

To Whom It May Concern.

Topic: People like Epaphras should report and be connected with people like Paul.

Epaphras, Paul's convert, a faithful and hard working minister, was responsible to the churches that he planted in Colossia, Laodicea and Hierapolis. He faced certain struggles in these churches due to some false teaching that contradicted the truth. He needed to travel from his place, Asia Minor, that is Turkey, to Rome in Italy to meet Paul. He travelled across countries, across continents (from Asia to Europe), land and sea, in order to reach Paul and inform him about the situation, seeking advice and solutions. Epaphras was a transparent person; he told Paul every important detail in these churches (Colossians 1:8, Colossians 4:17), and this information helped Paul to write letters, one of them the letter to the Colossians, in which Paul refuted the false teachings and described to them the truth, supplying them with teachings and instructions pertaining to family life, work, holiness, and other important aspects of Christian life, as well as recommending Epaphras to them as a genuine and faithful fellow servant with him for Christ's service (Colossians 4:12-13; Colossians 1:7).

The Church of God has a structure to govern the churches. The structure of the denomination was to serve the churches and help them grow. This is the issue I want to discuss:

Does the structure of the Church of God have people like Paul, whom faithful and genuine ministers like Epaphras can connect with to report and to ask counsel and advices to deal with crisis and critical issues in the churches that are under their care? Frankly speaking, in my opinion, no.

Does the structure of the Church of God remove people like Paul and replace them with people who are unable to help faithful and genuine ministers and support them by giving them counsel to solve critical issues in their churches? In my opinion, yes.

Does the structure of the Church of God use geopolitical barriers (Regions, States, Provinces, Countries, and Continents) as an excuse to obstruct the communication and partnerships in the ministry between people like Epaphras and Paul? Yes. By the way, church leaders did not tell Epaphras to report to someone in Asia Minor.

In order for the Apostolic ministry (Acts 1:25) to continue to flow in the church, the structure of the Church of God should not use geopolitical barriers to prevent faithful ministers like Epaphras to connect and report to competent people like Paul who can support them with advices. People like Paul and people like Epaphras must be together; they cannot be apart in working for the Lord. Scriptures do not support their separation; its puts them together (Philemon 1:23).

In my opinion, it can be solved in this way: In addition to the existing structure, new offices for competent and compatible people like Paul and Epaphras should be created in various places to confirm ministry partnerships and help ministers and churches around the world to report problems and seek advices, so that they can grow and find relief from their problems.

These offices should not give additional cost on the church, because people like Paul and Epaphras must willingly volunteer; ready with their resources and not wanting nor waiting on the church to spend on them to serve the Lord. Epaphras travelled and spent money with a genuine motive and desire to reach Paul who was in jail; not expecting refunds for the money he spent nor for an allowance, but for counsel, advices, and prayers.

I believe it is time for things to come in Biblical order. Even if the Biblical solution will not take place, people like Paul and Epaphras will continue to be faithful to their calling and ministry despite of all the hindrances; they will receive their reward from the Lord, and the afflicted churches will continue to exist, but their problems and bondages will move from bad to worse and people will not get helped. When the structure of the Church of God prevents people like Epaphras from reporting problems and getting advices from people like Paul, then the leadership of the Church of God is accountable before God to correct that. The structure that we use in serving others should be Scriptural.

Prayer: O God, I cry unto You, have mercy on your churches that you shed your blood for. Do something, O Lord; stretch out Your hand and help Your churches to make the right decision. Help the church leaders do the right action, hear my cry, in Jesus' name, Amen.

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