

THE WAVES OF REVIVAL SERIES

The Barnabas and Philip Wave is the last of the waves of Revival. In these last days, we will see God raising up a fresh new lay ministry just as He has done in the case of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship in the past few decades. This time, they will move further than the previous group. In Acts 4:32- 37, we see the first mention of a person named Barnabas. Barnabas was among those people who were touched by God and he functioned in quite a prominent role in the Body of Christ. God is raising up a group of people who will stand in between what is called the five-fold and the laity. Some of them may move into the five-fold in the latter days and some may not. There is a group of people that God is raising up like Barnabas and Philip who perhaps will function as lay-leaders, but at the time of the completion of their work in the secular world, they may begin to move into full-time ministry just as we see in Barnabas' life and ministry.

Reputable, Spirit-filled Laypeople

We will consider some of the characteristics of this move. First of all, these people may be in the background for some time. They will function in the background unseen, yet as leaders and highly responsible people. They may not be in the fulltime ministry at all. Some may move into that not because they are called but because of the pressing needs. These people will be faithful, successful in their own right in their secular life. Notice this in Acts 6:3 in the life of Philip. Here they have a different situation whereby they have a certain need in the church. It was a physical need. There were Hebrew-speaking widows and Greek speaking widows who had to be taken care of. They needed a group of leaders to function in that role.

You do not need a call to the five-fold office to be in that role. They did not say, "Let's look for a person who is an apostle, prophet, pastor or teacher". They said, "Let's look for people who have capability, who are full of wisdom and full of the Holy Spirit who can meet this natural yet spiritual need." So this group of people may not have a call to the five-fold office, though some of them may move into that later on. They need not be called into the five-fold ministry.

Everyone in the Body of Christ has a certain ministry to fulfill. We need not be called to the five-fold to do a work of ministry. In Eph.4: 11 *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.* This verse was referring to the five-fold. But Eph.4: 12 *for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ* - is referring to a group of Christians who are not called to the five-fold ministry. They are a particular group of people who are equipped, trained and prepared for the ministry. In the society that we have today, we realize that everyone has their own work or profession. Yet inside, each one of us has a desire to serve God in some way. Perhaps some get to do that when they retire. Others get to do even before they retire. Out there in the secular world, we do not get to do much except to maintain our spiritual life, to grow spiritually and help a little here and there, but not do a whole lot of ministry work.

Due to the responsibility in the secular world, you probably do not have much time for what the Bible says "the work of the ministry". However, God is going to make it possible in this decade for some people who may not have a call to the ministry, to move into that work. It also includes people who are in the ministry of helps; for example if someone is called to be an evangelist, they may have a whole lot of staff to help them. Who are the staffs? The staff would be those who have a certain leading of the Spirit to serve under a ministry.

They also need a certain leading to work in a Christian organization. Who are these people? How are they trained? These are the people whom we would include in the Barnabas and Philip Wave. God is going to raise up a whole group of them to be skilled and anointed to do the work.

Acts 6:3 *Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.* Note that there are 3 things mentioned there. *Good reputation* says that they have a good name both outside and within Christian circles. They are well known as good people outside in the secular world. This means that they have shown their Christian testimony, their example and their love.

Secondly, these groups of people have to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Filled with the Spirit not just to bring healing. It is interesting to note that some people see that as only necessary to heal the sick and to cast out devils. It is also essential that we be filled with the Spirit to be a secretary to type a letter, to be filled with the Spirit to serve food to the widows, to do social work, administrative work and others. These things must also be prayed over before it is done.

The Bible requires them to be filled with the Holy Spirit to serve widows. It did not say that they have to lay hands on the widows, as some may not want them to lay hands. All they did was just to bring the food to the widows. We need to be anointed to be hospitable and to transport people. The anointing is not to be separated from our secular life. There is a spiritual satisfaction that comes when the anointing comes to do secular work. Many people feel that something is missing in their lives when they do secular work. That is because they did not tap into God's anointing to do their secular work. The Bible says that there is an anointing to do all these work. In Acts 6, it shows that there is an anointing to serve; there is an anointing to build the Tabernacle of Moses, an anointing to administrate like Joseph did. We need this kind of anointing that the Holy Spirit is capable of giving.

The 3rd area described here is that they must be filled with wisdom. It says here in verse 3, "*...who we may appoint over this business*". They called the serving of widows a business. This is a church business, a church activity. There will be tremendous activity in the church in these last days. God will raise up these group of people with this gift. Why don't God use the five-fold ministers?

The Bible shows us that apparently the five-fold ministers is not equipped in this area nor are they called into this area. The apostles found it difficult. Acts 6:2 *Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables."* There is a line of division that is drawn. It is not desirable that they get entangled in these things and neglect the Word of God. They must spend their time in the Word and in prayer to feed and train the people. These groups of people are what we call "successful" in the secular sense. By success, we do not mean that you earn a high salary, but it means that you are capable of doing whatever you are doing out there and you have built a good reputation. You are a good man or a good woman and well known for your good testimony. This group may look similar to the other waves but it is different.

