

JUSTICE

by John Dawson

Let's talk a little about the issue of justice. When it comes to the Kingdom of God, we have real temptations that pagan people don't have. One of the reasons is because our expectations are so high. When you think about it, we literally expect each other to act like Jesus.

I remember one time about someone coming into my office and saying, "John, God has really been dealing with me about joining your ministry, and I want to commit myself and acknowledge your headship." I happened to be the base leader at this time. And it frightened me. In fact, I came around from behind the desk and came to the couch and knelt down. I said, "Look, let's both submit to Jesus, because He is really the base director, and at some time in my humanity, I'm going to be a big disappointment to you."

I was out in my neighborhood once, and one of my neighbors had painted his Volkswagen bug an iridescent metal pink. He and his neighbors were standing around drinking beer, kicking the tire, and making comments. He said, "Someone's going to steal it the blankety-blank thing!" Actually someone did that. He was down on in a bar on San Fernando Road, and he comes out to where his car was, and there's just an oil spot. Now I know this guy. He's a raw pagan. He's a cynic. He would probably go back into the bar, swear a lot, order a couple of drinks, and announce to the other patrons, "Well, that's life!!" He wouldn't be shattered. He wouldn't be disappointed. He had already said he expected that it would happen. He has the victim mentality because he's in the kingdom of darkness. If you're in the kingdom of darkness, you're in a leadership structure that hates you, and has a plan for your life that is trying to kill you. So people adjust to that by taking on the protective measure of cynicism. They expect to be put upon, to and

Now when you get saved you come from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son, or you are "transferred" as it says in the Bible. So you come into the kingdom where you are taught that God loves you, has a fantastic plan for your life, and all things work together for good, and so we expect wonderful things to happen. We expect beauty, order, and justice. The fact is though human structures are improving, the leadership is improving even within the Kingdom of God.

Now let's look at this issue, for when it comes to the point that when we get bitter, we do have imperfect fathers and mothers, and there are character issues. But it is very important to see the way God governs, his structures according to the Kingdom of God. We see at the core of creation is the Trinity, and there you have order and function. Then you have a kind of governance implied, a division of labor there. And so let's look at that. Now I don't have a fancy message on this. I'm making this up as I go.

Let's found this on some basic things: first of all the purpose of coordinate structures in the Kingdom of God. I think the first of these would be that Jesus be exalted. For

instance, if you were a high school kid, and someone came who was a four-star general to speak to your senior class. He would be an ordinary person in drab, military-colored clothing. And you would be unimpressed with that. What if you saw that same general in a military parade? And you saw all the tanks and hardware and the forces and troops under his command paraded down the main street of your town. Then you would understand who you met in the classroom. And there is something when we come to a March for Jesus. It exalts the Lord. So coordinate structures gives us a sense of governance and us being governed together in some kind of array, whether it is for an outreach or worship --- it exalts the Lord. And it's got to be the first reason why coordinate structures are valid because He is then seen as the head of the army, the Lord of Hosts, the King of Kings. And there is a revelation of His majesty. Jesus is the friend who sticks closer than a brother, but He is also the Lord of Lords.

A second purpose of coordinate structures is that there is unity and harmony of relationship and that it is enhanced through accountability. Disorder is a temptation to sin in the areas of _____ and independence. And so it is good for us to have someone convene us and someone to ask us to do something according to our strengths. We need governing. And the Bible says that governance shall rest upon the shoulders of Jesus. And so the Holy Spirit comes among us, and there is a soft way in the way that God governs us. He organizes His kingdom through gifts of friendship, and out of those alliances of the heart there is a division of labor and then ministries are born out of it. Local churches are born out of this and that is also the basis of the family.

There is another purpose of coordinate structures and that is the unfinished tasks of the Church universal and the Church local who then _____ toward the completion. So for instance, when we have something like Project 4K, where we measure the unfinished tasks by looking at the people groups of the earth, and realize that there are a whole lot of them hidden who don't have the Gospel --- that is a coordinate structure that is very valid.

