

Leadership That Reflects Christ

25 April 2018



If you have ever visited a funfair hall of mirrors you will have been amused at the images reflected by the mirrors. These images are distorted because the mirrors have been designed with curves and bends. Only a perfectly straight mirror produces an accurate image of what is placed before it. In a hall of mirrors this is cause for much hilarity, but such mirrors in everyday life would prove problematic. For a mirror to be truly useful, it needs to provide an authentic reflection of the original.

In His character, nature, actions and words, Jesus reflected what the Father is like.

When Jesus walked the earth, He could claim with conviction that *'if you have seen me you have seen the Father'* (John 14:9). In His character, nature, actions and words (which themselves were dictated by the Father), Jesus reflected what the Father is like. That is why Paul could write that He is the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15).

The Distortion

Man had originally been tasked with glorifying God in creation, having been made in His image, but chose to decide for himself how to live his life, what to think and how to behave. So sin entered the world and has infected mankind ever since. Every man is affected by sin, which distorts his nature, just like one of those mirrors. Therefore, what fallen man reflects is not the true image of God but a grotesque, blasphemous distortion. This is one reason why God so hates sin.

As the church, we need to reflect to the world what God is like.

Jesus came to save mankind from sin: to restore us back into the image of God so that we could fulfill our God-given purpose of glorifying Him as He always intended. To this end He saves us, and to this end He places us in His church, where we are built together into Him (Eph 2:22). For it isn't just as individuals that we need to be a true reflection of God. As the church, we need to reflect to

the world what God is like. God has chosen the church to be the vessel for revealing His glory (Eph 3:10).

Authentic Leaders Reflecting Jesus

Jesus said, *'I will build my church'*, He is the master builder. But then He delegated to men the responsibility of ensuring that the church properly reflects Him. This is primarily the role of apostles, working in partnership with elders of local churches: to ensure that churches are being built on the foundation of Christ and according to the pattern laid down by Him. For this reason, Paul calls himself a master builder (1 Cor 3:10). This is a tremendous responsibility and requires such men to be, as far as possible, true and authentic representations of Jesus – in the same manner that Jesus was an accurate and authentic representation of His Father: in nature, character and total obedience to Him. Failure to do so will result in a church that doesn't reflect Jesus accurately. It will be a grotesque misrepresentation, just like one of those images in the hall of mirrors.

I cannot afford to let my own preferences, character quirks or pet theologies distort the mirror that I am.

Paul was not without sin (no man is), but was a model to any who are called to a leadership role in the church. He could point out to the churches that they knew his way of life as well as his teachings (1 Thess 2:10) and he could exhort them to *'follow (imitate) me as I follow (imitate) Christ.'* (1 Cor 11:1)

Leaders Reflect Their Leaders

So it is that a leadership team needs to not only reflect the nature and character of Jesus, but that of their team leader too. By this I don't mean becoming a pale imitation or trying to be something that we are not. Rather, within our own gifting, calling and individuality, to seek to accurately reflect the values, life and teachings of those who lead us.

I have the privilege of travelling the world, ministering to churches. I am not an apostle, but I work in an apostolic field and am sent by apostolic leaders. If they have a responsibility for building the church by representing Jesus exactly, then I in turn have a responsibility to be an exact representation of them, in my life and my teachings. Paul himself would say of Timothy, *'He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.'* (1 Cor 4:17)

I need my life, words and character to be as straight as possible, so that what I reflect is a true image of the one who sent me.

This principle also holds true for leaders of local churches. Once a man is recognised as an apostle, there is a responsibility to accept him as an apostle; as a representative of the Lord Jesus Himself. Acts 2:42 tells us that *'they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching.'*

I cannot afford to let my own preferences, character quirks or pet theologies distort the mirror that I am. I need my life, words and character to be as straight as possible, so that what I reflect is a true image of the one who sent me. In doing so, I then represent not just the team leader well, but I

display the nature of Christ and help to build a church that looks like Him.

As we all do this, like well-made mirrors, we will all reflect back the same image of Jesus – to the church *and* to a lost world that so desperately needs Him.