Why is this group different from the Daniel Wave and the Joseph Wave? The Daniel Wave and Joseph Wave never got directly involved in any church work. The Daniel Wave is always called to be in the secular realm. Some of them may be great scientists, engineers, inventors and they will always be there. They are not involved at all in the actual church work. This is the same with the Joseph Wave. They are so busy in the secular sense. God placed them there to spoil the goods of the enemy, to bring the wealth of the sinners into the hands of the righteous and to channel them into the kingdom of God.

These groups of people in the Barnabas and Philip Wave are different. They may have a certain sense of success in the secular world, but their real place is not in the secular. The secular is only a temporary phase in their lives. Perhaps, it may just be a short while until they are established and then they move into the Christian scene or Christian organization where they become full-fledge in the Christian organization doing the "business" in a Christian ministry or Christian organization. That is the wave we are talking about.

One-to-one Work

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The 2nd characteristics of the Barnabas and Philip Wave are that this group of people is very adept and very good at one-to-one work. The five-fold ministers are

usually called to the ministry to the masses. It takes a different principle and training to minister to thousands of people. It is another special gift and training to minister one-to-one. Many times those who could minister to the masses could not minister one-to-one, or those who could minister one-to-one could not minister to the masses. However, some others can do both. Philip, of course, could do both, but Barnabas did not succeed in doing both. Those that God is raising up in the Barnabas and Philip Wave will have the ability to minister one-to-one, which is important. When you attend to the business of the church, it is not just getting the work done but also the ability at the same time to minister to the people who are closest to you.

There could be thousands of widows in Acts 6: 1 who were neglected and there were murmurings and strife. When there are murmurings and strife, you need a man of peace to be there. If you put someone who is highly disciplined and lacks the ability to relate to people in this situation, you will only multiply the murmurings. It is not just a capability of doing the business but it is the capability to deal one-to-one with people. If anyone of you has been what Jesus called, "peacemakers (who are called the sons of God)", you will notice that the main gift is to be able to get a person aside and deal one-to-one. If about 50 people are quarrelling and striving, you will have the special gift to be able to pick up the right people who are the source of strife and to get them aside to minister to the hurts in their lives. All murmurings and strife are caused by internal hurts.

Let's say that the church in Acts 6 had multiplied to 30, 40,000 with one or two thousand widows to feed and you have been selected to take care of this problem where there is striving among the widows. To deal with strife is one thing but to deal with an elderly widow who is in strife is another thing, because elderly people listen usually only to another elderly person, which makes it twice as difficult. Taking over the job to feed them is not enough because there is that hurt that needs to be healed, or else strife will erupt again. So, God raised up the Barnabas and Philip Wave with the special anointing to minister one-to-one. Barnabas had the special gift and anointing (Acts 9:26,27) to reach to Saul whom no one wanted to befriend and brought Saul into the fold. In Acts 15:36,37, Barnabas stood by his relative Mark in his misunderstanding with Paul. Barnabas will not give up on a person. He was gifted in the one-to-one ministry. Paul was involved in the mass ministry while Barnabas was in the background of a one-to-one ministry (Acts 14:12) patiently encouraging the people. One-to-one ministry is rewarding although the world tends to look at big things. Sometimes those who are called to the one-to-

one ministry are neglected and unappreciated by people. Thus sometimes they may feel inferior to those who are called to minister to the masses and they try to be in the mass ministry and fail. God has given to each his/her special gifting whether it is a one-to-one ministry or a mass ministry. God rewards you for your faithfulness to what you are called to do and not for the number of people you have ministered to.

In the end, Paul appreciated Barnabas' ministry because in 2 Timothy 4:11, he wrote of how Mark had grown "useful to me for ministry". The relationship between Paul and Barnabas was re-established. Mark was the one who wrote the Gospel of Mark.

Philip also had the same gifting (Acts 8:26). He was called to minister to one person who had been a dignitary of a country. It takes a gifting to approach a dignitary and speak at his level and to minister. It is the Barnabas and Philip gifting. God is going to raise up this group of Barnabas and Philip ministry so that they will be in position to minister to people in high place. People in high places have their own peculiar quirks because they are used to attention, authority, power and wealth. It has to be a different kind of gifting to be able to reach out to this kind of people. One-to-one ministry takes a lot of patience and skill to build up a rapport. It requires a gift of diplomacy. This group called to the Barnabas and Philip ministry will have such a gift of diplomacy to be able to reach the hearts of these people even to the most difficult one. In this decade, God is going to use these people and place them with opportunities to reach out to dignitaries. They will be the only people there and they will learn how to reach out. They will have the gift like Queen Esther's. She had the gift of diplomacy. She fasted three days, which tells us that she depended on the Lord; the gift was from the Lord and not of her own.