The last general purpose for coordinate of structures is that all might find inclusion when we enter the Kingdom of God. So for example when we have evangelism and outreach and a follow-up program, and we assign young people to do this. Look at the books of Timothy and Titus in which there would have been an evangelistic crusade on the Island of Crete, and the following up would be the establishment of elders and pastoral care.

Now let's look at the nature of divine government. First of all it is personal rather than hierarchy. No human structure is a substitute of our relationship with God. There's the idea of the priesthood of all believers. No human structure limits our access to Jesus as the King. This is just a basic point, but it is an important one.

The ultimate structure of the Kingdom of God is very simple. It is you as part of the Bride and Christ as the Bridegroom. Any human structure within the Kingdom of God is tempered and exists within a time frame. There are a lot of analogies in the scriptures. Most of them are organic: the olive tree, the grape vine, and the fig tree. One of the

things that is most important to think about here is that different structures are appropriate at different stages in the growth of the Christian organization of a church, movement or ministry.

The ultimate model of family relationship that comes out of God, is the governing of the family. If you think about a 29-year-old guy with his wife and their string of little kids, now what form of government would that be? If you would call it by a political name, you would say that it is probably a benevolent dictatorship. I have a six-year-old in my home right now, and my oldest child is really a married young man of 27 who happens to be a YWAM leader in Brazil. His wife is expecting a baby. Now there is a whole different form of government in my relationship with the six-year-old little girl or the son who has his own family. Now what's happened there? Even with the six-year-old, there has been an evolving governance over her. When she was first born, I would check her diaper. If I were to handle her in that way right now, I would be arrested by the laws of most lands and convicted as a molester. Now what's happened? Well, what's happened is when a little baby is born, parents will know that they are the emperor of your universe, and you have become their slave. Now you have total authority over them jurisdictionally, but you are also a total slave. And so those two circles -- the circle of servanthood and the circle of jurisdiction -- almost completely overlap. But as that child grows they begin to assume greater and greater authority over their domain and person. As their domain increases, your domain as a leader or parent decreases.

Now the same is true with ministries. A new ministry that is born usually begins with apostolic leadership that is highly directed and centralized. The Lord has spoken. We are going to do this. So for instance you go from an apostolic season like what we have in YWAM, to the plurality of elders, where you have a group of mature people who are confirming the word of the Lord together. We have three great models of this in church history, and we even have arguments over them. You have the apostolic, in the Episcopal, where you refer to the structure, you have the Presbyterian with the multiple eldership, and you have the congregational form, where you are involving the widest number of people. Now if we absolutize the theories of all of this and when we hammer what the Bible teaches about it, this becomes one of the points where we get wounds, brokenness, and we accuse one another of injustice and of not being Biblical. And it's one of the things that we have got to understand that we must give grace to one another.

I could put it this way: "How should we be governed, John?" My answer is this: "Do what love and wisdom dictates in that circumstance." Now YWAM internationally for a long time has had the Global Leadership Team, which is an appropriate Biblical fellowship. So let's look at this.

The evolution of authority within the family shows us that as people move together in time, authority moves from dependence on dominant leadership, commands and directives, accountability that is required. Think of Jesus as the Good Shepherd who leaves the ninety and nine who goes and gets the sheep that has gone off the cliff. That is someone being rescued; they are being picked up and carried back. In some ways that is

a rescuing, disciplinary action. So the necessity of structure discipline is really being dictated by fatherly, motherly leadership.

But as time passes, that should change. It should move to a group dynamic, a multiplicity of leaders of ministries, the teaching of principle to give direction, persuasion and example, consensus and plurality confirming direction, appreciation and varieties of individual strengths, the free exercise of diverse ministries, based on personal initiative, not just because someone is called to do it, and an atmosphere of love and trust, accountability that is voluntary in which we humbly recognize our need of other people. Of course that is a vast subject. We don't have time to go into that today. But we can see that the Trinity is the ultimate model of that.

