



Revivals And Church History :: [revival] "ICONOCLASTS" - An Insightful Word

[revival] "ICONOCLASTS" - An Insightful Word - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2011/12/8 10:15

"ICONOCLASTS" - An Insightful Word
-extracts by Robert I Holmes.

"Where, O where is the prophet? Where are the incandescent ones fresh from the holy place? Where is Moses to plead in fasting before the holiness of the Lord?... the one with a terrible earnestness, the one totally otherworldly." - Leonard Ravenhill.

Ravenhill's words are reminiscent of a podcast I was listening to on my way to Sydney... It was a communication from the Banff Leadership Centre in Toronto Canada titled "Iconoclasts" outlining the role of men and women in organisations who shake things up. They gave this definition of iconoclast: The breaker or destroyer of images or idols set up for veneration. A person who attacks cherished beliefs, traditions, institutions and error. You might be familiar with its synonym: Curmudgeon.

This idea, this concept of shaking the house, shattering the idols, attacking cherished beliefs is very much the life blood of Christianity, of early Christians and indeed, draws from their long heritage as recipients of faith from Israel. Peter, in describing his fellow believers said they were "sons of the prophets" (Acts 3:25) - for Peter faith meant being like the prophets of old.

Enter Moses

There are many iconoclasts in church history, some as far back as Moses in the Old Testament. He, looking forward as far as Peter was looking back, said he wished "that all God's people were prophets and that the Lord would pour his spirit upon them!" (Numbers 11:29). Remember that Scripture defines Moses himself as a prophet (Deut. 34:10, Luke 24:27), and Moses prophesied of a time when one "likened unto Moses" would arise - Jesus himself (Acts 7:37).

So who is this man - this prophet after whom we are sons? Moses was the man: - who confronted Pharaoh - who split the Red Sea - whose enemies were swallowed by the sand - who saw God and lived - of whom God said, "Moses is my friend"!

This is the iconoclast. This is the prophet. This is Jesus all the way through his ministry. And where is the spirit of Moses in the church today? Where is the nature and character of Christ amongst Christian today? There are a number of facets to the prophetic that should be reflected in our lives including: being a forerunner; dealing with isolation; holding God's opinion above men's; going against the flow; dealing with rejection; being a recoverer and; driving for balance by being out of balance.

1. Forerunning

Prophetic people are forerunners. They come into things first. God deals with the church before he deals with the world (ref) and he deals with natural things before spiritual things (ref). Prophetic people in the church are even further ahead and as a result are quite out of step with the mainstream. They are often in the opposite phase. Happy when everyone else is sad, sad when everyone else is happy.

2. Dealing with isolation

Bring prophetic very often means having an unpopular message, and results in fierce isolation. You have to have a thick skin to say the unpopular thing. You might be a solitary figure rebuking a corrupt king. The one who rats out sin in the camp. The one who cares about what God cares about. However just because we are isolated does not mean we isolate ourselves. We seek out the brethren, we want companions. We resist being a loose canon or a law unto ourselves.

3. Holding God's opinion above men's

If we face heaven, and we care about heaven's opinion and perspective on things we will care more about God's opinion than peoples. We will seek to experience heaven's favour and not curry the favour of men. We will desire heaven's stamp of approval even at the expense of men's favouritism.

4. Going against the flow

Have you noticed that God has a very different set of priorities to us? He values integrity whilst the world pushes for sensuality; he desires honesty when the world wants duplicity; he aims for longevity when the world demands expediency. Prophetic people even find themselves going against the flow in church - and sadly sometimes even going against the prophetic flow!...

5. Dealing with rejection

Being out of step, being isolated, being a lone voice comes with rejection too. People do not just take kindly to your obstinate passion for truth and purpose, they buck against it. The donkey kicks against the goad, the horse bolts when spurred. So too people rebuke and rail against those who are prophetic...

However, we do not imbue the spirit of rejection. We do not walk around with a sour face, expectant of rejection - wishing it upon ourselves and provoking it from others. Rather we understand it is part of the call, a necessary companion on the journey. After all we are followers of Jesus: a man despised and rejected, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3).

Instead, Jesus came into situations expectant of finding the Kingdom at work, and his Father at work, with work for him to do there (John 5:17).

6. Being a recoverer

"The function of the prophet has almost always been that of

recovery." - T Austin Sparks

The prophetic person is not a maintainer, they come in to repair what is broken. Recovery is required after an accident or injury - people need rescue and decisive action is needed for triage. Recovery is needed after a loss or fall - lost things need to be found, people adrift at sea need to be rescued. Recovery is needed after a mop up campaign. The troops have gone through and the land needs to be restored. As a result, when all is well, prophetic people are quiet.

7. Driving for balance

"Prophets were not made for the status quo, they were made to bring things back to the middle. This means they stand for the extreme, to bring the church back to where she should be."
-Brian Medway.

If the church gets imbalanced, or has forgotten a truth the prophet pushes back to recover it. They take an extreme view of stance, to bring the church back to centre. Which is why it seems that their message is unbalanced, because of necessity it is. But this contains a dilemma for us.

Once an issue has been championed, and accepted the church must move on, lest she camp in that imbalanced position. Nothing gets done when things stay the same. Movement is required - things grow by getting out of balance - but nothing remains if it stays unstable.

We quickly become false if we camp at and insist on an extreme.

Conclusion

This is the church, as sons of the prophets. This is the Christian following Jesus the prophet. They are...

- An iconoclast: standing for truth; standing against tradition.
- A forerunner: out of step and out of season.
- Solitary: but not a loner or a loose canon.
- Rejected: but without a spirit of rejection.
- A recoverer: to bring things back to wholeness.
- Unbalanced: extreme but not staying out there.