

A Warning to Preachers Engaging in Ministry Espionage

When I was a business and technology journalist, I wrote my fair share of articles about corporate espionage, cyberspying and violations of intellectual property. Let's just say it's big business—until you get caught.

defines corporate espionage as “the act or practice of spying to gain secret information on a government or a business competitor. According to the Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals, corporations spent an estimated \$2 billion spying on each other in 2004 alone. In the Internet world, it's called cyberspying, and it's all about tapping into someone else's intellectual property to gain an advantage.

It doesn't surprise me to see these types of activities in a Babylonian world. But it grieves me to see it going on in the church. Yes, we've entered the age of kingdom espionage; a world where teachers, preachers and pastors spy out the plans and strategies of other gospel ministers so they can race to the market with a copycat revelation, product or service that puts money in their bank accounts and adds credibility to their name.

While all revelation belongs to God and certainly God speaks the same things to many people, it's clear to the discerning heart when copycat preachers tap into someone else's innovation for their own increase. And it's so unnecessary. God is not lacking in revelation, innovation or increase. He wants to pour it out on His children—but we have to seek it.

A Spirit of Innovation

As I said earlier this year, we are in an age of innovation and acceleration. Prophetically speaking, as part of this metamorphosis I see a spirit of innovation coming into the church. The see innovations throughout the Bible in the form of inventions, which are tied to our creator God's wisdom impartations. Proverbs 8:12 (KJV) tells us, "I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions."

The Bible speaks of Jubal, the first of those who played the harp and flute (see Gen. 4:21) and Zillah, the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron (see Gen. 4:22). Second Chronicles 26:15 speaks of Uriah, who made engines of war invented by skillful men.

In modern times, many inventors credit God with their innovations. George Washington Carver, who invented at least 300 products from peanuts—including paper, soap, glue and medicines—said, "The Lord has guided me," and "without my Savior, I am nothing." Mary Hunter, an award-winning chef, insists all her recipes come from heaven: "I don't have a cookbook. God gives me my own. Prayer is where I get 99 percent of my recipes."

Gary Starkweather, an engineer who invented the laser printer, said: "I believe that to a great extent, the creativity we possess is because the Creator put it there. God put things [in us] as tool developers and creative individuals and I think it has to please Him when He sees us use those faculties to make something completely new."

I agree with Starkweather's revelation and we need to embrace this pure wisdom from above.

God is a Creator, an innovator and an inventor, and we were created in His image and in His likeness. John 1:3 proclaims, "All things were created through Him, and without Him nothing was created that was created." I believe this is still true; and that witty inventions, technologies, scientific

breakthroughs and other innovations that make a positive impact on society are inspired by His Spirit, even if the inventor does not yet know Him.

The church has been lagging on the innovation front. Religion has offered us a form of godliness without its power (see 2 Tim. 3:5). When the power of God comes on the scene, eyes are opened to what was unseen, dreams come alive, and creativity is inspired. The Lord wants to bring a metamorphosis to the church that is innovation-driven so we can reach unchurched people who have rejected religion.

Copypat Preachers Corrupt Innovation

Here's a friendly word to all the copypat preachers who steal prophetic words, mimic the ministry blueprints of others instead of getting their own innovation from God, and otherwise stand up to teach something of which they know nothing about: Repent.

Repent. Change the way you think. God wants to give you witty inventions and innovative ideas that set you apart. He wants to use you to change the world. If you want to see fruit that remains, do it His way.

Hear me: If you're in ministry to build your personal kingdom by spying out the ideas of others, you will eventually fall on your face and hurt a lot of people. But if you press into your unique gifts and callings and seek His face for your messages, prophecies, books and programs, you'll empower people to change their lives. That's what it's all about—helping people.

Repent. Don't run your ministry the way the world runs mega conglomerates. God anointed Jesus to proclaim the good news to the poor, liberty to the captives, recovery of the sight to the blind and freedom to the oppressed (see Luke 4:18). God has anointed you to do something original—something unique. Don't let the spirt of the world—or the spirit of competition—tempt you to bow to Babylon's ways and become a

cyberspy instead of a supernatural innovator.