Let's think about the Trinity. Let's think about what is implied by the ultimate relationship that is the Trinity. In the Trinity we see that they are equal in authority but different in function. When it comes to the Trinity, you can't say, "Who's in charge?" You could have a big debate on this – you could say it's God the Father, Jesus is called the King of Kings – you are not going to be able to figure it out. They are equal in authority but different in function. In the history of the Trinity they complete each other; they do not compete with each other. They are totally dependent on each other. In the book of John, it says, "the Holy Spirit will glorify me", or when Jesus says, "I will do only what the Father shows me to do." There is absolute truth and transparency. Therefore there is absolute trust. They serve and they glorify one another. They have a singleness of purpose. They represent the ultimate purity of motive, for they experience the ultimate in pleasure. Our deepest pleasure in the hierarchy of pleasure is intimacy. That is what we so thirst for, because we are made in the image of God. So the Trinity is all about the highest form of pleasure that is represented there. It is a governmental reality but it is a relational reality that is awesome.

In the area of functionality, the fact that God has given aptitudes and graces and certain anointings, and with that comes the area of jurisdiction. For instance we see at one point where a king entered the inner court in Israel's history, and a courageous priest rebuked him, and he was smitten with leprosy. He was a good king, but he was usurping the domain of the priesthood, and he was smitten with leprosy. It puts the fear of God on it. There are limits to our gifts and callings and jurisdictions that might come out of it. Primary leadership does not give us the authority to take the gifts and privileges of some of our followers. There are a lot of little things like that that become a point of injustice.

In the Kingdom of God there are no real positions; there are only ministries. In the Kingdom of God there is "bossism". It's like, "I'm the boss; you do this because I am telling you to do this." But in the Kingdom of God we have functional authority, not positional authority.

Let's meditate on this point for a minute. Satan's kingdom looks like a pyramid. One reason is probably because he is not omnipotent. He is not omnipresent, and he is not omniscient. So therefore his kingdom forms into a hierarchical structure in which each

person – in this case fallen angels – are under the authority of a more powerful figure. That seems to be what is implied in the kingdom of darkness.

Now God's Kingdom is fundamentally different. If we think about the kingdom of God on earth expressed more purely, it would be back in Israel's history where they are more than a family, they have become a nation, but they were not yet a kingdom. It was in the time of what the Bible calls the judges. During that time God was King. The reason we know this is that at the time when Samuel's ministry transitions into the kingship of Saul, the people are clamoring for a king, a human authority that they can transfer their trust to. They want to be like the surrounding nations. They want government. They want management. They want military power, and they want identity with human charismatic leadership that that can transfer their trust to. Now Samuel feels rejected, and he goes to God and says, "they have rejected me" and God says, "No, they have rejected Me." Now God is the invisible king. This is not a democracy. The authority flows down from God, not up from the people.

But look how God governed in those days. He governed first of all through law and covenants in the sense that he had revealed himself already in the body of what we call the canon of scripture that was starting to emerge. So there was a call to remembrance that begins with the words "In the beginning God" and then unfolds in what became the Jewish scripture, the law and covenants.

Secondly God was able to rule through the judges. Now the judges sometimes were military leaders and sometimes were prophets. They were people like Deborah. They were people like Gideon. Think of what happened. There is a little phrase in scripture that says, "and the hand of the Lord came on..."so-and-so. You watch what happened after that. You have a release of creative authority, corrective authority, teaching authority, and the expression of the kingdom of God comes through a human personality. And it is an arbitrary act of God's government. God just put his hand on Gideon. He put his hand on Samuel. Now God still exercises that prerogative. This is the story of Loren. The hand of the Lord came on Loren Cunningham. It was not a delegated power from the Assemblies of God. It came originally with the recognition and encouragement of him, but then there came a painful point in which he came to the threshold of am I going to obey the Lord in the matter of being multi-denominational, or am I going to seek the approval of the authority figures at that time in his circle of human relationships. The very birthing of YWAM comes out of this principle. Now Loren could have been a rebellious person getting away from his authority, but the fruits have shown us in retrospect that this actually was the hand of God on a young man in a difficult circumstance. God Himself had placed His hand on Loren as in the days of the judges, and there was supposed to be a YWAM. Certainly this could not have been produced by force of personality and by the organizing powers of Loren and Darlene. YWAM is to the glory of God, not to the glory of our founders. So we are in a family that is the demonstration of this principle, looking back at its 43rd year.

