoshua.

And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain:

Numbers 13: 1-17

3. An assistant pastor's call may seem like a coincidence.

There are times when somebody steps in to assist a leader not necessarily because he has had a clear call but he happened to be the most available person at that time. I believe most assistant pastors fit into this category.

It may look so ordinary and not spectacular but herein lies the truth of the Scripture: “The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord and he delighteth in his way” (Psalm 37:23).

And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

Matthew 9:9

Matthew was a tax collector and by the standards of the Jews he was not qualified to be a disciple of Jesus. Jesus appeared to be passing where Matthew was. Matthew’s call looked unintentional and accidental but divinity had organized his destiny.

4. An assistant pastor may be chosen as a replacement.

Judas lost his place and position in Jesus’ ministry and this was taken by Matthias.

For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take. Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, That he may take part

of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Acts 1:17, 20-26

Chapter 2

What It Means to Assist

I would like to share with you twenty meanings of the word to “assist”. These will give you a broad scope of the purpose of an assistant and the assignment to which he is called.

Twenty Definitions

1. To assist means to support somebody to fulfil his vision.

2. To assist means to push somebody to move faster in the direction he intends to go.

3. To assist means to stand with someone in a time of need.

4. To assist means to stand by somebody in a particular season of his life.

5. To assist means to encourage somebody to achieve his goal.

6. To assist means to help somebody to meet his target.

7. To assist means to aid somebody to accomplish an idea.

8. To assist means to back somebody in a decision.

9. To assist means to promote a person and the values he stands for.

10. To assist means to give a helping hand

11. To assist means to contribute to somebody’s dream.

12. To assist means to enable someone fulfil a set objective.

13. To assist means to urge somebody on to reach their expected end.

14. To assist means to relieve somebody of a burden.

15. To assist means to serve somebody.

16. To assist means to facilitate the aspirations of somebody.

17. To assist means to rally round somebody.

18. To assist means to lend a hand in somebody's work.

19. To assist means to be loyal to somebody.

20. To assist means to serve as a booster to enable somebody to go higher.

Of all the definitions for the word "assist" the one that strikes me most is this simple one that I found which says that, "to assist is an act by a player in a sport that enables a team mate to score a goal."

As assistants our primary objective is not to be the goal scorers but to help our leaders or Senior Pastors score as many goals as possible.

Section 2

SEVEN OUTSTANDING DESCRIPTIONS OF AN ASSISTANT

Chapter 3

The Assistant as a Friend

1. An assistant must learn to trust, and to be trustworthy.

In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

1 Corinthians 4:2, NASB

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

1 Corinthians 4:2

Confidence in an unfaithful man...is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.

Proverbs 25:19

One of the foundations in building any lasting relationship is trust. In marriage you need to trust your spouse so as to be committed to him or her. Business partners need to trust each other in spite of all the legal documents if they are going to succeed. In the same vein, for a ministry team to last, trust is fundamental.

The assistant pastor must be able to trust his Senior Pastor absolutely and must also be trustworthy.

2. An assistant will be a good friend if he is open to his leader.

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another...

1 John 1:7

And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend...

Exodus 33:11

My relationship with my Senior Pastor, Bishop Dag Heward- Mills, has been very open in every sense of the word. When I met him I realized that he was a very open and frank person. Our relationship has become stronger over the years because of this principle of openness. It is difficult to relate with somebody deeply and genuinely when there are barriers between the two of you. When you are standing in the light it is almost impossible to see another person standing in the dark even though he may see you clearly. You may not know whether he is armed or not. There are some people who seem to present a façade of perfection in all aspects of their life including marriage. It comes therefore as a real surprise when you realize that they are all subject to human passions like everybody else and may even have started filing for divorce. Even their closest friend or Senior Pastor is kept in the dark till the issue explodes and gets out of hand.

Jesus was very open to His disciples (assistant pastors) to the point that they knew where He was at all times. That is why Judas was able to lead the soldiers to arrest Him. He took advantage of his Senior Pastor's openness to betray Him.

Dear Assistant Pastor, do not be like Judas who betrayed his Senior Pastor. Even at the point of betrayal Jesus called Judas "friend"!

And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

Matthew 26:50

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

John 15:15

3. An assistant who remains constant will serve as a good friend.

A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Proverbs 17:17

There are many challenges in ministry and the assistant pastor should be found dependable particularly in times of adversity. It is during such times that true friendship is tested. Adversity in ministry shows up in different ways and at different times. Sometimes the church goes through financial crisis. There are seasons when attendance can drop drastically. There are also times when church members can rise up and criticize their pastor or his preaching. The Senior Pastor may even go through marital challenges. These times can be very stressful to the Senior Pastor. It is at such times that true friendship must be exhibited. A true assistant pastor must stand and defend his Senior Pastor against critics.

"He Sips Water When He Is Preaching"

I know of situations when assistant pastors have joined the opposition party against their Senior Pastors. Their home became the centre for receiving of complaints. I remember in the early days of our ministry some members of the church rose up and started criticizing and finding fault with our pastor's style of preaching and others even questioned his calling.

Some said, "He sips water when he is preaching." Others said, "He does not stand at one place when he's preaching" and yet others said, "He tells too many stories during his sermons."

Can you believe this? It was indeed a very trying time for our Senior Pastor. The still waters of our fledgling church were getting muddied. My colleague Eddy Addy and I decided to literally visit all the then forty members of the church who were being poisoned, one after the other, to put out these fires. We advised some of the people we felt did not believe in our Senior Pastor anymore to leave. And oh, what a blessing it was that they left! The church became calm, stable and began to grow.

Soon after, Hushai the Arkite, David's friend, came and greeted Absalom, "Long live the king! Long live the king! Absalom said to Hushai, "Is this the way you show your devotion to your good friend? Why didn't you go with your friend David?

2 Samuel 16:16 (The Message Bible)

When David was driven away by Absalom everybody expected that his genuine friends would stand with him in his time of crisis and this is why Absalom was surprised that David's trusted friend Hushai would come and declare allegiance to Absalom. However, Hushai's staying behind in the palace was for a purpose.

4. An assistant who is a good friend is discreet and exercises confidentiality.

And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer, and the king's friend:

1 Kings 4:5

Everybody needs a friend and so does the king. What qualification does one need to be the king's friend?

He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.

Proverbs 22:11

Confidentiality and discretion are key to becoming the king's friend.

"He Eats Whilst We Fast!"

Everybody needs somebody they can confide in and be sure that "their secret" or openness will not be re-described or used against them. There was this assistant pastor who told me that his Senior Pastor does not pray but watches television whilst they go for "all-night" services. He further went on to say that the pastor would declare a fast for the whole church but

he would never be a part of it. He would be eating away while the members fasted and starved. This assistant was however aware that his Senior Pastor had a very bad stomach ulcer and doctors had advised him to stay away from fasting. The assistant pastor was being mischievous! Ministry can be a real long and lonely road and it even becomes darker if you do not have a close companion to travel on the road with.

Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.

Psalms 88:18

Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

Proverbs 27:17

I know many Senior Pastors who literally walk alone. They may have been wounded so badly and so many times by their close associates that they cannot find in any of them a true friend. They therefore have resorted to travelling alone, going to the restaurant alone, playing golf alone. Sometimes the only assistant pastors they have and can trust are their wives! It is not unscriptural to have one's wife as an associate. However, sometimes the reason for that choice is the fear of trusting somebody else with your life's work. And indeed stories abound of people who have been made associate pastors and these assistant pastors have cunningly stolen the hearts of the people, causing a major split in the ministry.

My dear colleagues, as we work as assistant pastors let us give our Senior Pastors every cause to have absolute confidence in us. Let us decide to be their number one confidante, number one fan and number one supporter. Let us project and promote their ministry like no one else will.

5. An assitant who is a real friend believes in and truly admires his leader.

A real assistant pastor must believe in, like and admire his Senior Pastor in all ways.

And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

James 2:23

Abraham was called the friend of God because he had one hundred percent confidence in God. It cannot be that as an assistant pastor you admire and like another Senior Pastor above your Senior Pastor. I once met an assistant pastor of a church who told me that his mentor and "real pastor" is a Senior Pastor of another church in the same city. He shamelessly told me how that pastor's sermons were the messages he listened to all the time and he enjoyed them more than those of his own pastor. As if this was not enough he further surprised me by saying that all he knew in ministry he learnt from this pastor. Meanwhile, he had been with his Senior Pastor for several years and hears him preach all the time. I therefore found these comments extremely disgusting.

I am not saying it is wrong to listen to other messages apart from those of your Senior Pastor. There are indeed great and anointed men of God that we can all learn from. However, it is out of place for an assistant pastor to highly esteem, like, admire and believe in somebody else way above his Senior Pastor. My advice to such a pastor is to leave and join the pastor he believes in, likes and admires.

He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

John 3:29

A real assistant pastor will be excited to hear the voice of his Senior Pastor and will encourage others to have that same desire. The first time I heard my Senior Pastor, Bishop Dag Heward- Mills preach was many years ago when we both were in the University. He was not an ordained pastor then but a leader of a fellowship he had started. I was enthralled.... I had not heard anybody preach or teach with such clarity the way he did. He was

down-to-earth and practical in his approach and used very relevant illustrations. It was just too captivating. It has now been almost thirty years since that day. And today I can still say without a shadow of doubt that his teachings are as fresh as that first day I heard him preach. He has written many books since then, and as an avid reader who has also read many other books, I can boldly say that he is my best author any day. I love him deeply, I admire him greatly, and I believe in his leadership absolutely. I am blessed indeed.

A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

Proverbs 18:24

Chapter 4

The Assistant as a Servant

The word *servant* does not appear to be an attractive word in today's world. It is seen as low class and derogatory if you are referred to as a servant. The dictionary defines a servant as "a person hired to perform household or menial services". So not many Assistant Pastors may readily embrace this word or concept if used to describe them. However, it is one of the most profound ways great ministers have been described in the Bible.

Joshua Was a Servant

One of the finest leaders in the Bible was Joshua. On three separate occasions Joshua is aptly described as the servant of Moses.

And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

Exodus 33:11

And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses...

Numbers 11:28

Now after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD it came to pass, that the LORD spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying,

Joshua 1:1

The New King James Version of the Bible uses the word "assistant" in place of "servant".

Elisha Was a Servant

Another outstanding prophet of all time was Elisha. He was referred to as the servant of Elijah.

So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee? And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

1 Kings 19:19-21

Elisha was later described as the one who poured water on Elijah's hands. You and I would crave to even have ten percent of the anointing that was on Elisha, and this would change our ministries very significantly. To be referred to as servant is by no means demeaning. I would wish that people would refer to me as the servant of Bishop Dag if that would qualify me to receive the anointing on Joshua or Elisha. Surprisingly, I have had very Senior Pastors in our city ask if I would "bow" to and serve my Senior Pastor all my life. I see that as a devilish question.

Jesus Was a Servant

In Mark Chapter 10 verse 45, Jesus Himself said He came not to be served but to serve and give His life as an offering to many. Isn't it amazing that Jesus, the most anointed man who ever walked this earth, referred to Himself as a servant? How dare anybody else think that being referred to as a servant is inordinate? He always made it clear that He came to do not His will but the will of the One who sent Him.

For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Mark 10:45

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

Phillipians 2: 5-7

Dear Pastor, if you want to be great in the eyes of God then take the words of Jesus seriously. He said, "...for whosoever shall be great among you shall be your minister (servant)." Mark 10:43. The word "minister" here is from the Greek word "diakonos" which means to execute the command of another. It therefore means that your greatness in ministry is measured by your ability to carry out the commands of another person.

The Apostles Were Servants

One of the most common ways the apostles introduced themselves was as "servants of Jesus Christ".

● Paul

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

Romans 1:1

Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;

Titus 1:1

● James (Brother of Jesus)

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

James 1:1

● Peter

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 Peter 1:1

● Jude

Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:

Jude 1:1

The word "servant" comes from the Greek word "doulos" which means bond slave. The Apostles must have found it a great honour then for them to describe themselves in this manner.

My Pleasure

I may not have succeeded all the time but I have realized that my greatest joy in ministry is to see my Senior Pastor very happy because I carried through his instruction or his heart's desire. Sometimes a Senior Pastor will not want to be seen as bossy and his commands or instructions may come out as a wish. It is for the assistant pastor to read between the lines and hurriedly ensure that the wish is fulfilled even when it might on occasion be at a great price or require some sacrifice.

And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate! And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD.

2 Samuel 23:16

Fine protocol would not permit David to send anybody to risk their lives just to bring him water. So as is said, “he spoke to the wind” and these three mighty men saw his wish as their command. This act alone earned them a place among David’s mighty men.

These be the names of the mighty men whom David had...

2 Samuel 23:8

It is always important for the assistant pastor to know his position in relation to his Senior Pastor. There are assistant pastors who feel they are more anointed, popular and important than their Senior Pastor. That cannot be true; it is as untrue as it is unscriptural.

The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.

Matthew 10:24

Eight Golden Qualities of a Servant

1. Servants are sendable.

He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant:

Psalm 105:17

He sent Moses his servant; and Aaron whom he had chosen.

Psalm 105:26

When an assistant pastor grows so “big” such that his Senior Pastor feels he can no longer send him then he is really too big to be called an assistant. An assistant pastor must not only seek to be sent to preach. Elisha fetched water for Elijah and the sons of the Prophet were also sent to go and hew wood from the forest to build a house. All these errands did not make them less than they actually were in any way. Instead that contributed to their greatness.

But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may enquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.

2 Kings 3:11

And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us.

Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye.

And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go. **So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood.**

2 Kings 6:1-4

For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

Matthew 8:9

2. Servants do what they are told to do.

I have seen assistant pastors who argue, sometimes even very vehemently, with their Senior Pastors when they are given an instruction to do something. The assignment may eventually be done but the joy that comes from a job well done will be gone. This is not to say that an assistant pastor does not have the right to express an opinion on any matter and must behave like a "zombie". However, he should give his Senior Pastor the final say and uphold his stance at all times.

"I Will Not Come"

One day, a Senior Pastor sent for his assistant for an urgent discussion. It was outside the usual working hours and normally he would not inconvenience any of his pastors in this way. However, this was a pressing matter that needed to be addressed immediately. The assistant pastor sent a message through his messenger, "Go and tell that man that I will not come. He cannot disturb my family life." This is rudeness at its highest peak. Maybe he did not know that he was re-echoing the words of Dathan and Abiram.

And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up: ...except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?

Numbers 16:12, 13

The assistant eventually came but the water was already muddied and the joy of working together started to fade away fast.

3. Servants must be trustworthy and dependable.

Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Matthew 24:45 -46

Bible Class Sunday Morning

When an assistant pastor is given an assignment he must stay with it faithfully until his Senior Pastor decides otherwise. I know a case where a Senior Pastor travelled outside the country to honour ministry invitations and the assistant pastor was asked to take charge till he returned. This assistant pastor also got himself very busy with his personal local invitations outside the church. He divided the church into little Bible study groups and appointed leaders to have Bible classes on Sunday mornings, which was more like small discussion groups, whilst he went gallivanting. By the time the Senior Pastor came back after two months the church had virtually disintegrated and the flock scattered.

Preach. Do Not Lay Hands!

Another assistant pastor was given charge of the church whilst his Senior Pastor attended a two week conference. This assistant pastor saw it as an opportunity to exhibit his prowess. Instead of preaching a normal, approximately forty-five minute sermon on Sunday morning, he turned the service into a deliverance session. He laid hands on members, anointing them and delivering them from evil spirits. The two-hour service ended after four hours. The following Sunday the attendance dropped drastically. The assistant pastor's showmanship did not contribute in any way to the stability of the church.

The Bible says the servant must be found "so doing". That means he must be doing exactly what he was asked to do. This is what it means to be trustworthy.

4. Servants do their masters bidding both in their presence and in their absence.

Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

Ephesians 6:5-6

It is important for assistant pastors to work even harder when the Senior Pastor is not around or not looking. Many of us naturally like to impress. We seem to be up and about when we feel the eyes of our superior are on us. I have been to many offices in our city during peak office hours and found workers sleeping, reading newspapers or engaged in useless chatter. But, how soon that changes when their bosses enter. Everybody sits up and pretends to be very engrossed in their work. This behaviour is what the Bible refers to as "eye service". It is pure hypocrisy. I do not take or consider it a holiday when my Senior Pastor is out of town. On the contrary I even find myself busier at such times. He needs not see what I am doing

for me to feel good. If you have a spiritual leader like my Senior Pastor, God has a way of revealing to him the ulterior motives of people around him.

"Why Should We Write Exams in Church?"

I know pastors who seem to flow with the practices of the church they belong to. However, when such pastors leave they speak against these practices. In our church, leaders study and write exams on biblical doctrines. I know of pastors who have been in our church for over ten years and gone through these only to leave the church and boldly declare that it is unnecessary to write exams in church.

Another pastor who gained his "independence" told other pastor friends of his that, "At long last we are free from filling of forms and data and irrelevant instructions that have no bearing on real ministry work."

5. A servant must serve cheerfully.

Servants obey in all things ...And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

Colossians 3:22,23

It is a blessing to have a hardworking assistant but service with a smile is an invaluable asset. No matter how hard a person works, a bad attitude and a sullen countenance has a way of negating the results. I would rather work with somebody who may not be one hundred percent up to task but has a very good attitude than somebody who is a worker par excellence yet has a very unpleasant demeanour.

The message Bible beautifully paraphrases Ephesians Chapter 6 verse 6: "...And work with a smile on your face, always keeping in mind that no matter who happens to be giving the orders you are really serving God."

6. A servant must be humble.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Philippians 2:5-8

It is important for an assistant to always remain humble as a servant. Jesus Christ is our ultimate example. The desire to be equal to God was not something He grasped at. He happily and willingly stepped back and became vulnerable to mere man. Humility is one outstanding but rare quality that can take you to the highest level in this life.

A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

Proverbs 29:23

If as an assistant you are haughty, proud and arrogant, remember it is not your Senior Pastor you are contending against but you are fighting God and God will resist you. The humble assistant pastor will receive more grace to excel in his work.

7. A servant must not expect a “thank you”.

Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

Luke 17:9-10

An assistant is under obligation to serve without earning merit or a thank you. If we look out for praises for everything that we do it is an indication of our selfishness and we have received our reward already. Admittedly,

everybody needs a pat on the back at one time or the other to serve as a motivation to them. However, it is controlling to become grumpy when you are not praised for something you have done. It is "Pharisaic" to "love the praise of men more than the praise of God".

For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

John 12:43

In some churches the Senior Pastor must remember to say thank you to the soloist, the organist, the drummer and even the ushers every Sunday. He must also not forget the prayer team. By the time he finishes saying "thank you" to all these people, he would be as exhausted as he would be after preaching a sermon, having had to make a conscious effort to remember all the people that need to be thanked. Please, give your Senior Pastor a break!