King Ahasuerus was no fool in his position as king. He knew she was there in his court for something. Queen Esther was very diplomatic by not asking immediately for the king to spare her people – that would be wrong timing. She prepared the atmosphere for her request to be presented. On the 2nd day when the king was well dined and pleased that she made her request known. If everybody were to have the Barnabas and Philip gift of diplomacy, there will be no strife because everyone will know how to respect people and how to approach them.

Philip was sent to minister to the eunuch, a dignitary. There are many ways of approaching the eunuch but Philip asked him a question after the Holy Spirit asked him to run after the chariot. However before he spoke, he listened. One-to-one ministry is to listen first. You must be slow to speak and quick to listen and start from the other person's platform first. Know the mind of the person you are listening to. As he ran alongside the chariot, he was listening to what the eunuch was reading (Acts 8:31) before he asked if he understood what he was reading from the scroll of Isaiah. He then got an invitation to get onto the chariot with the eunuch.

According to Christian traditions and the writing of the early church that eunuch got born again, baptized and when he went back to Ethiopia, he continued the revival where the church is in existence today. This happened because of Philip who ministered on a one-to-one basis to him. We realize that Philip also had a mass ministry gifting, but since we are emphasizing on his personality and ability, we realize that he was someone who understood this. He started off as one of the seven. They were chosen because of their ability to relate to people.

Gradual Ministerial Development

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Thirdly, the Barnabas and Philip Wave will move into their respective ministry gradually, step by step – a gradual development of their gifting that God has for them in their lives. Eventually, some of them may end up in the full-time ministry in some way or they may not. Barnabas was just one of those faithful ones and was known by the people because of his hospitality (Acts 4: 36). Slowly as he grew in his reputation, the apostles took note of him. By Acts 9:27; he had access to the 12 apostles. He grew into a powerful apostolic office (Acts 13: 2), but along the way he became the main front man of the apostles (Acts 11:22). We see the development of his ministry.

This was the same with Philip the evangelist (Acts 6:5) who started out as one of the

seven serving the widows and he grew into the fullness of the ministry that God wanted. He was preaching the Word of God successfully as an evangelist by Acts chapter 8. These people would be there right now in existence, but they are there in the background. However, when the need is there, they will appear. It is this group of people although they are unnamed who became the group in Acts 15:6 *Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.* This second group of apostles and lay-leaders came together in the church in Jerusalem, and these were the Barnabas and Philip Wave that God raised up.

I believe that in the last days, the church needs to have a place and a room where a person who is out there functioning in the world can to come in and grow in God and later to function and flow in the ministry. In our church, we call it the home fellowship pastors or the home ministry pastors where they can function in some ministries. Some of them may grow out to be in the 5-fold ministry and some may never. What is important is that every church whatever they may call it, needs to have an organizational place or structure where a lay ministry can come up and minister the Word of God or minister in some leadership roles and fulfill them. It is important for every church to have a structure of elders and deacons. A church cannot exist with just the five-fold ministry. We need leaders, men and women of God in capable positions to minister to the flock.

In Acts 21:8, we see that Philip has a ministry of hospitality. The evidence of a ministry of hospitality is when you take care of a person at your own cost and serve them. After you have taken care of them, there will be no complaints whether that person was an easy person to care of or not. Every ministry costs something. Philip in spite of the extent in which his ministry went forth, he still got involved in those sideline ministries in which he was good at from the time he started in Acts 6. In his latter ministry, he was still capable and everyone who passed by Caesarea stopped by his house. It was a real ministry.

The Barnabas and Philip wave rise up in the time of need (Acts 8:4,5). There is a balance here. There is a difference between a need and a call. When you see a need, you have a burden. When you are called, you must definitely have a burden and see the needs. But both are different. When you have a burden, it may not necessarily mean that you have a call to the ministry. Some are called into the five-

fold ministry and they see a need and have a burden for the body of Christ. Yet some who are similarly burdened may not be called to the five-fold ministry.

The Barnabas and Philip Wave have a peculiar ability to rise up when the need comes. It would be wrong to call them the jack of all trades but in a sense, when there is a need even though they have not done that before will be the people to rise up to the occasion to fulfill it. There will be many more peculiar needs as the body of Christ grows towards the last days. It will be the Barnabas and Philip ministries that will rise up to meet the need.

It looks like Philip did not go into the ministry because God called him but it was because he was running away from persecution. As he was getting away, he preached the Word and suddenly his ministry took off (Acts 8). Similarly in Acts 6, if there was no need among the widows, Philip, Stephen and the others may not have risen in their ministries. They might have remained in the background. All because of a need, they suddenly rose up. In the last days when there is an outpouring of the Spirit, suddenly there will be a lack of pastors and it will be the Barnabas and Philip that will come to the rescue.