The characteristics of the Kingdom of God versus the characteristics of the kingdom of darkness. The Kingdom of God releases authority to autonomous, decentralized liberty.

The kingdom of darkness collects authority. All earthly authority is basically stolen from human beings, if you think about the way the demonic world works. In the Kingdom of God there is freedom within a covenant. It's the idea that everything is permitted --- think about what happened in Genesis when God says, "do what you want, just don't eat of this particular tree." Now that's not hyper-controlling or dominating. In the kingdom of darkness there is controlling at all times. It's the idea that nothing is permitted, except.....Don't act, unless you get permission from me. Now perhaps that is permitted when a newborn baby is finding his way into the world, but that is not appropriate as people grow in their domain.

The third thing is in the Kingdom of God authority is dispersed to the widest number of recipients. In the kingdom of darkness authority is concentrated in one person through a hierarchy or empire. In the Kingdom of God there is no absolute submission. There is no absolute submission to anybody but Jesus. Think for instance of the marketplace. Think of how the economy would work in a city like Singapore. I take my teeth to the dentist. I take my little kid to the preschool teacher. I'd take my automobile to the body shop to get it fixed. I'd take my body to the doctor. And I'd never ask myself the question of who I am submitted to. That's a silly question. I re-define my submission based on the aptitude of the authority to which I am submitting.

That's what I am trying to define for you, the difference between bossism or positional authority and functional authority. For instance if you are in a restaurant, and a waitress brings you a sizzling plate of fajitas. If you are not familiar with Mexican food, that is an iron plate that is very hot. And maybe you reach for it, and she says, "Don't touch this; it is hot." Now she just took authority over you, and she should and she had every right to because she is your servant. You see, the zone of a servant is equal to the zone of her authority. That's the way the Kingdom of God works. It's not bossism. It is not arbitrary.

In the kingdom of darkness it is absolute submission to a human leader. In the Kingdom of God we have functional authority. In the kingdom of darkness we have positional authority.

Let's round this up a little bit. We could look at this in terms of scripture. 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us." That's pretty straight, isn't it. And we have phrases like "don't lord it over others as the heathens do." Which, by the way, is one of the reasons why an elder is to be "apt to teach" in the scriptures. The way you exercise authority in a Biblical way is by persuasion, example, reference to scripture, in reference to the values that the Lord has called your family to. It is not just about Him saying you obey me because I have the power. That is positional authority.

Let's just look in closing at the nature of authority. There are really three areas above human authority. One is God's own sovereign authority. Another would be the expression of that, the scriptures. And the third would be the expression of that in terms

of conscience, that we are made in God's image, and the law that is written in our hearts, not just in the Bible.

Human authority is limited to delegated authority, the authority that is given to us by others, stipulate authority – that's the authority of contract. Thirdly is the authority of tradition and custom, which of course must be subservient to scripture. Think of Great Britain and all the traditions surrounding the royal household. That is the authority of tradition.

In the Kingdom of God we have functional authority, the authority of the servant. Functional authority is the result of four things. Your authority as a YWAM minister really comes from these four things:

- aptitude, which has to do with inherited abilities
- training, the way that those abilities have been educated
- experience, the fact that you have walked for a while with that aptitude and training
- God's enabling and God's grace.