They Boycotted the Church Service

I know a church in which one Sunday all the instrumentalists decided without prior notice to "boycott" the church service and the reason – they did not feel appreciated by the Pastor! The Pastor was shocked when he got to his church that morning and realized there was nobody to play the instruments. This resulted in a very depressing and uninteresting service that day. He managed to muster courage to preach. Eventually, all these instrumentalists left the church, to create further embarrassment for the Senior Pastor and the church. It has been some years now and the church has recovered beautifully. They have several instrumentalists who wrestle Sunday after Sunday for an opportunity to minister. I know some of the instrumentalists who left personally. Whilst some of them backslid completely and started playing for non-Christian music groups, others are still struggling to find their feet in the new churches they joined.

8. A servant must relate well with his fellow servants.

But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

Matthew 24:48-49

In many ministries the people working under the Senior Pastor have very high respect for him. They genuinely love him and admire the grace of God upon his life. However, among themselves there is an underlying rivalry and competition. There is no flow among them. Everybody is seeking the downfall of his fellow assistant minister. They build for themselves little congregations in the one big church who see them as their personal pastors. They visit these congregants with various ulterior motives.

Fighting Assistants

There is a church in our city where anytime the Senior Pastor travels there is such tension during the church Services. When one Assistant Pastor is preaching the others sit in front with frowned faces and one can literally feel the despisement emanating from them. This unhealthy attitude has grossly affected the growth of this ministry.

I am grateful to God for my colleague Bishop Eddy Addy who together with me has assisted our Presiding Bishop for many years. He is more than a brother to me. I can say in all sincerity that the beauty of our friendship is to see each other do well in assisting our Senior Pastor. The only quarrel I have with him, for almost thirty years of working together, occurs when we have to decide on who will preach when my Senior Pastor is out of church. He is such a fine preacher but will insist that I should rather preach and I will also insist that he preaches. I am earnestly looking forward to the day that he will grow out of this! I can always read his happiness when I am doing well. And he knows without a shadow of doubt that I am his number one fan or maybe number two fan.

As an assistant your unflinching loyalty is to your senior minister. It is important to also note that unity and strength also depends on how strong you are bonded with your fellow-workers in supporting your Senior Pastor. Be like Aaron and Hur who together lifted up Moses' hands for victory to come to Israel.

So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill.

And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

Exodus 17:10-13

Chapter 5

The Assistant Pastor as a Helper

Another very apt description of the assistant in the Bible is helper. The word "helper" comes from the Hebrew word "azar", which means to surround, protect, aid, help, or succour.

Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion;

Psalm 20:2

Real help in ministry comes from God. For any minister to do well in his calling he will need trusted people to assist and stand with him. God often calls a man alone but gives him people along the way who understand his vision and help run with it.

The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.

Psalm 68:11

- Abraham was the one who was called but he needed the company of Lot.
- Aaron's calling was to serve as a helper and support to Moses.
- Timothy came into Paul's life at a time when he needed a travel companion and an assistant.

There are times in everybody's life, when one needs somebody just to share life and ministry issues with or to talk to.

Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

What a difference real helpers make in a person's ministry. As our ministry has grown I have realised how stunted our growth would have been without the coming in of several pastoral and administrative helpers.

Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.

Psalm 22:11

There are ministries which have collapsed completely not because the Senior Pastor was not anointed but simply because he did not have administrative helpers to put structures in place to contain the rapid growth of the ministry. It may be important or worthwhile to mention here that administrative helpers must see their calling as important as that of pastoral helpers. Not everybody is called to the "pulpit ministry" but surely you can be called to keep the man of God in the pulpit.

Even Animals Had Help

Out of all of God's creation it was only man who did not have help. The cattle, the birds and indeed every beast you can think of had a helper. Only man was without help from the beginning and God saw it necessary to rapidly provide him help.

And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

Genesis 2:20

The Help an Assistant Gives Must Be Genuine

It is important for an assistant pastor to offer genuine help and not have ulterior motives as he serves under his Senior Minister. He must not seek to make himself popular and think that his help is indispensable. Many Senior Pastors are like David who was unsure of the help that some people came to offer him. When a ministry is in its infantile stage it is not difficult to know the motive of assistant pastors. After all, there will be nothing in the ministry that is attractive anyway. However as a ministry grows, people come in to offer help in various areas. I cannot begin to count the number of

ministers who have brought their CV's desiring to work in our ministry. Some of them even brought pictures and DVD's to show us how anointed and powerful they are and what great assets they would be to the ministry. Others have come as music experts with the prowess to build first class orchestras. I have learnt from my Senior Pastor not to be impressed with talents but rather to be attracted to faithful people.

Before David became the king of Israel he had only hooligans and debtors as his helpers and they made him their captain.

The Message Bible says in 1 Samuel Chapter 22 verse 1-2:

"So David got away and escaped to the Cave of Adullam. When his brothers and others associated with his family heard where he was, they came down and joined him. Not only that, but all who were down on their luck came around - losers and vagrants and misfits of all sorts. David became their leader..."

God blessed and prospered David and he ended up becoming the king of the whole of Israel. Suddenly his ministry becomes attractive to many people who want to now come and offer their help.

And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the hold unto David.

1 Chronicles 12:16

It is important for every Senior Pastor to confront anybody who comes to assist with David's words, "...If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you: but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it" (1 Chronicles 12:17).

The Assistant Pastor's Pledge

What Amasai said in response to David's query is what must be the pledge of every assistant pastor.

Then the spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.

1 Chronicles 12:18

Dear Assistant Pastor, if we will play our role effectively and humbly there will be a great blessing that would come into our lives and ministries. May our ministries be delivered because we were there to help. But the truth is before you came God was already at work anyway so no assistant must feel indispensable.

...for thy God helpeth thee...

1 Chronicles 12:18

Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.

Psalm 22:11

Ministry Needs Many Helpers

As a ministry grows there may be need for more than one or two assistants. The number of helpers coming in will depend on the size and diversity of the church or ministry. Some ministries are purely church based. Others have several wings like evangelistic, social help, education and medical. Some ministries may just run a single church system whilst others may have multiple branches. Others may even develop into a whole denomination.

All these variations in the ‘ministry type’ determine the number and type of helpers that will be needed to fulfil their God-given mandate.

Chapter 6

The Assistant Pastor as Likened to a Wife

Another way an assistant pastor can be described in relation to his Senior Pastor is the role that a wife plays in her husband's life.

When God created man he was alone and God in His infinite wisdom decided to make for him a help meet.

And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

Genesis 2:18

The word "help" here is from the Greek word "ay-zer" which means to surround, to protect, to aid, to help and to succour.

The assistant pastor must see himself as surrounding, protecting, aiding, helping and providing succour to his Senior Pastor.

Five Ways an Assistant Pastor Is Likened to a Wife

1. An assistant who observes the principle of leaving and cleaving is like a good wife.

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Genesis 2:24

An assistant pastor must have a mind of having left all former close associations or mentors in order to bond well with his Senior Pastor. IT IS A SHAME TO SEE ASSISTANT PASTORS BELIEVE IN OTHER MEN

OF GOD AND FOLLOW THEIR MINISTRIES INTENTLY WHILST THEY DO NOT HAVE MUCH REGARD FOR THEIR SENIOR PASTOR AND HIS WORDS. To play the role of the assistant pastor well you must not only gladly leave all others but you must also make an effort to cleave. How would you feel if your wife is closely in touch with all her previous suitors, regularly spending long hours with them on the phone? Would you not doubt the genuiness of her love for you? Some assistant pastors however, behave like a wife who is still clinging to other suitors but has not bonded well with the one she is married to. An assistant must be seen to be unflinchingly loyal to his Senior Pastor.

2. An assistant must be as open and tranparent as a wife is expected to be to her husband.

A wife is expected to be thoroughly open to her husband and vice versa. An assistant pastor must be equally transparent to his Senior Pastor. He must not have clandestine moves. As an assistant pastor, anytime I am invited to minister in any church especially outside my denomination it is very important to me that I have the blessing of my Senior Pastor. I know for a fact that my Senior Pastor will not object to my going to preach elsewhere. However, it is indecent for him to hear of my engagements from another source. Furthermore, I have even made it a personal practice to inform him of the honorarium I am given.

In every city and/or country there may be many ministerial bodies or organizations. An assistant pastor or branch pastor should not be affiliated to any such body without the express consent of the Senior Pastor. An assistant pastor must be open to the Senior Pastor on not only official lines but on all fronts as well - this should include marital, domestic as well as financial issues. He must be the first to know any marital challenges you have.

And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Genesis 2:25

3. An assistant must develop the good qualities of a virtuous wife.

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

Proverbs 31:10

The New American Standard Version uses the term *an excellent wife* in the place of the virtuous woman. If a wife can be excellent then an assistant can also be excellent in his duty to the Senior Pastor.

Just like a virtuous wife an assistant needs to have the following qualities:

- **He must be trustworthy.**

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

Proverbs 31:11

The assistant pastor should not give his Senior Pastor any reason to doubt his loyalty. He will not stab him in the back.

- **An assistant must offer continuous help.**

She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

Proverbs 31:12

If anybody is going to be a source of trouble and pain to the Senior Pastor it must not be you, his assistant. You must seek to always look for ways to take off some of the extra burden. How come when the Senior Pastor is rebuking church members who come to church late you are also on the list? When others are doing your Senior Pastor evil; grumbling and murmuring, you should be clearly on the other side, praising and honouring him.

- **An assistant must always honour his leader publicly.**

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

Proverbs 31:23

A virtuous wife seeks to give her husband a good public image by ensuring that he is properly dressed and ready for every occasion. An assistant pastor may not have the right and authority to choose what his Senior Pastor wears but can help a great deal in honouring him publicly. At public functions he should ensure that he is properly seated and well introduced if need be.

- **An assistant must speak with wisdom.**

She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

Proverbs 31:26

It's a blessing to have a wife who does not nag but rather speaks words of wisdom and encouragement. Senior Pastors are decision makers and you will be of great benefit to them if you make thoughtful and wise contributions. It is difficult to relate closely with someone who is "deaf and dumb" and does not make any contributions at all on any subject. He must make discussions lively not only by listening but also by talking. Like a wife, an assistant pastor should not be rude when talking but must speak gently and respectfully to his Senior Pastor.

4. An assistant must remain in a position of submission to his leader.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

Ephesians 5:22

One of the most beautiful qualities in every wife is submission. Submission has a way of making a wife so attractive; more than any facial make up can. I have met some wives whose husbands literally hate them. These ladies, some of whom are as beautiful as the sun and as radiant as the stars and as

gorgeous as the moon, are however so difficult to control. They never yield! They never surrender! They never comply! They never give in! They never give up! They never assent! Their outward beauty does not matter anymore to their husband. An assistant pastor must be submissive to his own pastor just as a wife must be to her own husband.

IN LIKE manner, you married women, be submissive to your own husbands [subordinate yourselves as dependent being secondary to and on them, and adapt yourselves to them], so that even if any do not obey the Word [of God], they may be won over not by discussion but by the [godly] lives of their wives,

When they observe the pure and modest way in which you conduct yourselves, together with your reverence [for your husband; you are to feel for him all that reverence includes: to respect, defer to, revere him--to honor, esteem, appreciate, prize, and, in the human sense, to adore him, that is, to admire, praise, be devoted to, deeply love, and enjoy your husband.

Let not yours be the [merely] external adorning with [elaborate] interweaving and knotting of the hair, the wearing of jewelry, or changes of clothes;

But let it be the inward adorning and beauty of the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible and unfading charm of a gentle and peaceful spirit, which [is not anxious or wrought up, but] is very precious in the sight of God.

1 Peter 3: 1-4 (Amplified Bible)

Some assistants are very submissive to and only listen to the counsel of Archbishops or Prophets in another denomination but to their own pastor they are unyielding, rude and arrogant.

5. An assistant must work hard to help his leader to be fruitful.

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

Genesis 4:1

Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.

Psalm 128:3

One of God's outstanding blessings that come with marriage is fruitfulness (the bearing of children). Children can only be produced by means of the most intimate relationship between couples. When Rebekah was sent to be a wife to Isaac, her siblings pronounced the highest form of blessing on her life.

And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

Genesis 24:60

An assistant pastor who plays his role well will lead the ministry to flourish greatly as Rebekah did for Isaac. The Senior Pastor is like a husband who has a seed, looking for a fertile womb to receive it. If the assistant pastor understands and receives his Senior Pastor's vision well and runs with it, the ministry can grow beyond anybody's wildest imagination.

I can say without a shadow of doubt that my pastor, Bishop Dag Heward Mills is a great visionary. He has the grace to hear from God and has wonderful and spiritual ideas for leadership and ministry. He however needed fertile wombs to receive this vision and indeed God has blessed him with many assistant pastors, branch pastors and helps ministers who believe in his vision, have received it, conceived and brought forth fruits. This has resulted in Lighthouse Chapel International evolving into a denomination of over a thousand two hundred churches today; spread all over the world, with other para-church ministries as well.

My dear friend, my prayer for you is that God will open your eyes to see that seed of greatness in your "husband in ministry" and that you will have a "fertile womb" that will bring increase.

Six Fertile Wombs that Led to Great Fruitfulness

i. Sarah, Mother of Jesus

God called Abraham and promised to make his seed a great nation but Abraham needed the womb of his "assistant" Sara to fulfil this promise.

For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

Genesis 21:2

ii. Rebekah, Mother of Esau and Jacob

God's promise to build great nations through Isaac was to be fulfilled through the opening of Rebekah's womb.

And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

Genesis 25:21

And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

Genesis 25:23

iii. Rachael and Leah, Mothers of the Tribes of Israel

God's promise to Jacob to make his descendants into a great nation was to be fulfilled through the wombs of assistants Rachael and Leah.

...The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem:

Ruth 4:11

And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.

Genesis 30:1

iv. The Mother of Samson

God was about to deliver the people of Israel who had been held captive by the Philistines for forty years but it was important that the womb of "Senior Pastor" Manoah's assistant be fertile for the deliverer Samson to come forth.

And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

Judges 13:3

For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

Judges 13:5

v. Hannah, Mother of the Prophet Samuel

The son of Elkanah, Samuel, who was to be an outstanding prophet, was to be formed in the womb and through the prayers of "Assistant Pastor" Hannah.

And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

1 Samuel 1:11

vi. Elisabeth, Mother of John the Baptist

High priest Zacharias received a promise from an angel sent by the Lord. However, his assistant Elisabeth's womb had to be prepared and made ready for the arrival of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus.

But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Luke 1:13-17

For all these women, God had great intentions to make them part of history and no wonder the devil also fought so hard to keep their wombs barren.

Dear assistant, the word of the Lord received by your Senior Pastor and transmitted to your receptive heart can lead to amazing prophecies being fulfilled in our time. Stay on your course; don't give up because of a season of barrenness. God is about to visit your ministry in a spectacular way. Remain faithful. Hold on to the vision of your Senior Pastor! The clouds are gathering. The rain is about to fall!

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.

Proverbs 18:22

The word "wife" in this verse is the Greek word *ay-zer* (to help, aid, succour, surround, protect). Therefore it will not be inappropriate to read this verse as, "whoso findeth an assistant findeth a good thing and obtaineth the favour of the Lord."

May your Senior Pastor feel favoured because he found you.

House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife(assistant) is from the LORD.

Proverbs 19:14

Chapter 7

The Assistant as an Armour Bearer

Another description of an assistant in the Bible is as an armour bearer. This is a term that was used in the times when kings fought in battles. The king had a personal assistant who would carry his weapons and stand with him throughout every battle. Saul and Jonathan are two clear examples of leaders who had armour bearers.

The description of the armour bearers show that they are personal assistants and helps ministers.

Saul's Armour Bearer

And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.

Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.

And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me.

Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him.

And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer.

And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight.

And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

1 Samuel 16:15-18,21-23

Ten Facts about an Armour Bearer

1. An armour bearer must be completely devoted to his leader.

An armour bearer must be totally dedicated to the service of his Senior Pastor. The greater and the best part of your time should be solely devoted to serving and working with your Senior Pastor. He should not be made to accept a tithe or a small portion of your working time. A singer or instrumentalist who ministers with the Senior Pastor must not engage himself with so many other assignments and invitations in the city or elsewhere.

He must know and understand that his total dedication should be to the Senior Pastor he is working with.

Then David came to Saul and attended him...

1 Samuel 16:21 NASB

2. An armour bearer must see his closeness to the leader as a privilege.

Not everybody will have the rare privilege of being close to the man of God you serve. An armour bearer must always see himself honoured to have the opportunity to be so close to the man of God. Thousands of people would want to sit in the chair he sits on. Never take your place for granted.

...and Saul loved him greatly...

1 Samuel 16:21b NASB

3. An armour bearer must see that he has been favoured and chosen.

Favour is divine. It is God who makes somebody have a special liking for another. To love somebody is a command. To like somebody is a choice. I am very grateful to God that of the many people my Senior Pastor could have chosen to assist him I was numbered among the worthy. My Senior Pastor's family background and mine are so different that it is amazing that God placed a liking for me in his heart.

...Let David now stand before me for he has found favor in my sight.

1 Samuel 16:22 NASB

4. An armour bearer must be ready at all times to respond to duty.

An armour bearer must be available to serve and even at short notices. The Senior Pastor must not feel he is inconveniencing his armour bearer at any time when his services are needed.

So it came about that whenever the evil spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the harp and play it with his hand...

1 Samuel 16:23 NASB

5. An armour bearer must be one who relieves his leader of undue stress.

The work of a pastor can be very stressful. Preparing to preach and preaching alone is full of tension. This is why the armour bearer must seek to take the other aspects of the ministry like administration. The Senior Pastor should be relieved of as many distractions as possible.

...and Saul would be refreshed and be well...

1 Samuel 16:23 NASB

6. An armour bearer must be a skillful assistant.

Every man of God needs people who have a special skill around him. A pastor planning to build will need architects or building engineers to assist and support the vision. He may also need accountants and professional secretaries to help the organization to have a strong footing. It is said of William Branham that his ministry never moved to a certain level not because he was not anointed but because he did not have administrators to provide a support base. These professional people should not control the Senior Pastor nor impede his vision. He should have versatile yet malleable assistants around him.

...who is a skillful musician...

1 Samuel 16:18 NASB

7. An armour bearer must be willing to fight battles on behalf of his leader.

Ministry is fighting and every man of God needs people who are willing to fight. Some assistant pastors like to look good in the eyes of others and therefore when there are issues relating with people they leave their Senior Pastor to fight all alone.

...a mighty man of valour, a warrior...

1 Samuel 16:18 NASB

8. An armour bearer must be discreet to avoid causing difficulty for his leader.

A blabber mouth is a risky person to be around you. A person without discretion can redescribe an incident that will completely erode the respect that people have for the Senior Pastor. David would see Saul tormented by evil spirits but it would be extremely inappropriate for him to talk about it in public. We do not have any account of David discussing Saul's peculiar problems outside the palace.