So why am I talking to you right now? I am not the most holy, Godly person. I'm not the President of YWAM because I am more Godly than anybody else. I just have an aptitude, experience and anointing that is appropriate for this time. And so do you for the jurisdiction that God has given you.

Now you might say, "what in the world does all this have to do with justice?!" Well, it turns out it has a lot to do with justice because when God describes the Body of Christ, He is describing something we know well. Now touch yourself on your hand. It is as close to you as that. Feel that underneath that flesh there is a bone structure. If you did not have the bone structure, you would not be able to fulfill your destiny. The seeking God for wisdom, this process is very important. I am saying this to you as a person who is a prophetic poetic dreamer. This is not my proclivity. But I know as a person who seeks God that it is very important at this season as a family of Youth With A Mission. I have been thinking about this deeply, because love and wisdom dictates that we do think about this deeply.

One of the things that God has been showing to us is the deploying of an eldership. An eldership is a circle of covenantal love. It is primarily not about government, but it is primarily about the spiritual authority that covers governing processes. When we think about the two words that are used in the New Testament, often translated overseer, ruler, or elder, the two Greek words are *presbyteros* or *episcopas*. One is an architectural term; Episcopal means "to cover". The other quite literally means "white haired one." It is a circle of mature people. And so as we have been meeting in the Global Leadership Meetings – we meet annually – our highest assignment is to move together in care and intimacy with one another. If you are on a team, you form an "episcopas", move together in covenantal love, seek God together, deeply listen to one another. You might say, "what does that have to do with government and justice?" A lot!

In ministries, for instance, it's in how they are born. The way things come about in the Kingdom of God is that we begin to love one another, to seek God together. It's the process by which families are born. Observation. Attraction. Courtship. Covenant. Intimacy. Fruitfulness. Celebration. You may say, "I can't think about all those words!" Well, just think about how a family is formed. I know you talk about romance endlessly, so just think about it. That's how ministries are born. The family really forms us. It gives us a lot of common sense. Before we are anything else, we are family. That's what the Bible tells us --- Abraham and the extension of his family. When we go out to do evangelism, people can say they eventually become named that way – the "seed of Abraham".

So YWAM at one level is an international organization. It is to have accountability, discipline, order, jurisdictions, authority titles, leadership – all that stuff is important. But underneath that is what you might call the super-rational government of the Holy Spirit, which is really ordered more through our emotions than through our intellect. So when I look out on the family of YWAM, I see people that I've walked with for a number of years. I can't relate to everybody. Just like Jesus I have to prioritize my relationships. But as we get on with loving the people God has put in our life, just like God put Ruth and Naomi together, there will be an order that begins to emerge. We will begin to see one another's strengths. Someone has a gift of government. Someone has a gift of prophetic insight. Someone has a gift of pastoral care. Someone is good at taking something that has been said and writing it all down and bringing us to a point of orderliness and resolution processes. This process of government in the midst of harmonious relationship will mitigate against some of the most painful things that we go through, where we end up crying out, saying "I've been neglected, I've not been heard, I've been dominated. I have not been set free in my obedience. I have not been served by leadership." And all of this comes under the banner of what we call injustice.

Lord Jesus, we just ask that you come by your Holy Spirit because the government rests on your shoulders, and the foundation of Your throne is righteousness and peace. And in the middle of all this cloud of words and the teachings of the scriptures, we confess that it is too much for us to process. So we just ask that your Spirit would stand up within us and live your life through us. The anointing for leadership would not be by might or power, but by your Spirit, not by force of personality, not by the leverage of position or money or information or connections, but it would be by your Spirit, that we are ordered and come into our inheritance as the family of YWAM in order that there might be justice and righteousness. So to you be the glory, Lord. The government is upon you. You are the Head of this family, and we ask you for the grace and justice to roll down over the whole family, and that all who come into us, who come into union with us would see your justice through us in the years to come. We receive this by faith. Thank you.