...one prudent in speech...

1 Samuel 16:18 NASB

9. An armour bearer must always make himself presentable.

Sometimes the Senior Pastor or the leader looks smart and presentable whilst those around him look shabby and like hooligans. Assistants must be a good reflection of their Senior Pastors in the way they dress and present themselves. The Senior Pastor must not feel embarrassed to invite them to come along with him. They must be well shaven, not sweaty all the time and must have a good, decent, general appearance.

...a handsome man...

1 Samuel 16:18

10. An armour bearer must be a spiritual person.

The most important quality of an armour bearer is his closeness to God. The work of ministry is a spiritual, not a social activity. An assistant should be prayerful and deep into the Word. He must be able to contribute positively during counselling sessions with sound biblical interjections. The spirituality of a person is also seen when asked to lead public prayer.

...and the Lord is with him.

1 Samuel 16:18

Six Lessons to Learn from Jonathan's Armour Bearer

And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few.

And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart...

And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armourbearer slew after him.

And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armourbearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow.

1 Samuel 14:6-7, 13-14

In this passage we discover some important qualities of a good armour bearer.

1. An armour bearer must not seek to be conspicuous.

The name of Jonathan's armour bearer is not even mentioned. Then Jonathan said to the young man who was carrying his armor...

1 Samuel 14:6 NASB

2. An armour bearer must be willing to follow his pastor through difficult places and in challenging times.

Between the passes by which Jonathan sought to cross over to the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp crag on the one side and a sharp crag on the other side... Then Jonathan said to the young man, who was carrying his armor, Come and let us cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised...

1 Samuel 14:4, 6 NASB

...then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet with his armor bearer behind him.

1 Samuel 14:13 NASB

3. An armour bearer follows the leader even when the leader is unsure of the future.

There are times in every man of God's life when he is not so certain about his own decision.

...come let us cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; perhaps the Lord will work for us...

1 Samuel 14:4 NASB

4. An armour bearer is a great encourager to his leader; he urges him to go on.

His armor bearer said to him "Do all that is in your heart..."

1 Samuel 14:7 NASB

5. An armour bearer shows unflinching support to his leader.

His armor bearer said to him " Do all that is on your heart; turn yourself, and here I am with you according to your desire."

1 Samuel 14:7 NASB

6. An armour bearer stands with his pastor and fights the enemy. He is not a daft follower.

...and they fell before Jonathan, and his armor bearer put some to death after him.

1 Samuel 14:13 NASB

Saul was at the end of his life and enemies had come up against him. He implored his armour bearer to kill him but he refused.

And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers.

Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.

1 Samuel 31:3-4

A final word of caution to all who have been called to be armour bearers to these great and anointed men of God: Never take advantage of your closeness to your pastor to hurt him or strike him. There may be times when he may be frail and feel very vulnerable to you. It is still not your right to join forces with the enemy and finish him off.

Chapter 8

The Assistant as an Armour Bearer

The work of the Holy Spirit can also be likened to the role of an assistant. The Bible gives various descriptions of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Father and the Son. These descriptions aptly describe the role an assistant pastor must play in relation to the Senior Pastor.

Six Roles of The Holy Spirit (Assistant Pastor)

1. The Holy Spirit as an assistant reveals the seven attributes of God.

And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

Isaiah 11:2

i. Spirit of the Lord

ii. Wisdom

iii. Understanding

iv. Counsel

v. Might

vi. Knowledge

vii. Fear of the Lord

Just as the Holy Spirit reveals the attributes of God, the total assistant pastor must have a mind to fulfil all the above roles. He should desire these

sterling qualities in his life so that he can fully and appropriately represent God and his Senior Pastor.

2. The Holy Spirit as an assistant teaches and brings into remembrance all that the Father has said.

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 14:26

A good assistant pastor teaches and emphasizes his Senior Pastor's message. If the Senior Pastor has written a book the assistant or branch pastor must be able to take it and preach it with strength like his own message.

There are times when the assistant pastor may be called upon to close a meeting after the Senior Pastor has preached. At such times he should seek to emphasize the salient points of the message. This has a way of strengthening the import of the message. He should not bring a totally different and unrelated revelation or even some Scriptures he thought should have been used in the sermon, just to create an impression that he would have done a better job.

3. The Holy Spirit as an assistant affirms Christ as the Son of God.

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

John 15:26

When you meet a good assistant pastor you can easily know who his Senior Pastor is. Some Assistant Pastors are too proud to let anybody know where they came from and who taught them what they know; that is why nobody would use them as a point of reference.

4. The Holy Spirit as an assistant does not draw attention to Himself.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

John 16:13

An assistant pastor must always desire to project his Senior Pastor above himself. When the simple-minded begin to sing his praises: "Saul has killed a thousand, David ten thousand" he should immediately correct them. Long before David fought his first battle, Saul had fought and won so many battles.

5. The Holy Spirit as an assistant reveals the Father's vision.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

John 16:13

Through the ministry of the assistant pastor the vision must become clearer to the congregation. There comes division when the assistant pastor also has his own vision and seeks to project it parallel to the Senior Pastor's vision in the same ministry. The assistant pastor must make the vision very "plain" for the church to run with it and any other agenda anyone else may have will be exposed. It is amazing how the vision and direction for a church change when the founder is no more because there are no pastors to make the vision plain. A denomination in my country, the Church of Pentecost which started many years ago and whose founder passed on a long time ago has kept its vision up till today. This is because there were associate pastors who made the Founder's vision plain. The church, whose main vision was evangelism when it was birthed, is today just as evangelistic as it was when the Founder was alive.

And the LORD answered me, and said, write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.

Habakkuk 2:2

6. The Holy Spirit as an assistant directs people to the Father.

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Galatians 4:6

When a pastor is sent to start a branch church, he needs to ensure that the Senior Pastor does not become a stranger in his own church. There are churches where the members do not even know the founder's name. A good branch pastor, however, will let his church members be properly connected to the founder and Senior Pastor through the books he has written and his teaching. One can understand why in every embassy the picture of the President is conspicuously displayed; so you know who they represent.

Chapter 9

The Assistant Pastor as a Son

Fatherhood and sonship in ministry is one of the most important relationships that a Senior Pastor can have with his assistant. Anointing, like inheritance is often passed from father to son.

Introduction of a Son

In the Bible, every notable person was introduced in relation to his father. A father serves as a point of reference.

The first introduction of David, the great warrior to Saul was as a son. That far outweighed any gift he had.

Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him.

1 Samuel 16:18

The New Testament opens with the introduction of Jesus Christ as a son.

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Matthew 1:1

The two pastoral letters of 1st and 2nd Timothy were written by Paul to the young pastor whom he could confidently refer to as son.

Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Timothy 1:2

To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Timothy 1:2

Sons Do the Will of Their Fathers

When it was time for God's greatest work on earth to be done He did not send even an angel. The one He could trust to follow through and accomplish the most humiliating and yet the greatest act of deliverance was His Son.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Matthew 1:21

But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Galatians 4:4-5

Thank God for prophets like Moses, Elijah and Isaiah who accomplished great feats in their days. However, what they did can in no way be compared to what the Son accomplished for his Father.

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Romans 8:3

The most popular verse in the Bible talks about the work that the Son was sent to do.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

There comes a time in a Senior Pastor's life and ministry when he does not necessarily need a gifted or talented person. All he may need is a yielding son who can be trusted with his God- given mandate.

Church under Attack

I remember some years back our church was under attack by assailants in the community where the church was located; they threw petrol bombs into the church and burnt fires around the church premises. There were times when they besieged the church such that none could come in nor go out. Finally, they managed to involve the political powers of the day to break down the fence wall of the church. My Senior Pastor's life was constantly under threat; there were times he had to be escorted home by several police vehicles. When it became necessary for the church's side of the story to heard, it was not advisable for the Senior Pastor to speak to the media himself. It was his sons, my colleague and I who had to be sent to address the issue on both television and radio networks.

A Son's Authority Is Derived from His Father

The son's mandate and authority emanates from the father. Without the father's backing and support a son knows that he is helplessly hopeless.

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

John 5:19

Every son must seek and desire the endorsement of his father. It gives validity and credibility to the son's ministry and his message.

While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

Matthew 17:5

Some assistant pastors feel adequate, sufficient and capable by themselves. They claim they do not need the input and endorsement of their spiritual fathers to do well. Some people start their own ministry and cut all links and association with the church they came out of and with their spiritual father who has invested into them.

One pastor who started his own ministry told his Senior Pastor who had nurtured him for many years that, "I don't need you and you don't need me."

There is no statement as ignorant and arrogant as this.

Dear friend, our words will carry more weight and will also go very far if we would crave the blessing of our fathers. Each time I am invited to minister outside my church I crave for the prayers and blessing of my Senior Pastor. I do not want to think that I am a pastor in my own right and I can do without his blessing. I have been invited to several places to minister just because of what my Senior Pastor has said about me. I once asked a pastor of a large church in the United Kingdom why he invited me. He said he was in a conference where my Senior Pastor preached and the positive comments he made about me in his sermon made him feel I was a good person and had something to offer to his congregation as well as to his assistants.

Even Demons Know the Authority of The Son

And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

Matthew 8:29

The Disciples Also Knew the Authority of the Son

Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

Matthew 14:33

After moving with Jesus for a while, Peter could confidently stand and say, "Thou art Christ the Son of the Living God."

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Mathew 16:16

Nothing could make the disciples turn away from Jesus Christ.

Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

John 6:67 - 69

May you give your father so much pleasure and joy that he will say of you, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased!"

A Son Relates Closely to His Father

All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Mathew 11:27

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

John 3:11-13

The closer you are to your father the more he reveals himself to you. It is a privilege and an honour to be brought close. Closeness is achieved by constantly hearing a person's voice. There are some assistant pastors who may be far away because they are branch pastors but are very close spiritually, because they listen to their father's voice all the time through the messages they listen to constantly. You know a person better by what he says not by what he eats. Seek to hear your pastor's voice regularly by audio, video or any other means.

You may be amazed how you would get to know him better and receive many revelations that you would otherwise have missed. In your quest to be close, know that certain things are your Senior Pastor's preserve and you don't need to know and see everything. Do not be nosy and too inquisitive. Be content with what the Senior Pastor is prepared to share and be grateful for that privilege.

Even Jesus the Son of God admitted that He does not and need not know everything.

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Mathew 24:36

However, a real son always has inside information.

For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

John 5:20

A son is deemed to be close enough to the father and thus has access to extra information that the ordinary person may not have.

Among the disciples Peter, James and John were closer to Jesus. They had the privilege of seeing things that the others did not. At the transfiguration it was these three who saw Jesus in all His divine glory. This gave validity to their future ministries. Peter wrote later on and said,

For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

2 Peter 1:17&18

John also wrote and said,

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of life.

1 John 1:1

These three were also privileged to see Jesus raise Jairus' daughter from the dead. However, they were also honoured enough to see Jesus in His frailty. In the garden of Gethsemane He took these three again to stand with Him in prayer at the most difficult point in His life.

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Matthew 26:36-41

Timothy was a close son to Paul; close enough to experience Paul's lifestyle and his experiences in ministry.

But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

2 Timothy 3:10-11

Nine Things That a Son Will Be Privileged to See

i. Teaching

ii. Lifestyle

iii. Purpose

iv. Faith

v. Endurance

vi. Love

vii. Patience

viii. Persecutions

ix. Sufferings

A Son Looks Like His Father

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

John 14:9

When you see a real son what would usually strike you about him is a close semblance to his father. Many fathers take pride that their sons look like them physically. When a child does well in school a father is quick to take the honour. As a father I delight in seeing my sons wear my clothes, neck ties and shoes. It gives me the feeling that the child likes what I like and wants to look like me. I know some people who admire their spiritual fathers so much that they even cut their hair the same style as theirs. One person wanted to wear fake eye glasses so that he would look like his spiritual father.

An assistant pastor who is a real son must seek to be like his spiritual father. It is pride that would make an assistant want to look like an original. Many people have ridiculed assistant pastors who desire to be like their Senior Pastors as copy cats. Someone even referred to one such assistant pastor as a "clone", simply because the assistant pastor was preaching messages the Senior Pastor had preached and with the same style and emphasis of preaching as well. Such comments have a way of diminishing the desire of sons to seek to look like their fathers.

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

Acts 4:13

The disciples did not have any apology for preaching so boldly and powerfully like Jesus. Indeed their style of delivery was so similar to Jesus' style that everybody around admitted that they had been with Jesus.

And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilaean, and thy speech agreeth thereto.

Mark 14:70

When Peter was denying Christ it was difficult to hide his identity because he had been with Jesus for so long that the way he spoke even gave him away. Dear assistant pastor, may you rejoice on the day you are referred to as being or looking like your Senior Pastor.

A Son Does What His Father Is Doing

Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

John 5:19

Jesus was frank and honest enough to admit that He could do nothing without the Father's initiative. For Him to do well He had to closely watch every move the Father made and follow suit. This was after Jesus had healed the man who had been lying by the pool for thirty-eight years. The question is why did Jesus not heal everybody at the pool? The answer is He could only do what He saw the Father do.

We should not overstretch ourselves and act as if we are more anointed and more merciful than our father. Jesus could only heal whom the Father was healing and touch only whom the Father was touching. If you belong to a ministry you should clearly seek to understand both the bigger and smaller visions of the leader.

In the ministry where I belong the head of the ministry who is my spiritual father has a bigger vision of soul winning and evangelism. His main thrust of teaching is on doing the work of God. As a son I must buy into that vision. I cannot stand and say that my vision in ministry is prosperity and deliverance. Although such a vision may be biblical, it is at variance with the vision of the house where I claim to belong and, therefore, I cannot claim to be doing what my father is doing.

The father of the ministry may also give a yearly vision or direction for the church. At the last service of every year my Bishop gives the vision and direction of the ministry for the coming year. For example, at one such time he declared the following year to be "A Year of Quiet Time". This meant that, for that particular year the emphasis was on daily personal Bible Study and growing in the Word. As an assistant or branch pastor it will be absurd or out of place to announce to your church that God has told you that the vision of the year is "A Year of Supernatural Marriages".

A Son Is Very Loyal to His Father

And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

John 8:35

Many people come to work in the ministry with different motives. Some come to be trained and then go off to start their own work. Others come to gain some public endorsement so that they can use it for their own selfish personal aggrandizement. There are yet others who come with their hands lifted up, ready to totally abandon themselves for the ministry. The last category of people can be classified as sons and daughters of the ministry. They come with an attitude of permanence.

In my home, I have had many helpers. Some have stayed with me for over ten years. Others have stayed for as short as two days. They leave for different reasons. Some leave because they cannot accept correction, while others leave in search of greener pastures. In this same house my children live with me. I have rebuked or even spanked them on many occasions.

However, none of them has ever dared to pack their bag and baggage to leave home permanently. That is what it means to be a son. Indeed, a son abides forever! If you get irritated easily or walk out on your father in ministry then perhaps you were never a son in the first place.

A Son Is Honoured Because of His Father

That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

John 5:23

The blessing of being a son is the respect and honour that is accorded you by others. In our ministry we send pastors and lay ministers to handle some of our branches. Such pastors are sent with the full endorsement and support of the Presiding Bishop. We expect everybody in the church to receive such pastors with the same honour they will give the father of the house if he had come himself. Some of these pastors may be unimpressive young people who have just finished school but are received as great men of God by the people they have been sent to. Sometimes they are respected in the city because of the banner of the church they operate under.

There have, however, been a few occasions where a few people have not been so warm towards these pastors who have been sent. We have had to rebuke and correct this act of disrespect and despisement sharply because we see these young and growing ministers as great gifts who can do well when allowed to flourish in a good environment.

Section 3

NOTABLE EXAMPLES OF ASSISTANTS

Chapter 10

Aaron, Moses' Assistant

1. Aaron is often referred to as Moses' brother. The phrase "Aaron, Moses' brother" appears ten times in the first five books of the Bible.

2. Aaron was called by God to step in when Moses complained that he did not know how to speak.

3. Moses' job was tough and he needed somebody by his side.

4.Moses was therefore the primary leader and Aaron shared in the divine authority to lead the people. It is not all assistant pastors who are trained and appointed by the Senior Pastor. Sometimes some come with a deep sense of personally hearing the call of God. Such assistant pastors are often gifted and talented. They have a deep sense of spirituality and can be of great assistance to their Senior Pastor if they can buy into his vision and flow fully.

5. Moses was the leader and the prophet and Aaron was the priest and had access to all the things in the tabernacle.

6. Gifted and talented assistant pastors like Aaron need to be extra careful because they can also be a great source of temptation and cause terrible disaster and embarrassment to themselves and to the ministry if they do not properly yield their seemingly divine mandate to the Senior Pastor.

How Helpful Was Aaron to Moses as an Assistant?

1. He stood with Moses through all the encounters and exchanges with Pharaoh.

2. He was the spokesman for Moses before Pharaoh.

And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

Exodus 4:16

3. It was Aaron and Hur who lifted up Moses' hand on the mountain to guarantee victory for the people of Israel at the battle of Rephidim.

But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

Exodus 17:12

Today's assistant pastor would rather that Moses sat down so that he also will lift his own hands. However, Aaron knew that victory was not in anybody just lifting their hands but specifically in Moses' anointed hands. Moses may have been tired but the anointing still resided in him and it was important not to take his human frailty for granted.

4. Aaron stood by Moses during the rebellion of Korah and he together with Moses interceded on behalf of the people of Israel.

And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.

And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the LORD, thou, and they, and Aaron, to morrow:

And take every man his censer, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the LORD every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; thou also, and Aaron, each of you his censer.

And they took every man his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron.

And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation.

And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

Numbers 16:15 -20

5. When God's judgement came on Nadab and Abihu the sons of Aaron because they offered strange fire to the Lord, Aaron stood by Moses and accepted God's judgement in spite of his family ties with the two gentlemen.

And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.

And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

Leviticus 10:1-3

Aaron's Mistakes

Aaron's greatest mistake occurred when Moses left the church in his care. As long as Moses was around Aaron did well. This is the reason why some Senior Pastors are unable to travel. Everything got out of control during the short period that Aaron was in charge.

And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?

Exodus 32:21

And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.

And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.

Exodus 32:30-31

1. Aaron led the people to break two of the ten commandments before the commandments arrived.

- Idolatry
- Immorality

2. Aaron gave excuses instead of accepting blame: he said it was the people who made the golden calf.

Any assistant pastor who allows the people to lead and take decisions for themselves is not worth his salt. Sometimes it is only when the Senior Pastor is not present that you see the value and strength of his leadership. Just one trip that Moses made led to confusion and total chaos in the church. An assistant pastor can be a people pleaser and give an impression that the Senior Pastor is too hard. Nothing erodes and destroys authority more than giving people what they want instead of what they need. There are times an assistant pastor can give the impression that he is the kind one who is more yielding and tolerant to the wants and feelings of the people.

3. Aaron gave another lame excuse that Moses stayed too long on the mountain.

An assistant pastor should be strong enough to allow the Senior Pastor to take some time off to either wait on the Lord or to break new grounds.

4. Aaron committed the sin of familiarity and criticism.

When Moses took an Ethiopian wife it was Aaron and Miriam who criticized Moses and embarrassed him.

And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it.

(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

Numbers 12:1-3

God Was Very Angry with Aaron and Miriam

And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed.

Numbers 12:9

An assistant pastor may have the privilege to be very close to the Senior Pastor but that does not open the door for him to show gross disrespect and criticize his Senior Pastor unduly.

Chapter 11

Elisha, Elijah's Assistant

Elisha's Call

And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria:

And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abelmeholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

1 Kings 19:15 -16

Elisha was called to assist Elijah and eventually take over as the outstanding prophet of Israel. Not every assistant pastor is called to be a successor to the Senior Pastor. To assist is different from being a successor. It is important for all assistant pastors not to nurse the idea of eventually taking over from their Senior Pastors. However, there may be occasions when someone is called and groomed to take over the leadership of the ministry. In this case this direct revelation must come to the Senior Pastor and not the assistant. There are times when a young minister feels a strong conviction that he has been called to be a successor to a "Senior Man of God". He has gone to introduce himself to this senior man of God and told him what revelation he has received from God. This is highly immature. God must first speak to the leader and if necessary confirm it to the young minister. There was no ambiguity about Elisha's call right from the onset. The mandate was clear.

Elisha's Outstanding Qualities

The story of Elisha reveals amazing and and sterling qualities that anybody who desires to be a good assistant must crave for.

1. Elisha as an assistant was a man of great energy.

So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.

1 Kings 19:19

The first time Elijah met Elisha he was directing twelve men with twelve yoke of oxen. That is hard work. If God is going to use you He often will not call you as you sit idle. There are some young people who believe God has called them into ministry and therefore refuse to go to school or engage in any secular job. They sit with arms folded waiting for the call to ministry. This is unfortunate. Till that door of ministry opens you should get yourself busy with whatever your hands find to do. Indeed, your secular training or job can be a great asset to your ministry.

You can understand why Elisha followed Elijah tirelessly. He was a man of great energy. An assistant pastor must have both the desire and energy to follow his Senior Pastor to the very end.

2. Elisha as an assistant was a decisive man.

And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?

And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

1 Kings 19:20 -21

When Elisha received the call he took a complete break from the past without any intention of turning back. When he killed his oxen and organized a send-off party for himself he was saying a decisive goodbye and stepping into a new life. He burnt his bridges.

And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Luke 9:62

Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Hebrews 10: 38 -39

An assistant pastor must be fully persuaded in his calling and about the person he has been called to assist and support. There are challenges and obstacles in ministry so without a decisive mind a young minister can easily give up along the way. From the time he went to say goodbye to his father there was never a mention of him again; Elijah became his father. He went from being the son of a wealthy farmer to being the son and servant of a "strange prophet".

...Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

1 Kings 19:21

This is decisiveness. He abandoned his natural implements "instruments of the oxen" (1 Kings 19:21) and rather sought for spiritual implements, Elijah's mantle!

3. Elisha as an assistant was a man of great perseverance.

In 2 Kings Chapter 2 we see a young prophet who could not be turned away from walking closely with his Senior Prophet. At every stage of this journey up to the time Elijah was taken up by chariots of fire, there were various attempts by different people including Elijah himself to discourage him from receiving a double portion of the anointing. You can never be a good leader if you are not a persistent follower. Elijah and Elisha came to Gilgal on the way to "the place".

Here Elijah tried to dissuade Elisha from going any further.

And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Bethel.

2 Kings 2:1 -2

Perhaps the prophet did not want to disturb or inconvenience Elisha. It was for Elisha to assure Elijah that he was too determined to give up.

When the two arrived in Bethel other pastors also tried to discourage the young associate from continuing his loyal ministry to his Senior Pastor.

And the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

2 Kings 2:3

Do not be surprised when other ministers tell you things that will make you break away from your Senior Pastor. You may be committing spiritual suicide if you adhere to such ungodly counsel.

I have had other ministers in our city who have tried to discourage me from following my Senior Pastor closely. By the grace of God I have not been moved.

Elijah and Elisha then followed on to Jericho, and again the pastors in the city tried to drive a wedge between them. Whether they were mocking Elisha or just informing him of what lay ahead, the ultimate aim was to make this man turn away from his master. Once again, this persevering man could not be perturbed!

The two finally got to Jordan where the sons of the Prophets were all watching to see the disastrous end of this stubborn and unyielding Elisha.

And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

2 Kings 2:7

Sometimes even believers and other ministers will look on to see what will become of your unflinching loyalty to your Senior Pastor. God rewards loyalty. As an assistant pastor do not allow what people say to affect you and discourage you from sticking to your Senior Pastor and the vision God has given him. Whatever God has promised you will come to pass as you exhibit unflinching allegiance to your pastor.

Eventually Elisha received a double portion of Elijah's anointing that he very much desired.

You can recognize a clear resemblance between Elijah's ministry and Elisha's. Nobody would doubt when they saw Elisha ministering that he had indeed been with Elijah.

Similarities Between the Ministries of Elijah and Elisha

1. Elijah parted the River Jordan and walked on dry ground. Elisha also parted the river Jordan and walked on dry ground.

And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

2 Kings 2:8

And he [Elisha] took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

2 Kings 2:14

2. Elijah prophesied rain in times of drought. Elisha also prophesied waters of refreshment in times of drought.

And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.

1 Kings 18:41

And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

1 Kings 18:45

And he [Elisha] said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of ditches.

For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts.

2 Kings 3:16-17

And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

2 Kings 3:20

3. Elijah blessed a widow's store of food. Elisha also blessed a widow who was in need with an abundance of oil.

And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD

sendeth rain upon the earth.

1 Kings 17:13-14

Then he [Elisha] said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.

So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed.

Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

2 Kings 4:3-7

4. Elijah raised a boy to life by lying on him. Elisha also raised the Shunamites' son from the dead by also lying on him.

And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him.

And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.

And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth.

And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.

1 Kings 17:17 -24

And he [Elisha] said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old. And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door.

And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine handmaid. And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.

And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.

2 Kings 4:14 -20

And he [Elisha] went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

2 Kings 4:34 -37

5. Elijah ministered to somebody who was outside the boundaries of Israel. Elisha also performed a miracle for someone who was not an Israelite.

Arise, get thee [Elijah] to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

1 Kings 17:9

For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.

And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.

1 Kings 17:14-16

Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper. And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife.

And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.

And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six

thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

2 Kings 5:1-6

And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

2 Kings 5:10 -14

6. Elijah pronounced judgement on King Ahab. Elisha also proclaimed judgement on King Benhadad.

And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him,

saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.

And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD. Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel,

And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin.

1 Kings 21:17-24

And Elisha came to Damascus; and Benhadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither.

And the king said unto Hazael, Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and enquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Benhadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die.

2 Kings 8:7 -10

7. Elijah called down vengeance on unbelieving soldiers. Elisha also declared vengeance on the unbelieving boys who mocked him.

Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto

him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

2 Kings1:9-12

And he [Elisha] went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.

And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.

2 Kings 2:23-24

These similarities teach us how an assistant pastor can so catch the anointing on the Senior Pastor. Not every successor is a success; however, Elisha is a great example of a successor who was a complete success.

Chapter 12

John the Baptist, Jesus' Assistant Pastor

John the Baptist is referred to as the forerunner of Jesus. Both were born at the same period and season. He was six months older than Jesus and they were closely related.

John was very sure of his calling and mandate. He can be conveniently described as an assistant minister to Jesus based on his own pronouncement and the understanding of his calling.

"He Must Increase"

He must increase, but I must decrease.

John 3:30

There were several attempts to provoke John to jealousy, rivalry and envy.

1. Andrew and John his disciples deserted him and followed Jesus after he pointed out to the crowds that Jesus was the one to come.

An assistant pastor must always have the goal of directing people to the Senior Pastor. I know some churches where the assistant pastors struggle over the few rich and noble people in the church in order to gain favours and financial blessings. They become personal pastors to these so called wealthy people and prevent them from having personal contact with the Senior Pastor. John directed people to Jesus. That must be the aim of every assistant pastor. He must direct people to the Senior Pastor.

2. John's disciples reported to him that Jesus' church was growing faster than his and the crowds were turning to him.

John was not perturbed at all. He could not be provoked to jealousy as he was sure of his divine calling. John's reply to the complainants was unambiguous.

John replied, "No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven. You yourselves know how plainly I told you, 'I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him.' ...He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less" (John 3:27, NLT).

3. John the Baptist called himself a voice in the wilderness crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord" (Mark 1:3).

However, we all know that Jesus is The Word.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

John 1:1-2

So John as a voice was echoing Jesus "The Word". Assistant pastors must aim at heralding and emphasizing the messages and ministry of the Senior Pastor. This avoids confusion in the mind of the simple-minded church member as to "who –is –who".

4. John referred to himself as the friend of the bridegroom (best man).

"The one who gets the bride is by definition the bridegroom. And the bridegroom's friend, his 'bestman' - that's me - in place at his side where he can hear every word, is genuinely happy. How could he be jealous when he knows the wedding is finished and the marriage is off to a good start?" (John 3:29, The Message Bible).

At every wedding the bride and the groom are the main focus and not the maid of honour or the best man. The best man is truly happy for his role in preparing the bride for the marriage. Every assistant pastor ought to see his role in the light of a best man to his Senior Pastor. Every honour, opportunity or an open door that comes to the Senior Pastor must make the

assistant pastor truly happy. I know an assistant pastor who was uncomfortable that the Senior Pastor got all the invitations for preaching engagements. He definitely did not understand the role of a best man!

5. John was referred to as “a light".

He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

John 5:35

Jesus described Himself as “the Light of the world”. So in every sense of the word Jesus was greater than John the Baptist and John did not struggle to accept this fact.

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 8:12

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

John 9:5

6. John had the privilege of baptizing Jesus.

However, he did not see this as a sign of authority over Jesus, for the less is blessed of the greater. He saw that he was not qualified even to untie the laces of Jesus’ shoes:

“And John tried to prevent him saying, I need to be baptized by you and are you coming to me” (Matthew 3:14, NKJV).

The Bible enjoins us to submit one to another. My Bishop has on more than one occasion given me the rare privilege and honour of praying for him in public. As he knelt before me I shuddered and trembled and could understand how John the Baptist felt when Jesus came to him to be

baptized. I knew it was not my place and my Senior Pastor had to literally beg me to accept this honour. Anytime a Senior Pastor gives a pre-eminent role to his assistant, the assistant pastor should never think it is because he is so anointed and qualified. He should rather count himself most privileged, blessed and undeserving of such an honour.

"I Must Decrease"

He must become greater, I must become less.

John 3:30 (NIV)

This is the assigned moment for him to move into the center while I slip off to the sidelines.

John 3:30 (The Message Bible)

The assistant pastor must aim at becoming LESS AND LESS VISIBLE and allow the Senior Pastor to become MORE AND MORE VISIBLE. Whilst Jesus moved from city to city preaching and healing John was content to stay at the back side of the desert. An assistant pastor must always have in mind that Christians are like sheep that must get used to the voice of their Shepherd. This is why the Senior Pastor preaches to the congregation all the time. His voice must be heard and known and recognized. A fulfilled assistant pastor will encourage the church members to obtain the messages preached by the Senior Pastor instead of promoting himself or his own messages.

"This My Joy Therefore Is Fulfilled"

He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

John 3:29

John was overjoyed to see Jesus' ministry doing well. Even when he was in the womb he leapt for joy when his mother Elisabeth heard the salutation of

Mary.

And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

Luke 1:41

The news about Jesus' ministry flourishing brought John his greatest joy. That was all he expected. I have discovered as an assistant pastor, that some of the events which have made me really happy have been milestones which occurred in the life of my Senior Pastor. For example, the day I heard a dead person had been brought to life through the ministration of my Bishop in Columbia I literally leapt for joy and screamed my head off like a mad man. It was unbelievable. I see my Senior Pastor's victories as my victories, his joy as my joy.

Another occasion that brought me ecstatic joy was several years ago when I received a phone call from Korea that he had been made a member of the Board of Church Growth International chaired by Dr Yonggi Cho, the pastor of the World's largest church. This board has on it some of the most renowned and experienced ministers in the world. So for my Senior Pastor to be a part of it and indeed the youngest member at that time was to me no mean achievement and honour.

John Almost Missed It!

John was however not a faultless assistant pastor. In Matthew Chapter 11 we find John languishing in prison for preaching one of his radical messages. Suddenly we see John's faith waning. He sent messengers to Jesus to ask him, "Are you the Messiah or should we expect another?" Amazing!

"Are you the one we've been expecting or are we still waiting?"

Matthew 11:3 (The Message Bible)

Sometimes in your walk with your Senior Pastor there may be seasons when the devil will throw doubts into your mind. You will wonder whether you heard right or saw well when God called you to stand by your Senior Pastor.

What could be the possible reasons that affected John's initial unwavering faith in Jesus?

- Perhaps John thought Jesus would preach judgement, hell fire and brimstone like he John had been doing. However, here comes Jesus preaching mercy and other soft-sounding messages like THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

  The shadows of many of the people who followed Jesus like Matthew, Zaccheus and Mary Magdalene could not have darkened the doorway of John's Church. These were first- class sinners. John's mandate was to herald the ministry of Jesus and to assist him to take off smoothly. Jesus' mandate was to seek and save that which was lost.

- Perhaps John thought Jesus would be fasting and screaming in the desert as he had been doing. But here comes Jesus eating and drinking at parties and weddings.

- Perhaps John expected "his Senior Pastor", Jesus, to come to his rescue and command the prison doors to be opened.

A reed shaken with the wind?

Matthew 11:7

Instead Jesus was moving in the villages preaching and teaching as if He did not care about John.

Jesus did not do it John's way!!! Could it be that John was affected by Jesus' style?

An ASSISTANT pastor is not an INSISTING pastor. He must always allow the Senior Pastor to be guided and directed by God. If the assistant pastor's

suggestions are overlooked by the Senior Pastor, it would be a gross sign of immaturity for him to recoil or become hurt.

In spite of John's shortcomings and the fact that his faith had waned, Jesus did not embarrass, disgrace or rebuke John in public when John sent someone to ask Jesus whether He was the Messiah. Jesus rather gave John the most glorious attribute any person would give. He was fiercely loyal to John; he defended John's style of ministry.

Five Ways Senior Pastor Jesus Defended His Assistant

1. Jesus said John was not a reed shaken by the wind. In other words, Jesus referred to John as a very stable person.

And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see?

Matthew 11:7

2. Jesus approved of John's style of dressing saying that it was suitable and appropriate for the occasion and fitted his calling.

But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

Matthew 11:8

3. Jesus said John was more than a prophet.

But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

Matthew 11:9

4. Jesus compared John to Elijah, one of the most revered prophets of all time.

For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

Matthew 11:10

5. Jesus declared that John was the greatest person ever born of women.

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Matthew 11:11

May your Senior Pastor have good reason to declare such blessings over your life, because of your faithfulness, dedication and loyalty.

May your Senior Pastor not have good reason to curse you because of the pain you have caused him and his ministry.

May your Senior Pastor never regret the day he met you and you became a part of his ministry team!

Chapter 13

Timothy, Paul's Assistant Pastor

Paul was blessed with several people who helped him in ministry. His calling and ministry was too large, diverse and dynamic for him to have only one associate pastor. A few of his assistant pastors included Barnabas his first partner. Silas and Luke were his travelling companions at a point. In all his letters Paul makes mention of several people who stood with him in ministry. However, Timothy stands out as Paul's most distinguished helper.

● HIS BACKGROUND

Paul first met Timothy in Lystra. His biological father was a Greek and his mother was a Jewish believer. Young Timothy was well spoken of by all the brethren and it is no wonder that Paul was attracted to him.

This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

1 Timothy 3:1-7

For Timothy to qualify as Paul's Assistant in a holistic manner he had to undergo the Jewish customary act of circumcision. Sometimes, an assistant pastor can be limited if he is not willing to adapt to suit the different facets his Senior Pastor's calling may entail. Paul was primarily called to the Gentiles but he would make incursions into Jewish territories and synagogues. He, therefore, needed an assistant who would be well fitted for all seasons and places.

There are some assistant pastors who relate with only the poor. When it comes to relating to the rich they are bereft of words. Some can also only relate with people of their own tribe, colour or race. Such assistant pastors can only go up to a certain point in their help to their Senior Pastor and their value is therefore woefully inadequate. Unwillingness to adapt or change can be a great barrier in your own ministry.

Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:

Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

Acts 16: 1-3

Timothy had also been brought up very well in the faith by his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois.

When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am

persuaded that in thee also.

2 Timothy 1:5

SEVEN WAYS TIMOTHY WAS USEFUL TO HIS SENIOR PASTOR

But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.

For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.

Philippians 2: 19 -24

Timothy served as Paul's ministry partner in his missionary journeys from Acts Chapter 16 onwards. It is believed that Paul dictated some of his letters to Timothy to write. He was in many ways very helpful to Paul as a committed and faithful assistant.

1. Timothy was "sendable".

When Paul wanted to know the condition of the church in Philippi it was Timothy that he was going to send.

But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

Philipians 2:19

2. Timothy had the same mind as his Senior Pastor, Paul had.

For I have no man likeminded...

Philippians 2:20a

3. Timothy had a genuine concern for the welfare of the congregation.

...who will naturally care for your state.

Philippians 2:20b

4. Timothy was not selfish.

For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

Philippians 2:21

5. Timothy's relationship to Paul was as a son to the father.

But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

Philippians 2:22

6. Timothy was a servant to Paul on his missionary journeys.

But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

Philippians 2:22

7. Timothy served sometimes as a forerunner to Paul in the places he visited.

Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly. Philippians 2:23-24

TIMOTHY AS A BRANCH PASTOR

Timothy is an example of a person who assists the senior minister directly and later assists indirectly by handling an aspect of the ministry. After travelling with Paul on several missionary journeys establishing churches in several cities in Asia, he was ordained as the bishop of the church in Ephesus.

As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

1 Timothy 1:3

Paul wrote two letters to Timothy instructing him on how to conduct himself and handle the affairs of the church Paul had started in Ephesus.

These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:

But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

1 Timothy 3:14 -15

I recommend that every assistant and branch pastor study these two classic epistles seriously.

Chapter 14

The Rise and Fall of Assistant Pastor Lucifer

In many ways Lucifer could be seen as one of God's assistants in Heaven. In this chapter we will learn about how he rose to that high office and the reason for his fall. This will be an eye opener for all assistants.

Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

Ezekiel 28:11-19

Although this passage makes reference to the King of Tyrus, by the law of double interpretation it is Lucifer that is being talked about here.

In verse 13 it mentions the person in the Garden of Eden but we know the King of Tyrus could not have been there.

The Rise of Lucifer

Lucifer is beautifully described in this passage.

1. Lucifer was an embodiment of perfection, just as an assistant may seem to be perfect.

...Thou sealest up the sum...

Ezekiel 28:12

God made Lucifer perfect and he was an expert in all areas. However, you and I know that none of us here on earth is perfect. Some people are not real. They give a façade of perfection. They are perfect spouses, they have a perfect marriage, and they are always happy and well. Ministry and finances are working so well. They never get angry. And on and on. I call such people, first class pretenders. It is “luciferic”.

2. Lucifer was the wisest of God’s creation. An assistant may exhibit a great amount of wisdom and knowledge.

...full of wisdom...

Ezekiel 28:12

The Bible enjoins us to pray for wisdom, the kind that comes from above. In this day and age, many people think being smart and outwitting someone

means you are wise. The Bible says there is a kind of wisdom that is earthly, unspiritual and devilish.

3. Lucifer was handsome, just as an assistant may look attractive and appealing.

...perfect in beauty...

Ezekiel 28:12

Be careful of strikingly beautiful ladies and smart looking guys who are so conscious of themselves and often use extra artificial stuff to look attractive and to draw attention to themselves. They could be Lucifer in a skirt or jacket.

4. Lucifer was there from the beginning. Many assistants have been with their Senior Pastors from the early days of the Ministry.

Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God...

Ezekiel 28:13

Often the people who have been around a man of God and the ministry from the beginning stand the risk of becoming familiar because they fail to realise or even see when the anointing has multiplied.

5. Lucifer was adorned with every precious jewel. An assistant may be endowed with many spiritual gifts.

...every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold...

Ezekiel 28:13

Elegant, glamourous, expensive and exotic. Lucifer was adorned with precious stones. All these are not bad. After all it was God who endowed him with them. The problem is how many people change with a little enhancement that God gives them. They become so high minded it is not funny.

6. Lucifer was skillful and gifted. A lot of assistants are gifted and talented.

...the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee...in the day that thou wast created.

Ezekiel 28:13

To be gifted is very different from a good character. Too many pastors and church members are swayed by somebody who appears on the scene and gives an electrifying performance on the stage. But remember that a "good name is better than even anointing" (Ecclesiastes 7:1).

7. Lucifer was not "self-made" - he was created. The office of the assistant has been created.

...in the day that thou wast created.

Ezekiel 28:13

It is a blessing to know you are a product of somebody. You owe your coming into existence to your biological parents. Your success in education may be due to some teachers you met in life who took their time to tutor you to understand some difficult subjects. Somebody led you to Christ. Somebody prayed for you and taught you many spiritual truths you know today. So many people have played major roles in your life. And of course God is the centre of your life. So in every sense of the word you were created.

8. Lucifer was very anointed. It is a blessing to have an assistant who is very anointed.

Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth...

Ezekiel 28:14

The anointing makes such a difference in the life of a minister. It is so beautiful to watch an anointed person ministering either in music or in preaching. Without the anointing a pastor teaching is no different from a secular teacher.

9. Lucifer was appointed. An assistant must always be conscious of the fact that he has been appointed.

...and I have set thee so...

Ezekiel 28:14

Lucifer's chair was given to him by God. He had no role to play in his selection. The best he could have done was to be humble and feel undeserving. Some assistant pastors feel and think they would have made it without the Senior Pastor, and even made it bigger. What a shocking way of thinking?

10. Lucifer had access to God's dwelling place. An assistant may be honoured to sit with important people by virtue of his position.

...thou wast upon the holy mountain of God...

Ezekiel 28:14

What a blessing to be chosen to dwell in GOD'S presence! To sit with great and important people is what we call honour.

11. Lucifer was almost invincible. A assistant may appear to have unlimited power and influence among the congregation.

...thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

Ezekiel 28:14

God endued him with such awesome power that could make anyone feel unconquerable. Sometimes when God blesses our ministry with miracles and supernatural power we easily forget that we are not God!

12. Lucifer had been a great success all of his life. An assistant may be very skillful and versatile.

Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created...

Ezekiel 28:15

Some people have golden hands. Anything they touch turns into gold. Any ministry area you commit into their care blossoms. They excel so often that they forget how to learn by failing.

What a blessing it is to have an assistant pastor who is so skillful and versatile. However, it has been proven over and over again that it takes more than gifts to be a faithful and good minister. The fundamental requirement of a minister is faithfulness, which surprisingly is not mentioned anywhere as part of Lucifer's attributes.

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

1 Corinthians 4:2

Most of the time it is the gifts and talents that end up destroying a minister. Lucifer perhaps forgot that he was created by God and appointed to sit on the chair he sat on.

...the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so...

Ezekiel 28:14

Reasons Why an Assistant Can Fall Just as Lucifer Fell

...till iniquity was found in thee.

Ezekiel 28:15

1. Lucifer was proud. An assistant should be careful not to be as proud as Lucifer was.

Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

Ezekiel 28:17

Gifted assistant ministers must be careful they do not get conceited. Sometimes ministers who lead praise and worship and usher people into the presence of God can easily have a sense of self-importance. Also prayer warriors and those with prophetic gifts find it difficult to assist faithfully because of the feeling of superiority and spirituality. Very talented singers also have the tendency of becoming over confident because of the admiration and praises they often receive from the congregation. All these categories of assistants need to be careful so that do not tread the path of Lucifer.

Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 16:18

A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.

Proverbs 29:23

2. Lucifer was discontented. An assistant should not follow Lucifer’s example of discontentment.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

Isaiah 14: 12-15

But godliness with contentment is great gain.

1 Timothy 6:6

There are some assistant pastors who are never satisfied with where they sit. They are often disgruntled and unappreciative of their place in the ministry. They want what the Senior Pastor has and are looking for an opportunity to take over the church. I was invited to a church once. The Senior Pastor had travelled and the assistant pastor was resting comfortably in the Senior Pastor's chair. He had crossed his legs and felt like the real lord of the church. It was not only his sitting in the chair that bothered me so much, but his attitude and the impunity with which he conducted himself. I could predict that this assistant pastor would break off from the church in the foreseeable future. It happened exactly two months after I left the church.

3. Lucifer was full of himself. An assistant should watch out lest he becomes as conceited as Lucifer was.

For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

Isaiah 14:14

You can see from this short passage above Lucifer's self- conceited desires. He had an exaggerated impression of himself and his abilities.

4. Lucifer was forgetful. An assistant should not suffer from the sin of forgetfulness.

Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so...

Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created...

Ezekiel 28:14-15

Lucifer, despite all his gifts, beauty, talents and anointing was not "a self-made" person. He was created! He had a beginning! He did not fall from the skies! Lucifer was also appointed to the position he had; the chief musician of Heaven. It is imperative for every assistant to realize that they have been appointed to the role. If you are appointed then you can also be removed. Do not have a feeling of being indispensable!

For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

1 Corinthians 4:7

No matter how long you stay in your office, never forget that you were placed there by somebody.

Forgetfulness is a canker that leads to ingratitude and ingratitude invariably leads to rebellion. Most rebellious people are forgetful.

5. Lucifer had self-deception. An assistant must not fall into the trap of self-deception as did Lucifer.

...I will be like the most High.

Isaiah 14:14

The success that Lucifer had and his beauty and wisdom made him think that he could be like God who had created him. No matter how "great" an assistant pastor is he should never think he is as good as or even better than his Senior Pastor.

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Romans 12:3

How an Assistant Can Fall as Lucifer Fell

By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

Ezekiel 28:16-19

Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

Isaiah 14:15-16

1. Lucifer was cast out of God's presence. An assistant may lose his position.

...therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God.

Ezekiel 28:16

2. Lucifer was destroyed. The life and ministry of an assistant may be destroyed.

...I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Ezekiel 28:16

3. Lucifer was cast to the earth. An assistant may lose his connection to his head.

...I will cast thee to the ground...

Ezekiel 28:17

4. Lucifer was humiliated. An assistant may end up in disgrace.

...I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

Ezekiel 28:17

5. Lucifer was devoured by fire. An assistant may end up in destruction.

...therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee...

Ezekiel 28:18

6. Lucifer was destroyed beyond recognition. An assistant may become a nonentity.

...and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

Ezekiel 28:18

7. Lucifer's end shall be appalling. The end of an assistant's ministry may be shameful.

All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror...

Ezekiel 28:19

8. Lucifer was no more remembered on this earth. An assistant may fall into oblivion.

...and never shalt thou be any more.

Ezekiel 28:19

9. Lucifer shall be brought down to Hell. An assistant can actually end up in Hell.

Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

Isaiah 14:15

10. Lucifer's end was astonishment. What a shock! An assistant may have an equally shocking end.

...Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?

Isaiah 14:16

Dear assistant pastor, the less I comment about the fall of Lucifer the better it will be for all of us. As they say, “res ipsa loquitor” which means “the matter speaks for itself”. Let us pray for ourselves that as we have received mercy we will not faint!

Chapter 15

The Branch Pastor

The ministry of the branch pastor must always be seen in the same light as the office of an assistant pastor. As a ministry or church expands it becomes necessary to have extensions of the ministry at different locations. Every flourishing business has outlets that help it to reach more people and therefore increase its capacity.

If we look around we see fast food operators like McDonalds and KFC expanding in an attempt to reach the remotest places of the world. Financial institutions like Barclays Bank Ltd. and Standard Chartered Bank Ltd. have a worldwide reach. If the world deems it necessary to reach out and expand its customer base by ensuring it has branches everywhere, then what makes the church think it can fulfil its mandate of reaching the whole world without applying this principle.

Many pastors are afraid to go beyond their church to establish branches either in their locality or city. How much more rising up to become national or international in their operations. It looks like "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of the kingdom."

And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

Luke 16:8

There are several reasons why many pastors are not able to start branches of their ministry but the primary reason is finding a faithful person to represent them and the ministry in another place.

A good example of a branch pastor we find in the Bible is Timothy.

Timothy started off as Paul's assistant in ministry and later on was sent to pastor the church that Paul started at Ephesus. In Acts Chapter 19, Paul had done a great work during his two year stay at Ephesus to the extent that the message of salvation had been preached to the whole city.

And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

And all the men were about twelve.

And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Acts 19:1-10

Paul then appointed Timothy to pastor this church which had a large number of converts.

As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

1 Timothy 1:3

Eight Roles of a Branch Pastor

In 2 Timothy Chapter 2, Paul defines various roles that "branch pastor Timothy" ought to play.

1. The Branch Pastor Is a Faithful Son

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 2:1

An assistant pastor must always see himself as a son. This helps to introduce an element of permanence in the relationship between himself and the Senior Pastor. When a branch pastor is always entertaining thoughts of leaving, perhaps he is not a real son and has not caught the spirit of the house.

And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

John 8:35

It makes it easier for the branch pastor to receive instruction, rebuke, and direction and to be led by the Senior Pastor without being offended. Unfortunately, some Senior Pastors are always too careful when it comes to correcting their branch pastors for fear of upsetting them and possibly catalyzing their departure from the ministry. I have come to find that it is a waste of time to constantly dissuade a pastor from leaving. Most pastors who plan to leave and show signs of leaving eventually leave anyway. The

earlier they leave therefore the better it is. In our ministry anytime any pastor expresses any inclination to leave, we ask him to leave immediately.

...for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers,then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Hebrews 12:7b-8

Throughout 1st and 2nd Timothy, Paul confidently gives instructions, orders and commands to his son Timothy without any intimidation whatsoever.

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 2:1

God gives grace to every ministry and a son must seek to abound in that unique grace.

2. The Branch Pastor Is a Trustworthy Steward

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

2 Timothy 2:2

An assistant pastor has the responsibility to guard the deposit and treasure that God has given to the ministry through the Senior Pastor and his teachings. He must be ready to faithfully pass on the teachings he has received to the church and not always look for strange revelations to share with the church. Every branch pastor needs to constantly remind himself of his role as a trustee of the mysteries of God and the ministry.

Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

1 Corinthians 4:1-2

Every branch pastor must readily give an account of his work to his overseer. In some ministries, branch pastors are expected to submit monthly or quarterly reports to the headquarters. I have known some pastors who see it as a bother and an unnecessary procedure. This way of thinking is unfortunate and smacks of irresponsibility and gross disrespect.

And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

Luke 16:2

An unfaithful steward must be removed and replaced so as to maintain the integrity of the ministry.

Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

Luke 16:3

It must go without saying that the steward's place is not permanent. No branch pastor must have an attitude that he owns the church he has been sent to pastor and thus cannot be removed or transferred anywhere else. There are many stories of pastors who refused to be transferred and ended up causing splits. Some even managed to change the names of the churches they pastored and took over the assets. This is disgraceful and ought to be condemned in no uncertain terms as it is criminal. Timothy, the pastor of the church in Ephesus was moved to the headquarters (the prison in Rome) where Paul was and replaced with Tychicus, another faithful and able minister. Timothy did not throw any tantrums at all.

Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:

2 Timothy 4:9

And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.

2 Timothy 4:12

But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

Ephesians 6:21

3. The Branch Pastor Is an Enduring Soldier

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

2 Timothy 2:3-4

A branch pastor must consider himself enlisted in the army of God. A soldier is a member of an army trained to fight a common enemy together with his colleagues. One of the first laws of every army is to obey commands issued by the superior. It should not be burdensome for a branch pastor to receive and implement instructions given by the Senior Pastor or the leadership of the ministry.

For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

Matthew 8:9

A soldier need not ask, “Is it safe?” or “Is it popular?” He should rather ask, “Is this what my commander wants me to do?” Paul uses the military word “charge” in the book of Timothy nine times; implying that an aspect of the ministry must be militarized.

Another outstanding characteristic of every soldier is the ability to endure hardships. A branch pastor who is worth his salt must be ready to take tough times on the chin because ministry is no easy job! I have heard many a branch pastor in various cities and countries complain of the difficulties they encounter and how hard their city is. They often describe the area

where they minister as being peculiar and unique. Inasmuch as this may be true, there is nowhere in the world where ministry is easy. It takes a lot of sacrifice and commitment to build a lasting ministry.

Goats Take Over the Church

Some years back, a few friends and I travelled to a little village in Ghana. We saw a church building which was a branch of one of the big churches in the city. The church looked abandoned. Sheep and goats had taken over the building, lying on the pews and behind the pulpit as well. We asked some of the indigenes where the pastor of the church was. To our amazement we were told that the pastor had deserted the village and moved back to the city. The pastor's reason was that the ground was too hard and neither could he endure the many witches and wizards there!

Ministry is about fighting and a pastor who is not ready to fight will be like the ten spies who cowed because they saw the giants in the Promised Land. Every locality is a potential promised land for the minister assigned to it but you will definitely have to be ready to confront the giants.

A soldier must avoid all forms of entanglement. He must be totally committed to his commanding officer, the one who engaged him. There are situations where a branch pastor becomes a busybody in his locality. He occupies himself with many social activities and also spends a lot of time preaching in other churches to a point when he does not have time for the church to which he has been assigned.

4. The Branch Pastor Is a Disciplined Athlete

And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

2 Timothy 2:5

Any athlete who intends to do well must be disciplined thoroughly. All professional sportsmen are careful what they eat, how much they eat and when they eat. They have long hours of training. These they do this in preparation for the race ahead.

Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

1 Corinthians 9:24-26

On the particular day of the race, however, what is most important is the athlete's adherence to the rules of the game; otherwise all his preparatory efforts will go waste and unrewarded. The Living Bible puts the Scripture 2 Timothy 2:5 this way: "Follow the Lord's rules for doing his work, just as an athlete either follows the rules or is disqualified and wins no prize."

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

1 Corinthians 9:27

The word "castaway" is *adokimos* in Greek which means to lose your heavenly reward and your earthly ministry. It also means to be humiliated, disgraced and ejected. Samson was a great man of God but he did not adhere to the rules and thus ended up as an embarrassment to himself and his nation. Saul was also a great leader but his inability to obey the rules led to his rejection and ejection.

Every church has its own internal set of rules, philosophies, emphasis, practices and general vision. A branch pastor who does not conform to God's Word as well as the rules of his ministry will ultimately be rejected and ejected. Some branch pastors are like bullets. They take off with speed to any direction with no regard whatsoever for the ministry's vision. At the end of the day the churches become faded pictures of what they were intended to be.

The sports world abounds with stories of athletes who were applauded and hailed for their exceptional performances but after some years were found to have broken one rule or the other. They have had their medals taken from them and have been publicly humiliated.

Church Starts with One Hundred Members

I know a church whose attendance went into the hundreds within a few weeks of starting. Apparently the pastor had convinced some members of another church which was going through some challenges and they all defected into his church. As the story always ends, it was not long after that all the members turned against him, leading to the demise of his ministry.

What Paul was telling young pastor Timothy was that it is God who blesses ministry and not our own manipulations and skirmishes. We are not running for fame or cheers. We are running to please Jesus and to bring honour to the Lord. May you run in such a way that your victory cannot be disputed.

A good athlete needs concentration. Concentration leads to consecration and consecration leads to victory. You cannot be successful when you are distracted by cheers and jeers. Other runners should also not distract you. Just as every athlete has his lane every ministry has their lane, mapped out by God. Let's stay on course and in our lanes so we can reach our goal!

5. The Branch Pastor Is a Hardworking Farmer

The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

2 Timothy 2:6

Farming involves ploughing, planting, cultivating and harvesting. All these phases of farming involve very hard work. A branch minister who has been sent to start a work will have to do a lot of ploughing. This means he has to look for fresh souls and virgin land to work on.

Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:

And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.

Isaiah 5:1-3

The pastor must then begin to sow the Word into the people. In the parable of the sower, the seed was the Word of God. Anytime the Word of God is preached the seed is being sown.

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

1 Corinthians 3:5-9

In this imagery we see the church as a farm and the workers or ministers as labourers. No one person can do the work alone. A branch pastor must first of all pray to the Lord of the harvest to send labourers who will assist in preparing the land so that the church will survive and bring forth great increase.

Another outstanding quality of every farmer is patience.

Meanwhile, friends, wait patiently for the Master's Arrival. You see farmers do this all the time, waiting for their valuable crop to mature, patiently letting the rain do its slow but sure work. Be patient like that. Stay steady and strong.

James 5:7-8a (The Message Bible)

Branch pastors need to know that every ministry takes time to mature, grow and develop. It does not take a day to become like your father! It is infantile to compare your ministry with your father's ministry or another ministry which has been there many years and weathered many storms. The fact that you are preaching powerful messages, praying through the night and casting out devils, does not mean you will have a mega church within six months.

"Church Growth in Six Months"

"I will teach you church growth in six months," said a rebellious pastor as he broke away from his Senior Pastor. This pastor started his church down the road a few metres from his previous church. It's been several years now and we are still waiting to see this pastor come out of a little hut he started from. How long will it take for us to understand that God's judgement and rewards are going to be based largely on our faithfulness in our calling and not on how impressive we look?

As a branch pastor, Timothy was being exhorted to work hard and then patiently wait for the day of harvest to come. In the meantime he should keep watering and picking out the stones. Pastor, don't be discouraged. God is not unrighteous to forget your labour of love. See and declare that the place where your church is located is a "fruitful field". Keep your confession. Trust in the Lord of the harvest. He will fulfil His promises. Sometimes I have travelled to some of the places where we have started branches. I have wondered whether anything would ever come out of some of these places. I have returned to a number of these same places and it has been mind-blowing to see what God has done.

A hard-working farmer deserves to be rewarded. As you work hard and stay faithful your season of reward and honour will come. There is a reward for every sacrifice we make.

...The labourer is worthy of his reward.

1 Timothy 5:18

One other reward that a pastor gets is the fact that he is the first to enjoy the blessing that comes from teaching and preaching. The preacher or teacher gets more out of his sermons than the hearers because they put much more into research and preparation. Most preachers only share a part of the revelation they have received from the Lord.

The joy that comes from seeing people's lives changed and restored is indescribable and very rewarding. Farming may be hard work and is associated with some disappointments but the rewards far outweigh these difficulties.

6. The Branch Pastor Is a Diligent Student

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15

Studying is the most important hallmark of every student or minister. Ministers must never come to a place where they stop learning. A branch pastor must not only pray but devote quality time to studying the Word.

For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

Ezra 7:10

Reading is a very important aspect of every student's life. No minister will do well if he does not invest in the acquisition of books and spend time to read. It is said that only 20 % of people read and these 20% become leaders. There is no difference between the minister who does not read and the minister who cannot read.

Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

Proverbs 23:23

I know a branch pastor who spent three to four hours in the morning watching movies because he did not understand the real work of the ministry.

Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.

Proverbs 23:12

I have seen young and ambitious pastors who desire badly to become anointed and famous ministers. They are prepared to go through all the rigorous training and discipline so that they can qualify to be appointed pastors. Their energy, zeal and commitment to undergo such thorough preparations to become a pastor seem relentless. However, I have seen some of these same pastors become so dull and uninterested in learning any new thing. Branch pastors often get disconnected from their Senior Pastor because for many, their schooling period comes to an end the day they became pastors. It is important for branch pastors to always have a studious attitude and spirit. It is their duty to stay close and in contact with their Senior Minister or the headquarters so that they can keep the spirit of the ministry alive.

What makes a minister stop learning is arrogance and pride. Some branch pastors after being at post for a while and after enjoying some amount of success or growth begin to feel that they do not need anybody's input anymore. They cut themselves off from the blessing of having an input from the sending minister. I have had the privilege of travelling around to visit some of our branches worldwide and I have seen different attitudes exhibited by different pastors. There are some pastors

who feel extremely grateful with the visit and keep asking what they need to do to improve the ministry. Others feel over- confident and do not show any extra interest in learning new ways to improve the ministry.

A “student” branch pastor must from time to time ask his Senior Pastors the following questions:

- Is my church doing well?
- What areas do I need to work on?
- What changes do I need to make?
- What new things in the Headquarters can I implement?
- What is your personal assessment of my preaching?
- What must I do so that my church becomes more like the headquarters?
- Can you please pray for me?

A branch pastor who feels he has come to the end of his learning experience would not be interested to ask any of these questions. A branch pastor must be diligent to study and apply the Word to his personal life.

Every student at the end of the day will either be “approved” or “ashamed”. To be “approved” means to have been tested and found acceptable. It was used for testing and approving metals. A branch pastor who rightly studies and applies the Word and principles of the house shall invariably have a flourishing church. To be “ashamed” means to be humiliated, embarrassed, disgraced and rejected.

My prayer for you dear branch pastor as we work the field of souls is that you will be approved and not ashamed.

7. The Branch Pastor Is an Honourable Vessel

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal; The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.

If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

2 Timothy 2:19-22

A great house has both a solid foundation as well as vessels of all kinds for the use of the household. There are two groups of utensils. Some of honour and others of dishonour. The honourable ones are used for very special occasions and in serving fine meals whilst the dishonourable ones are used in storing garbage. A faithful branch pastor is like a gold or silver vessel that brings honour to Jesus and also to his Senior Pastor.

However, not all branch pastors turn out as gold or silver. In our ministry we have had reason to remove branch pastors for non-performance, immorality or financial impropriety. Such pastors are referred to as wood or clay. The honourable vessels must be careful they are not contaminated by the dishonourable vessels. Paul encourages Timothy to separate himself from all the evils. Some branch pastors get defiled by the sin of greed, discontentment, love for money, popularity and the world. As ministry grows, pastors change. Many ministries which have branches established in so-called prosperous cities often suffer from breakaways. The branch pastors begin to get unduly influenced by love of money. They begin to feel they are capable of being independent and using the money as and when they want to. They become uncontrollable. Not many pastors can be successful and still stay humble and under authourity. A pastor who keeps himself from these defilements shall be honoured by God and equipped for greater service. We must be empty and available so that the Master can fill us and use us.

Dear pastor, you belong to a “great house” - desire to be a vessel of honour. May your Senior Pastor be proud of you and use you as an example of a

vessel of honour!

8. The Branch Pastor Is the Bond Servant of the Lord

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

2 Timothy 2:24-26

The branch pastor must keep in mind that as much he is the servant of the Lord he is also at the service of his sending minister as well as a servant to the people he has been sent to. A servant has no will of his own but is under the command of his master. His ears are always open, waiting for the next instruction or line of direction. "A servant" branch pastor must be a patient teacher of the Word of God. People are naturally difficult to teach and handle. Some people enjoy useless arguments that are provocative and lead to quarrels. A branch pastor must be careful not to be dragged into such fruitless issues. We have sent missionaries to places who have gone to engage in inane activities that have ended up in fights needing the intervention of the police. A branch pastor's purpose must not to be to win arguments but to win souls and to deliver those under Satan's captivity.

Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again;

Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Titus 2:9-10

Chapter 16

Five Undesirable Assistants

In my short life in ministry I have related with five types of assistants.

1. The "Man Pleasing" Assistant

For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

Galatians 1:10

The primary goal of every assistant pastor is to please the one that he has been called to serve. Ministry sometimes involves unpleasant confrontations that are unavoidable. Paul taught Timothy not only to teach and admonish but also to correct and reprove sharply if need be.

Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

1 Timothy 5:20

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

2 Timothy 4:2

Dissolve the Choir

In my early days as an assistant pastor I was not good at confronting issues at all. Our church choir then was made up of a few young people who were both unspiritual and unproductive. They were not serious with their rehearsal times and they would grumble a lot. I remember my Senior Pastor travelling out of the country during this period and asking my colleague, Eddy Addy and I to dissolve the choir. We did not want to offend anybody so we 'dilly-dallied' with the decision until my Senior Pastor arrived after

six weeks. We wanted to be the ‘good guys’ that everybody liked. On the first Sunday that my Senior Pastor arrived in church he announced that the choir had been disbanded. He therefore ended up rather being the bad guy in the eyes of the congregation. A good assistant pastor must not behave like the Pharisees who love the praise of men rather than the praise of God.

For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

John 12:43

Jesus was killed because of a man-pleasing Pilate who was interested in pleasing the people rather than standing for the truth.

Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.

But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.

And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.

And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

Luke 23:14, 20-25

Paul was kept in jail by Felix because he wanted to please the Jews.

But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

Acts 24:27

Never underestimate the effect of a man-pleasing assistant. He can easily betray his Senior Pastor without realizing it.

"Rubbish Ideas"

I remember a Senior Pastor who sent his assistant pastor to represent him on a committee that involved pastors from other churches. The Senior Pastor made his vision clear to his assistant pastor and expected him to project this vision. As time went by it became clear that the other pastors did not believe in the vision of the Senior Pastor. These pastors criticized and "rubbished" and ridiculed the Senior Pastor's ideas which he brought forth. The assistant pastor surprisingly did not say word in defense of his Senior Pastor and his vision. What had happened was that with time the assistant pastor had become friends with these other pastors and therefore valued their friendship more than the vision of his Senior Pastor. In the end there was a strain in the Senior Pastor's relationship with all the other pastors whilst the assistant pastor became their favourite. Such an assistant pastor is a deadly ambassador to send.

2. The "Neutral" Assistant

There is another type of an assistant who appears to be neutral. You can never clearly know where he stands on any issue. He agrees with everybody all the time. An assistant pastor must be a person of conviction. Jesus spoke against neutrality on all fronts.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Revelations 3:15-16

Agree with Everything, Everybody and at Every Time

At a pastors' meeting, a Senior Pastor, his assistant and several other pastors were discussing an important issue. The assistant pastor was quiet and evasive. After some time, the Senior Pastor got irritated and asked his assistant to speak. To the surprise of all present, this assistant just blurted out that the vice-president never disagreed with the president even when he was wrong. He implied that a constructive critisicm by an assistant was not even welcome.

It is offensive to meet a person who is so neutral on all major issues. It is risky to trust such a person. He will agree with everything and everybody on every issue.

3. The "Double-Faced" Assistant

A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

James 1:8

No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Luke 16:13

There is yet another assistant I will describe as double-faced. Depending on whose presence he is in he has a different opinion on a particular issue.

The effect of such an assistant is that he ends up losing the trust and confidence of everybody around him especially the Senior Pastor. When it comes to light that he has been blowing hot and cold nobody believes what he says anymore.

He Switched Too Quickly

I was once with a pastor who appeared to be upset about some branch pastors of another denomination who had turned against their Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor of the denomination in question called this pastor friend of mine and complained bitterly about how let down he felt by the departure

of his branch pastors. He was indeed very depressed. As we talked, another friend who happened to know about the case joined us. This mutual friend brought another dimension to the story and felt the Senior Pastor had not treated his branch pastors well and thus deserved it. To my surprise, my pastor friend switched immediately and now supported the departing branch pastors. I was completely shocked. How could one appear so understanding of an issue and within seconds switch to perfectly agree with the other side?

Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images.

Hosea 10:2

4. The "Fault-Finding" Assistant

There is yet another type of assistant pastor who has the habit of opposing and criticizing his Senior Pastor all the time. It almost looks like he takes pleasure in opposing him and pointing out his faults. A Senior Pastor may not always be right; however, he need not have an assistant who takes pleasure in pointing fingers at him.

Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

Isaiah 58:9

Peter was presumptuous in his relationship with Jesus. Perhaps, over the period of time he had become so familiar with Jesus that he would have the audacity to rebuke him.

And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

Mark 8:31

Assistant or Opposition Leader?

I know an assistant pastor who always had something negative to tell his Senior Pastor about his preaching. He would criticize the way he moved about whilst preaching, question why he had to sip water when preaching, and he would ask why he had to crack so many jokes. On one occasion, he actually told him that the church was not growing because he did not know how to preach. If I were the Senior Pastor I would not tolerate such an assistant for even one extra day. I am sure there would be many men of God out there whom he would admire and appreciate their style. He could happily go out there and cheer them on. Is he an assistant or an opposition leader? Is it not enough that the world opposes ministers so much? Why should the pastor fight with the world out there and come home and continue the battle with his assistant pastor?

5. The "Heart-Stealing" Assistant

The reason why many churches cannot grow and even branch out is because of the fear that many Senior Pastors have. They have seen their colleague pastors robbed of their ministries and churches when they appointed assistants to help them oversee the work.

And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.

And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.

Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

2 Samuel 15:1-6

Unfortunately, many church members are not discerning. They do not notice when an assistant or branch pastor is slowly leading them away and turning their hearts against their Senior Pastor. Absalom appeared to be sympathetic, understanding and more readily available to help. But his real motive was to make them see David in a bad light, as an uncaring and incapable leader. Before anybody could realize it, two hundred of David's church members had joined Absalom's church.

Sometimes, church members are also swayed by an assistant who may appear talented and gifted. They then begin to sing his praises and make the Senior Pastor feel that he has not done anything at all for them. David kills Goliath and immediately he is the hero in town. Everybody is singing his praises that he is ten thousand times better than Saul who has been their leader up till then.

And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick.

And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

1 Samuel 18:5-7

This is deception. This is unfair to Saul and this marks the beginning of a long drawn-out battle between David and Saul that affected generations after them.

Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David...

2 Samuel 3:1a

I heard one pastor say about another pastor, "This pastor is my friend but I do not trust him. Each time I have introduced him to any of my friends this pastor has subtly broken my relationship with my friend and suddenly become the favourite."

Assistant Becomes Senior Pastor

I know a pastor who established a fellowship in the city. He asked one of his assistants to oversee this fellowship. The Senior Pastor then decided to concentrate on other aspect of the ministry while his trusted assistant handled this fellowship. One day, he decided to visit the fellowship to see how it was doing. He was very happy to find the fellowship intact. But to his utter amazement and shock all the members had turned away from him and now rather saw his assistant as the main leader and the only leader they knew. This is sad!

Section 4

IMPORTANT PROTOCOL

Chapter 17

Ethics of the Assistant Pastor

Section 4

IMPORTANT PROTOCOL

Ethics simply defined, can be said to be a system of moral principles governing the appropriate conduct for a person or group.

Ethics give a strong positive message to the public.

Ethics form the cornerstone in building socially responsible relationships.

Ethics encourage trustworthiness, honesty, integrity and loyalty.

Ethics enhances respect, dignity, courtesy, accountability and pursuit of excellence.

The assistant pastor in performing his duty should be guided by some principles. This is beautifully elucidated in Chapter 3 of Dag Heward-Mills' book, "*Ministerial Ethics*" and is culled here below, with the author's permission.

"The assisting minister can be identified as anyone operating in any of the following positions: associate pastor, assistant or deputy pastor, worship leader, departmental pastor, youth pastor, branch pastor, minister of music, etc.

The obligations of an assisting minister may look obvious. It may even seem superfluous to write about what is expected of the assisting minister. I have found the assisting minister to be one of the most important people in the ministry team. He can make or break the ministry by his actions, words and even attitude. From experience I have learnt that it is better to have no

assistant, than to have a bad assistant. It is better to have no branch church than to have a bad branch pastor. A good assistant minister is compared to a good ambassador. He does not reflect his own ideas and visions - only those of his home country (senior minister). A good assistant minister can be compared to a good wife. He must obey instructions and genuinely support the head. He must not be an independent or "difficult to control" person.

If you are not faithful with another man's ministry, do not ever expect to have your own.

And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

Luke 16:12

There is a proliferation of Absaloms, Adonijahs, Ahithophels, Shemeis, Joabs, Judases and Lucifers in the church. These are the major rebels of the Bible. Every minister will have his fair share of these personalities. I am against these people, and I constantly teach about them in order to expose them. Decide that you will never become a rebel. In your position as an assistant minister, you will have to observe certain rules of conduct. The following guidelines will help you to be a good assistant:

w **Make mention of your Head and senior often.**

Whenever you are speaking, preaching or counselling, make favourable references to him.

As I said earlier, you are actually an ambassador representing him.

w **Genuinely admire your Head and praise him often.**

If you do not admire him you should not be working with him in the first place!

w **Introduce your Head in an exciting way and make positive or complimentary remarks about everything that he has preached.**

Make statements like, "I was really blessed today by this message", or "That message was timely."

w **Do not become a receiver of complaints.**

If your office is a centre for the discussion of the shortcomings of your pastor, surely, another Absalom is in the making!

And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way... and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came... then Absalom called unto him... And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good... but there is no man deputed of the king... Oh that I were made judge...

2 Samuel 15:2-4

w **You must find genuine excuses for any lapses in the Head.**

Everybody makes mistakes, and nobody is always right. Your senior will have his fair share of mistakes. It is your duty as a good assistant to defend and protect the developing ministry of your pastor.

w **Whenever your Head is unable to attend a function, you must inform the parties concerned that your Head had intended to be there himself but could not make it for very good reasons.**

You must give the impression that your Head is a good person who is constrained by real and pressing schedules. Do not say, "Oh, I do not know why he didn't come to the hospital to visit you. He is probably sleeping at home!"

w **Always remind the congregation that you are not the main person, and that there is someone above you.**

When people are very impressed with your ministry, tell them happily that there is someone greater than you. Notice what John the Baptist did when he was in a similar situation. He said:

...I am NOT the Christ, but...I am sent...

John 3:28

w **Show your admiring congregation how and where you learnt all that you know.**

Jesus often said,

...The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do...

John 5:19

w **When you minister to church members let them know that you are actually doing it on behalf of the Head.**

When we say, "In the name of Jesus" it informs people that we are acting on behalf of Jesus, our Head.

w **Be genuinely happy at the promotion of your Head.**

Do not secretly think that he does not deserve the fame that he is getting. Notice what John the Baptist said when he heard that Jesus was becoming very popular:

And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, AND ALL MEN COME TO HIM.

John 3:26

Notice again the classic reply of a good assistant:

He must increase, but I must decrease.

John 3:30

w **Ensure that everything is well with your Head.**

Ensure that he has a seat and is comfortable. Give up your own chair if necessary. Ensure that he is acknowledged and respected by all. This is the duty of a good assistant.

w **Be genuinely excited at the arrival and involvement of your Head Pastor at any function.**

You must announce the visit of your senior to your department or branch with excitement. If you see his involvement as an intrusion and a bother, then you have a problem. You are probably a rebellious assistant at heart!

w **Honour your Head's wife as well. Minister to her and give her gifts.**

I take note of any person who doesn't respect my wife. It is an important sign to me.

He that receiveth you receiveth me...

Matthew 10:40

If you receive my wife, you have received me. In the same way, if you disrespect and disregard my wife, you have done the same to me.

w **Regard your association with your pastor as a learning experience.**

Decide to learn something from him everyday.

w **Acquire your pastor's tapes and books.**

"Soak in" his messages on audio and video tapes. Catch the anointing on his life through faithfulness and loyalty. As a good assistant, you must take notes, say "amen" and smile when your Head is speaking, teaching or even counselling. The congregation will follow whatever the assistant does.

w **In your preaching, do not hesitate to refer to your Head as an example of a successful person. Use him as an illustration for noble things.**

w **Do not publicly disagree with policies and decisions made by the Head.**

w **It is unethical for an assistant to establish a private, side-fellowship in the church without the knowledge or approval of the Head.**

w **Periodically organize pleasant surprises for your Head.**

Spontaneously celebrate the birthday of your Head, and give gifts to him. This will draw you closer to his heart.

A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.

Proverbs 18:16

w **When your Head is travelling, you must be at the airport to see him off.**

Be there to welcome him with joy when he returns. On some occasions you must organize a 'welcome home' party. Let him know that you are glad to have him back!

w **During counselling sessions you must assist properly.**

Do not contribute any counsel that is contrary to what is being said. Do not try to develop a completely new train of thought. This may only be confusing to the one receiving counsel. Do not try to impress anyone with some "high sounding" wisdom. Simply help your senior to say what he is saying better and emphasize what he has already said. Do not remain quiet during counselling sessions. This will make you look like a spectator and will make the person being counselled feel uncomfortable.

w **I teach all assisting ministers to use these simple but very powerful phrases whilst assisting their seniors in counselling:**

1. Do you understand what Pastor is saying?

2. Do you understand that Pastor is only trying to help you?

3. Pastor is only saying this because he loves you.

4. I wish I had had someone speak to me this way when I was in a similar situation.

As you interject comments like these during counselling sessions, you lend a greater impact to his words."

This is altogether comprehensive. I would also like to add these seven tips which have been so beneficial to me.

1. **Inform your Senior Pastor when invited to minister elsewhere.**

2. **Make reference to your Senior Pastor and his influence in your life when preaching, especially when he is not present.**

3. **At public functions make sure he is properly seated and comfortable and served.**

4. **See him off at the airport, train or bus station when he is travelling especially for a longer period.**

5. **Make the effort to stay in touch with him regularly by phone, email or other means even when there is no agenda.**

6. **Allow him to have his private and confidential moments at functions till he leaves. If you need to leave for any reason politely inform him.**

Chapter 18

How to Handle Disagreements with Your Senior Pastor

Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

Amos 3:3

The Senior Pastor - Assistant Pastor relationship is effective and yields great results when the two get along and have the same mind as they work together to achieve their God- given mandate. It is for this reason that Paul wrote to the church in Corinth and exhorted them "...by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgement" (1 Corinthians 1:10, NASB).

The Four Blessings of Walking in Agreement

1. It attracts God's blessing.

How wonderful, how beautiful, when brothers and sisters get along!

It's like costly anointing oil

flowing down head and beard,

Flowing down Aaron's beard,

flowing down the collar of his priestly robes. It's like the dew on Mount Hermon

flowing down the slopes of Zion.

Yes, that's where GOD commands the blessing, ordains eternal life.

Psalm 133:1-3, The Message Bible

2. It attracts answers to prayer.

Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 18:19

3. It attracts God's presence.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Matthew 18:20

4. It attracts strength to do almost everything you plan to do.

And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

Genesis 11:6

The main aim of the devil is to cause division and rancour in each and every relationship.

For example, in husband-wife, friend-friend, brother-sister, father-son, daughter-in-law and mother-in-law relationships.

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy:

John 10:10a

For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

James 3:16

The work of the ministry can never thrive in an atmosphere of strife and division. Many beautiful ministries have been destroyed and fragmented

into little ineffective pieces because the devil entered the leadership and stole, killed and destroyed the unity.

It will be an anomaly to say that there will be no disagreement between the Senior Pastor and the assistant. However, when such times of disagreement occur the assistant must always be guided by these six principles.

1. Principle of Esteeming the Senior Pastor Highly in Love

And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

If you esteem a person very highly you will not allow yourself to be ‘carried away by your emotions’ in times of disagreement.

2. Principle of Staying Submitted at All Times

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Hebrews 13:17

There must not be any occasion when you forget your position in relation to your Senior Pastor. No matter the issue at stake you must remember that he is your senior and your father and this will help you to be temperate in all things.

'Let's Go and Apologise'

In the early days of our ministry my Senior Pastor gave me a very bitter pill to swallow. He called me one day and said he felt we owed an apology to

another ministry because we had acted wrongly in our relationship towards them. Our church had then sprouted out of a fellowship that my Senior Pastor had started in the name and under the banner of that ministry. He said it was therefore unethical for us to turn it into a church. I did not think so AT ALL. I felt we had acted properly, judiciously and justifiably. All the souls in the ministry then were people that we had gone out into the hedges and highways to bring in. They did not have any connection with the parent ministry. So why should they have any justifiable claim or right to these ones? He, however, strongly insisted that we go and apologise to them and if they so wished to come and take over our new ministry, they could do so. What could I do? I followed grudgingly to their church office and I sat down and looked on as he profusely apologized to the leaders. They looked hostile on seeing us but this turned into shock as my Senior Pastor unveiled our mission there. Shock gave way to tears as both the executives and my pastor wept uncontrollably. But I did not cry at all. They prayed with us, forgave us and blessed and asked us to continue what we had started. This was to be a turning point in our ministry, as shortly after this we started experiencing growth in leaps and bounds like we had never known before. God indeed showed us great mercy. I look back and realized how wrong I was and how right my Senior Pastor was. I am glad I submitted to his leading and followed in spite of my feelings at that time.

3. Principle of Staying within Biblical Limits

Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren;

1 Timothy 5:1

No matter how right you feel or how hurt you may be never get to the point where you use foul or unsavoury language. Never shout on your Senior Pastor! Never hung up the phone when speaking with your Senior Pastor! Never walk off whilst your Senior Pastor is talking! Never bang the door behind your Senior Pastor! Be self-controlled at all times.

“This is the Last Time”

I know of a case of a Senior Pastor who was discussing a thorny issue with his assistant on the phone. The assistant got upset, screamed at the Senior Pastor and just banged the phone. The Senior Pastor called back and told him, “This is the last time you will do anything like this.” The next time he got a call from this assistant pastor, he was in the hospital and had been taken there in a critical state with a strange disease. I am sad to say that he never came back home to hold that phone again.

4. Principle of Not Letting Your Feelings Influence Others

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Acts 20:30

Don’t go around trying to prove yourself right and painting your Senior Pastor “black” in the eyes of your church members. You will not only live to regret it but you will also have created some bitter church members or even lead some to fall by the way side.

Ten out of the twelve spies who were sent by Moses to spy out Canaan influenced the whole nation of Israel with their bad report.

But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we.

And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature.

Numbers 13:31 -32

And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.

And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness!

Numbers 14:1-2

5. Principle of Doing Your Pastor No Harm

Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

Ecclesiastes 10:20

Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

Psalm 105:15

When you disagree with the decisions your Senior Pastor takes never desire them to fail so that you are proved right. Genuinely wish him well in the secret of your heart in all aspects.

6. Principle of Not Moving out of Your Place

If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.

Ecclesiastes 10:4

Never entertain thoughts of resignation because of a disagreement. Disagreement is a wrong premise for departure. I personally know an assistant pastor of a large ministry who left the church after a disagreement with his Senior Pastor. Some pastors in different churches encouraged him because they felt he was right in the issue at stake. He spent many years ministering in various churches where the pastors endorsed his resignation. After a while, these same pastors got tired of him and stopped inviting him because he was becoming a drain on their finances. Each time he ministered

they had to give him an honorarium. His source of income was therefore curtailed. After years of wandering he regretted his decision and went back to his church but unfortunately his place had been taken by another! When I see that pastor now he is a pale shadow of what he could have been.

May God help us to stay on course and be delivered from mess and ruin.

Chapter 19

How to Relate with Other Assistants

When a ministry is very young there may not be the need for several assistants. However, as the vision gets bigger and broader the door is opened to welcome others to come in and help. In the early stage of our ministry, there was just one church with a few members and my colleague, Eddy Addy and I were the only assistants our Senior Pastor had. By the grace of God the ministry grew rapidly as every healthy church should. The three of us with our spouses over a period of about five years would always have lunch in one person's home on Sundays. The men would sit and watch a soccer match or movie while the ladies sat in a corner and chatted heartily. We cherished one another greatly and jealously guarded our friendship.

The depth of the relationship grew. There was openness as we frankly talked about issues like marriage and shared our personal challenges. We sometimes played in-door games and teased one another! It was such fun! Only eternity will reveal the impact our bond of friendship has had on this ministry.

More Assistants Needed

As time went by, God led our leader to start other branches of the church. The number of branches increased with time quite rapidly. My Senior Pastor started writing books. The church started a bookshop. A Bible school also began. Building projects were initiated. There was therefore the need for many more assistants. It was obvious that the two of us could no longer assist our Senior Pastor in all these areas. We needed more pastors and administrators.

The church started engaging new people to come in to assist with the great work God had given our leader. As at today we have several pastors and administrators who assist worldwide to fulfil the vision.

Jesus Had Many Assistants

Although we all know that Peter, James and John were Jesus' closest assistants, the other disciples also had major roles to play for the ministry of Jesus to last. It was Matthew, though not as conspicuous as Peter, who wrote the life history of Jesus. Even Judas had a place in the ministry. He was the finance administrator. There were other women who followed and ministered to Him.

And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

Luke 8:3

"Many others" makes us understand that Jesus really had helpers. These were not just followers. "They ministered to him."

Paul Had Many Assistants

We all know Paul's assistants and travelling companions as Barnabas, Silas and Timothy. There were many people also, who assisted Paul in various aspects of ministry and helped him to fulfil his calling. He even had people he could dictate his letters to. In Romans Chapter 16, Paul gives a list of some people who played important roles in his life and ministry.

I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellowprisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord.
Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household.

Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.

Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and

simple concerning evil.

And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.

I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.

Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Romans 16:1-24

The Principle of Acceptance and Humility

As a ministry expands the principle of acceptance must guide the old and new assistants.

- The old must not feel intimidated by the coming in of the new. They must let them feel welcome and see them as necessary to complement their efforts and to cover areas they may not have been able to handle.

- The new must come in with a humble attitude. They must see the foundations that have been laid by the old and seek to build on them. The new must not despise the old and make them feel that they are incapable and that is why new people have been brought in.

I have heard more than once, unfortunate comments made by pastors sent to replace other pastors. These new pastors have described the former pastors as incapable, incompetent and useless. They have discounted all that the outgoing pastor has done. But they forget that one day they will also step out and someone else would sit in their chair and they will wish for them to compliment their efforts. There is also the other side where the pastor who is transferred does not prepare a good landing pad for his successor. The

new pastor then has to struggle with suspicion and intimidation and hostilities for some time before he settles down. This ought not to be so!

Ten Reasons Why God Brings Us Together in the Same Ministry

1. God puts us together to make us complete.

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12

2. God joins us together to make us complement one another.

In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:

In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Ephesians 2:21-22

3. God holds us together so we can have the same vision.

And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

Colossians 2:19

4. God fits us together for effectiveness.

From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Ephesians 4:16

5. God brings us together so that we can pray together.

Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

Acts 3:1

Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 18:19

6. God puts us in the same team so that we fight together.

Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

Romans 15:30

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Philipians 1:27

7. God calls us under the same leader so that we can follow together.

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

Philipians 3:17

8. God put us together so that we build each other up.

Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

9. God brings us together so we can fellowship with one another.

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Hebrews 10:25

10. God brings us together to be part of each other's lives.

So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Romans 12:5

Section 5

THE CHALLENGE

Chapter 20

Ten Temptations of the Assistant

The Son of God began His ministry with a temptation in the wilderness and ended it on the cross with a temptation. You are not greater than Him so you will also be tempted. But you should not fail. The grace that was available to Jesus is also there for you.

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Matthew 4 :1-11

And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

Matthew 27:40

There are certain temptations that come more readily to assistants that we need to be careful and guard against, so that they will not end up destroying us.

1. FAMILIARITY

Familiarity can be defined as an intimacy that is improper and presumptuous.

And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it.

Numbers 12:1 -2

And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed.

And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.

Numbers 12:9-10

One of the most important things that destroy relationships between Senior Pastors and their assistants is familiarity. A lot of Senior Pastors have developed a lifestyle of not being too close to their assistants for fear of being taken for granted. It looks like the closer a person gets to a leader, the greater the danger he stands of being familiar.

Factors That Can Cause Familiarity

1. Age: Older people are more likely to suffer from familiarity.

Generally, it is easier for a younger person to receive from an older person. In the case where the Senior Pastor is significantly younger than the assistant pastor there is a tendency for the assistant not to be so open and yielding to his teaching and instruction. The Bible abounds with examples of kings who were very young but ruled Israel. Anointing and wisdom is not necessarily found in the aged.

2. Education: Higher academic qualifications may lead to pride and familiarity.

There is a kind of pride that comes along with being highly educated. Scripture says knowledge puffs up. In the situation where the assistant is more highly educated than the Senior Pastor it is easy for him to criticize and find fault with the Senior Pastor and to become impervious to his instructions. There are cases in which the assistants helping with administrative issues may have some expertise that the Senior Pastor does not have. They can use this talent to bamboozle the Senior Pastor.

3. Closeness: The privilege of closeness may be abused, leading to familiarity.

Not everybody has the privilege of being close to the man of God. When you have the rare opportunity of being close to your Senior Pastor you may see things that the ordinary church member may not see. It is for this reason that wives may find it difficult to receive the ministry of their husbands who

may be great men of God. The disciples of Jesus were close enough to see Jesus tired. They saw him sleeping, hungry and even distressed in the Garden of Gethsemane. Such exhibition of human frailties can make one lose reverence and admiration. Perhaps this gave Judas the boldness to betray Christ. I have the privilege of being very close to my Senior Pastor. We play golf together, sit to eat together sometimes and once in a while I gather the courage to tease him. I can confidently say that my respect for him has not diminished at all but more and more I see how anointed he is. My respect for him keeps growing.

4. Wealth: Has the tendency of generating pride and familiarity.

Wealthy people are usually proud. Very few of them are able to submit themselves to authority. It is no wonder that not many rich people will go to Heaven.

For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Luke 18:25

A wealthy assistant might find it difficult to properly relate to his Senior Pastor.

2. EQUALIZATION

And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it.

Numbers 12:1-2

An assistant pastor stands the risk of thinking that he is on the same level as his Senior Pastor. Sometimes when an assistant pastor has the opportunity to preach, the congregation may applaud him and let him feel great. This

may only be because his stories may be fresher since he may not have had the opportunity to preach as often as the Senior Pastor. An immature congregation may feed him with the poison of making him think he is even better than the Senior Pastor; just as the people sang David's praises, "Saul has killed a thousand, David has killed ten thousand." What the people failed to realize was that whereas this was David's first battle, Saul had successfully fought many battles.

The onus lies on the assistant to correct the thinking of the people as well as to put a check on his own thoughts.

He is Afraid of You

One day when an assistant pastor finished preaching, a prominent member of the church came to him and said, "I now know why you are not allowed to preach often. You are such a good preacher and I think the Senior Pastor is afraid of you."

Dear assistant pastor, just hear the devil speaking right there!

An assistant pastor may sometimes want to enjoy the same compliments and privileges accorded his Senior Pastor. The assistant pastor should not sit on the Senior Pastor's chair when he is not around. I once saw a Senior Pastor frantically drive around the car park of his church looking for a place to park. The church did not deem it necessary to reserve a parking slot for their pastor. What a shame!

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.

Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Philipians 2:5-8 NASB

3. HURTSANDOFFENCES

Every office comes with its own challenges and the office of the assistant pastor is no exception.

A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.

Proverbs 18:19

There are times when an assistant may feel misunderstood or not fairly treated. Many little things can cause a person to be hurt or offended. But the assistant pastor must see further and know that his Senior Pastor really loves him. It is a sign of pride and immaturity to be hurt about any little thing that happens to me as a pastor. I have seen too many pastors knocked out of ministry not by fornication or adultery but by hurts and offences, which are not properly treated and they turn into bitterness that ends up destroying them and polluting so many people around them.

Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

Hebrews 12:15

To allow hurts and offences to grow into bitterness with its complicated root system, is to "fail of the grace of God". Remember, we are saved by grace and called to minister by grace. So to fail of the grace means to make a shipwreck of your calling. Time and time again young ministers come into my office to receive counselling and support to start their own ministry. As I talk with them, almost one hundred percent of the pastors ends up breaking down as they recount how they feel mistreated by the Senior Pastor of the church they are leaving. None of them take time to recount any good thing the “demon possessed” Senior Pastor has done for them. The churches these pastors are going out to establish have very weak foundations and if each pastor does not properly get healed of the perceived

hurt, he would lose his message and also his credibility and authority to preach on forgiveness.

If the foundations be destroyed,what can the righteous do?

Psalm 11:3

4. MOVINGOUTOFYOURPOSITION

They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks:

Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded.

Joel 2:7-8

An assistant pastor must always be conscious of his calling and his position. John the Baptist knew who he was. When asked if he was the Messiah he did not hesitate. His answer was emphatic.

And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

John 1:19 -20

There is nothing embarrassing about being an assistant. It is when you do not understand your calling that you will break ranks and usurp authority. It is only when you have the spirit of Diotrephes that you will move out of position and challenge legitimate authority.

I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

3 John 1:9

5. FORGETFULNESS

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Psalm 137:5-6

"Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

"You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The ruby, the topaz and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. On the day that you were created They were prepared.

"You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.

"You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created Until unrighteousness was found in you.

"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, That they may see you."

Ezekiel 28:12-15,17 (NASB)

Forgetfulness is one of the most grievous mistakes anyone can make in this life. It opens the door to your own destruction. Lucifer was created, beautified and anointed by God. He was put in the place of authority by God. Perhaps he could not handle the glory and the honour that the position brought him. Soon he forgot all the investments that had been made in him and wanted to take over God's throne. God had no choice but to cast him down to the ground.

Many assistant pastors easily forget the investment the Senior Pastor has made in them. They forget that if the Senior Pastor did not have confidence in them they would not stand where they stand now. I personally know pastors who were led to Christ by their Senior Pastor. The Senior Pastor trained them, prayed for them and appointed them as pastors. These same pastors get up one day and say to their Senior Pastor, “I don’t owe you anything.” This is because they feel that they have become great or they have ‘arrived’.

One such Assistant pastor said to his Senior Pastor, “I don’t need you and you don’t need me; I can do without you.” Sometimes it is important for the Senior Pastor to remind his assistants what they owe him, the same way Paul reminded Philemon.

I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

Philemon 1:19

6. LOOKINGBACK

Remember Lot's wife.

Luke 17:32

And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

Genesis 19:15

But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

Genesis 19:26

Ministry is a life-long journey and every visionary would want to have people who will come along with him on this journey. They must be

prepared to make the sacrifices together. There must be no turning back from this high calling. Like marriage, your plan should be to be in it forever. Lot's wife, who can also be described as his assistant, was not ready to pay the price for the journey. She looked back and that was the end of her story. Every assistant should have a mind of staying and following to the very end as long as God gives grace.

7. PRESUMPTION

Presumption is used to describe behaviour that is inconsiderate, disrespectful, or overconfident.

LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.

Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.

Psalm 131:1-2

The closeness of the assistant to his Senior Pastor can make him presumptuous. It is not every information that an assistant may be privy to and he should learn to stay within his boundaries. He should have an attitude that what he needs to know is what he is told. The Senior Pastor is not obliged to declare his assets to him.

8. ABANDONMENT

But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

Acts 15:38

The hardships of ministry can take its toll on a spineless assistant. Lean seasons can often last so long that even Senior Pastors may easily give up on ministry. Jesus never promised that ministry was going to be easy anyway. There are times when it is difficult to pray, preach, love people and wear a smile. An assistant must be careful not to abandon the ship

midstream. Young John Mark could not handle all the challenges with the missionary journey so he abandoned Paul and Barnabas. So Paul was not ready to take him on again.

Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

2 Corinthians 11:23-28

I must confess that it will not be easy to follow such a man like Paul. Most of his travelling companions shared not a five-star hotel suite with him but filthy dungeon cells. No wonder young John Mark abandoned the ministry. Before we take it too hard on John Mark, let us pray for ourselves that our own hardships and the hardships of ministry will not cause us to run away from the men God has called us to serve!

9. LOVE FOR THIS WORLD

For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world...

2 Timothy 4:10

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

1 John 2:15-17

Ministry work demands turning away from the world and all its pleasures and lusts and walking on a narrow path. Paul had several assistants at various stages of his ministry. Demas happened to be one of them. Perhaps the reason why Demas forsook Paul and went back to the worldly things is because he was an idle assistant.

With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.

Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)

And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

Colossians 4:9-14

In this passage, Paul ends his letter by giving compliments about the several assistants he had had. He had something to say about each of them except Demas.

Onesimus Our faithful and beloved brother

Aristarchus My fellow prisoner

Justus Fellow worker

Epaphras Laboring fervently

Luke Beloved physician

Demas (No compliments at all)

An assistant who does not catch the vision of the Senior Pastor but just idles will soon find that the world has taken over his life.

10. CAUSINGSPLITS

For I know this...shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Acts 20:29-30

An assistant pastor works among the sheep and helps to look after them. Naturally the sheep will grow to know him and love him. However, he should not take advantage of this and create a church within the church. I know a church where the assistant pastors went on a rampage among the church members and before the Senior Pastor realized it, the church had been divided into several pieces and these pastors went away with sections of the church to start their own ministries.

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

Romans 16:17

Chapter 21

Five Ways an Assistant Pastor Can Destroy a Church

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

1 Corinthians 10:1-5

This passage gives a picture of the church in the wilderness as a lively and promising congregation. They were blessed in many ways.

- They were all under the cloud (they were all protected by God's covering).
- They all passed through the sea (they all experienced one of the outstanding miracles in all history as the waters became walls by their side).
- They were all baptized (they were all saved and fulfilled the required spiritual obligation).
- They all ate the same spiritual food (this indicates that they were all under the influence of the same powerful teaching and feeding ministry that was supposed to build them up).

- They all drank the same spiritual drink (meaning they were filled with the Holy Spirit).

  Any church with such spiritual experiences must definitely be

a really blessed congregation. God had a plan and an agenda for them; he intended to take them to the place of fulfilment and accomplishment. That is the place the Bible refers to as the "Promised Land". However, it looks like experiencing God's wonder and grace did not mean much to many of them as they willfully turned against God. God was displeased with them.

By the time this church was entering the Promised Land almost everybody had died and a new generation had risen up to enjoy the blessing God had in store for their fathers.

In my short life I have seen many charismatic churches rise up in the power of the spirit with outstanding miracles. These churches were led by anointed men of God with a large following. The churches were filled to capacity. In their prayer services one could literally feel the presence of angels as well as all sorts of manifestations. Indeed, they were eating the spiritual food and drinking the spiritual water. It is sad to say that after a few years some of these ministries have become a pale shadow of what God intended them to be. Some of them are not even heard of anymore. And others have fragmented into little pieces led by some of the previously appointed assistant pastors. This gives the picture of a big cake that everybody cuts a piece of and runs off with it. It will do us a lot of good not to be judgmental but to learn the lessons we can from both the church in the wilderness and these modern examples, so that we will not go the same way they did.

The Message Bible beautifully paraphrases 1 Corinthians Chapter 10 verses 11 and 12 this way:

"These are all warning markers - DANGER! - in our history books, written down so that we don't repeat their mistakes. Our positions in the story are parallel - they at the beginning, we at the end - and we are just as capable of messing it up as they were. Don't be so naïve and self confident. You're not exempt. You could fall flat on your face as easily as anyone else. Forget about self-confidence; it's useless. Cultivate God-confidence."

Let us now begin to examine some of the insidious ways that a beautiful, vibrant and thriving ministry can be so affected that it withers, and the role some assistants can play towards the demise of these great ministries.

1. MURMURING

Murmuring is defined as a low continuous sound as of a brook, the wind or trees or indistinct voices. It is a mumbled or private expression of discontent or a complaint in a low tone or in private.

I have come to learn that disgruntled pastors and leaders often spread their discontentment among the congregation in the bid to gain sympathy and before long the congregation may turn against their own pastor.

They Now Pay Tithes to the Assistant Pastor

I know of an assistant pastor who started complaining to a few of the influential and affluent church members that he was not being treated well by the Senior Pastor. He claimed that the Senior Pastor enjoyed all the benefits while he and his children were famishing. Before long some of the members had stopped paying their tithes and were the assistant pastor's special financiers. They started paying their tithes directly to the assistant pastor.

Some people are never satisfied about anything. They find reason to complain about everything and anything.

Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word:

But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.

Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness: To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.

Psalm 106:24 -27

Murmuring is a sign of ingratitude and borders on exaggeration. The Israelites were specialists at complaining.

- **They murmured about food.**

I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God.

Exodus 16:12

- **They murmured about the water.**

And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.

And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?

And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

Exodus 15:23-25

They murmured about their leaders.

And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt.

And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:

And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

Exodus 16:1-3

- **They murmured about thirst.**

And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?

Exodus 17:3

- **They murmured about God.**

And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.

Deuteronomy 1:27

How far can a people go in the expression of their ingratitude? I believe it is the duty of the assistant pastor to help quell such murmuring in the congregation instead of igniting them.

Assistant Pastor's Home Becomes "Murmuring Centre"

Unfortunately, in many cases it is the assistant pastor who spearheads all this.

There is a church in my city which almost disintegrated because the assistant pastor's home became the centre of all murmuring. Every Sunday afternoon some of the key leaders would gather in the home of the assistant pastor and criticize everything in the church including the pastor's sermon. This "church in the house" increased in number by the day and their grousing now degenerated into questioning the calling of their pastor. Do not murmur against the goodman of the house.

...they murmured against the goodman of the house,

Matthew 20:11

2. STRIFE

To have strife means to have a bitter, heated and sometimes violent conflict. Strife is lack of agreement or harmony.

Many churches are often destroyed by strife among the pastors or leadership. As a ministry grows the number of leaders increase. More branches are created and more pastors are required. However, with growth comes the possibility of strife.

The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude.

How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife?

Deuteronomy 1:10, 12

When God blessed Abraham and Lot the unfortunate result was strife among their herdsmen.

And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.

Genesis 13:5-7

Sometimes the inevitable solution to strife is separation. Some Senior Pastors must be able to look into the eyes of their assistants and insist they leave. You will be amazed at the peace that will ensue.

And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.

Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

Genesis 13:8-9

Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yea, strife and reproach shall cease.

Proverbs 22:10

When there is strife the church becomes a laughing stock to the world. We claim to be proponents of love yet we fight and contend amongst ourselves as the world looks on in amazement.

Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves.

Psalm 80:6

Some pastors will discover that it is a higher blessing to stay with your few church members and build them up into a beautiful family in an environment of peace than to have a large church laden with strife and contention.

Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife.

Proverbs 17:1

According to the Message Bible: “A meal of bread and water in contented peace is better than a banquet spiced with quarrels.”

I wish all assistant pastors will walk in humility and give the Senior Pastors the necessary peace they need to lead and shepherd the flock of God. The root cause of strife is often pride. It is a feeling that you are as good as the Senior Pastor.

He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat.

Proverbs 28:25

Strife is one of the works of the flesh and has a way of hindering the work of the ministry. It opens the door for Satan himself to enter the church and bring confusion and total chaos.

But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

James 3:14, 16

3. ENVY / JEALOUSY

Envy is a feeling of grudging admiration and a desire to have something that is possessed by another. It also means resentment at seeing the success of another.

Jealousy means strongly wanting someone else's position, advantages or possessions.

Envy and jealousy are deadly twin brothers which when allowed in any ministry can totally wipe it out.

Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?

Proverbs 27:4

Paul had laboured tirelessly in building up many churches including the church in Corinth. Many things had affected the church in Corinth adversely. Paul's concern and worry was that he would find this church in a deplorable state having entertained many destructive works of the flesh including envy.

For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

2 Corinthians 12:20

Envy and jealousy are manifestations of a carnal ministry.

For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

1 Corinthians 3:3

It is possible to do the work of God with a wrong motive. Paul had been imprisoned and surprisingly some Christians began to preach Christ just to make the point that they were as good as Paul and the ministry could go on without Paul. In their hearts they wished Paul would stay in prison forever. For all you know they had always eyed Paul's position as the leader so they took advantage of his absence to assert themselves.

Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

Philippians 1:15-16

In every game of football there are reserve players who sit on the bench ready to step in when the need arises. However, it will be highly immoral and regrettable for a reserve player to wish that a player is injured so that he can take his place.

It is sad to say that there are many assistant pastors who are like green-eyed monsters waiting to sit in their Senior Pastors' chair at the slightest opportunity they may get. I heard an assistant pastor pass a comment once that his Senior Pastor was like Saul who had lost the anointing and he was like David, the anointed king in waiting.

Assistant pastors who have such negative inclinations must bow their heads in shame!

Envy and jealousy are the first doors the enemy uses to gain access into any ministry and to carry out his diabolical plans.

But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

James 3:14, 16

- **Envy drove Cain to murder his brother Abel.**

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

Genesis 4:4-5, 8

- **Envy drove Joseph's brothers to sell him to slavery.**

And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven star s made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

Genesis 37:9-11

- **Envy drove the Jewish leaders to sell Jesus.**

Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

Matthew 27:17-18

- **Envy drove the Jews to oppose and assault Paul.**

And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

Acts 13:44-45

And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

Acts 17:4-5

It will be simplistic to dismiss this subject without thoroughly examining yourself and asking for grace to overcome all traces of jealousy. It is an issue of the heart and must not be trivialized!

Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

James 4:5

"Us" means you and I!

4. DIVISIONS

One of the meanings of the word "division" is discord or dissension that splits a group. The strength and beauty of a church or ministry is the ability to stand together as one cohesive body.

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

1 Corinthians 1:10

An assistant pastor must seek to promote unity and strengthen the bonds of the ministry.

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:3

Jesus' wish and prayer for the church was that they be one. This was to serve as the strongest witness to the world that Jesus was sent by the Father.

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

John 17:21

Paul scolded the church in Corinth as they exhibited their immaturity in their factious behaviour. He refused to be party to this. Every pastor must stand against any attempt by the congregation to pitch pastor against pastor. An assistant pastor who knows his place will aggressively ward off any suggestion that will put him at par with his Senior Pastor.

Divisions are clear sigs of carnality.

For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:3-11

Paul explains from this passage above that:

- All pastors are servants of God - v5.
- All pastors have been given different assignments and gifts - v5.
- All pastors are only channels - v5.

- God is the source of all blessing that brings increase to the pastors' work - v6.
- All pastors are nothing - v7.
- All pastors have one aim - v8.
- All pastors shall be rewarded individually according to how they fulfilled their calling - v8.
- All pastors are working together in one vineyard under God - v9.
- All pastors must use the grace and gifting they have received to build the church - v10.
- Jesus Christ is the only foundation upon which all pastors must build - v11.

Any assistant pastor who carefully reads and meditates on this passage will be content to stay in his place, understanding that God's reward will be based not on which chair you sit on but how well you sit on your chair.

But if any man seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God. Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

1 Corinthians 11:16-18

Divisiveness and discordant behaviour should not be praised and pastors and leaders who cause division should be marked and avoided like the plague.

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

Romans 16:17

To “mark” means to make conspicuous. Senior Pastors are obliged to make public, leaders who cause divisions so that others will not be carried away by their subtlety.

5. GOSSIP

Gossip can simply be defined as a malicious report or comment about a person by another.

The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.

Proverbs 18:8

The Bible exhorts us to refrain from speaking evil about anybody. Words are powerful and can affect a person permanently. There is a common saying that “words may not break bones but they break hearts”.

If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

James 1:26

The Bible exhorts us to be circumspect with what we say otherwise we invalidate all that we claim to stand for. There are many assistant pastors who say very diabolical things about their Senior Pastors to others. They may even go on sometimes to discuss their Senior Pastor in a derogatory way among themselves. In the presence of the Senior Pastor, however, they say all the nice and praise-worthy things. But they say the most terrible things you can imagine in his absence.

An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour: but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.

Proverbs 11:9

Such manifestation of hypocrisy and pretense can contribute to the destruction of the ministry. When such gossip eventually gets to the ears of

the Senior Pastor it erodes all trust he has in his associates. Trust is the foundation of all relationships so when it is eroded the building collapses.

The Message Bible paraphrases Psalm 31:13 as, “the street- talk has me ‘criminally insane’! Behind locked doors they plot how to ruin me for good.”

He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.

Proverbs 20:19

A lot of assistant pastors who gossip have a way of speaking with authority to make their words seem authentic and even more so because of their closeness to the Senior Pastor. If we are going to have long-lasting ministries and enjoy wonderful days we should be careful not to speak maliciously about our Senior Pastors.

For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

1 Peter 3:10

You must always see your closeness to a man of God as a privilege and not misuse this opportunity to speak to others about him in a way that will discredit him. No king would want a blabber mouth to work in his palace.

A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

Proverbs 11:13

You and I know that a lot of quarrels between good friends are caused by gossip and it would be expedient for every Senior Pastor to remove a blabber mouth far from him.

Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.

Proverbs 26:20

Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.

Psalm 101:5

When people see you on the stage apparently giving glowing tributes to your Senior Pastor and in another setting saying nasty things you make yourself a laughing stock!

Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?

Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

James 3:10 -12

The credibility of a an assistant pastor is measured not by what he says in public about his Senior Pastor in his presence but what he says about him in private.

Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

Ecclesiastes 10:20

Chapter 22

Wrong Descriptions of the Assistant Pastor

The office of an assistant pastor is an honourable one and ought to be respected. However, some people have a way of redescribing this most treasured office in a derogatory manner. Their intentions are evil and they do not have the faintest idea what the beauty of unity and submission can bring. They are often motivated by envy as they see ministries with strong assistants who are very loyal to their Senior Pastors flourishing. I have personally heard some people use such unsavoury terms to describe my fellow assistants and myself.

For example, they refer to an assistant pastor as:

1. A Stooge

A stooge is a person whose actions are entirely controlled by another. A stooge is a person used to do unpleasant work by another. He is somebody a joker uses to joke. A stooge is also somebody who is exploited by others, especially somebody used by criminals in committing their crimes. Can you believe this awful way of describing a loyal assistant?

2. A Fool

A fool is a person who lacks good sense of judgement, an idiot who is easily deceived; a stupid or silly person who has been tricked. It is also an offensive term for somebody with below- average intelligence or a psychiatric disorder. He cannot think for himself and cannot take any sensible decision on his own. This is yet another devilish description of a faithful assistant.

3. A Clone

A clone is a genetic duplicate of an organism. It also means to produce an exact or near copy of an object or product. A clone's mind is almost one

hundred percent of the original. Every move he makes is exactly that of the original. He cannot exist without the original. This is a laughable insult of the role of a committed assistant.

4. A Yes-Man

This is a weak person who always agrees with his superior in order to obtain favour or approval. He fears to show any opinion which is at variance with his superior. He is always nodding and smiling just to please his superior. Ridiculous name to call a dependent assistant.

5. Pastor's Boy

This is somebody who follows his Senior Pastor and is loyal to him because of a reason. He is not intelligent and acts as a messenger and a spy for the pastor. His hands are in the pastor's mouth. So he treads carefully and gently, because that is where his bread is buttered. My dear friends, this is almost unbelievable.

6. Robot

A machine that resembles a human being and does mechanical routine tasks at a command. Somebody who works or behaves mechanically and emotionlessly.

Please, ignore this description and carry on your God-given assignment.

7. Copy Cat

A copy cat is a low-grade term that is used to describe someone who is thought to be an impersonator, an impressionist or an imitator.

Such re-descriptions of this office of high calling must be totally rejected and not allowed to be propagated. It must be disregarded with all the impunity it deserves.

Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

Titus 1:11

My exhortation to my colleague assistants is to stand firm and strong and to magnify our office, making full proof of our ministry. The devil is a liar. None of these things should move us. Let us be grateful for where God has placed us!

Section 6

CONCLUSION

Chapter 23

My Dream

Several years ago I had a dream. In this dream my Senior Pastor had been invited to preach to a large gathering of ministers at their conference. He asked another assistant pastor and I to go along with him. We were smartly dressed in our dark suits.

As we walked on a path to the conference a very old man approached us asking for help. We were late for the appointment and so we naturally wanted to ignore him. However, my Senior Pastor asked me to wait behind and help this man. I badly wanted to go with my Senior Pastor on this preaching appointment but I decided to do what he would have done if he had the time. I realized this man had thrown up and soiled himself. I started cleaning him up and as I did so he profusely vomited on me as well, totally messing up my nice suit and all.

Now even the hope of catching up and going for the programme was also gone. I had to remove my suit and was left with only my boxer shorts and singlet. Then I suddenly found myself sitting in another large minister's conference still wearing my boxer shorts and singlet. This conference was completely different from the one my Bishop was preaching at. Several of the ministers whom I knew began to laugh at me. I tried to explain the reason why I was dressed like that but they would not listen. I felt humiliated.

Suddenly, I heard the voice of God saying that if I was going to be a good assistant then I did not need to explain myself all the time or even seek to be understood by others. But I should rather seek to please my Senior Pastor for therein lay my blessing. I woke up with more resolve to stay on and serve as an assistant and to magnify the office of an assistant pastor and make it even the more enviable.

This indeed made me meditate seriously on the words from John's Gospel, in which our Lord spoke of His relationship to the Father and to see how

unceasingly He used the words “not” and “nothing” of Himself. The “not I” in Galatians Chapter 2 verse 20, in which Paul expressed his relationship to Christ is the very spirit of what Christ said of His relationship to the Father.

...The Son can do nothing of himself...

John 5:19

I can of mine own self do nothing...

John 5:30

I receive not honour from men.

John 5:41

For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

John 6:38

...My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

John 7 :16

...and I am not come of myself...

John 7:28

...and that I do nothing of myself...

John 8:28

...neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

John 8:42

And I seek not mine own glory...

John 8:50

...the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself...

John 14:10

...and the word which ye hear is not mine...

John 14:24

I pray that till my dying day I will have this same attitude that was in my Lord Jesus!

I love my role as an assistant and I will not trade it for anything! I pray for the grace to continue on this road and to be an example to other assistants.

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