

11 Obvious Signs of a Personality-Driven Church—Part 2

This is part 2 of a two-part series. To read part 1, click [here](#).

I have been striving since the early 1980s to help the church follow in the way of Jesus and the apostles. That being said, one of the earmarks of the first century apostolic church is how the church edified itself in love (see Eph. 4:16) and was led by a team of leaders whose primary purpose was to equip the church to perform the work of the ministry (see Eph. 4:11,12). Read this second half of the article which delineates traits five through 11 of the personality-driven church.

5. The leader draws attention to himself.

Paul warned of leaders who would arise, drawing disciples after themselves (see Acts 20:30). This takes place even today even in spite of the fact the apostle Paul said that in all things Christ should have the supremacy (see Col. 1:19). There are some leaders who brag so much about the great things they are doing that the people's attention and emotions are drawn more to them than to the Lord or to the church. When a leader does this, ultimately, danger and a huge fall is not far away since God humbles the proud and exalts the humble.

6. There is no room for other leaders to develop.

In personality-driven churches, people with a high upside regarding their leadership capacity usually get frustrated because there is no opportunity for them to use their gifts. Especially those in the congregation called to the fivefold ministry as found in Ephesians 4:11. In these churches, there

is a culture of “serving the pastor” (to the exclusion of serving the church) and enhancing “his ministry”, more than being equipped for the work of the ministry (see Eph. 4:12). In healthy churches, the lead pastor is constantly strategizing to develop and release people to their divine assignment in the church and marketplace.

7. The lead pastor has no accountability.

Usually, a personality-driven church is led by a narcissistic and or insecure leader who shies away from personal accountability. Even if they have denominational or structural accountability, it is not functional. These leaders do not want to be told what to do in their personal life or church. The very fact that they created the environment for a personality-driven church lends to the fact that they have lifted themselves up in regards to self-importance, which makes it difficult for them to listen to anyone else.

8. The government of the church is autocratic and highly centralized.

In personality-driven churches, there is strict control over what is said, what is done, what is marketed as well as the appearance of all things. Of course, even healthy churches are careful about their communications, public persona and marketing, but personality driven churches have “over the top” control in all these areas. Consequently, there is a “top down” leadership style that is autocratic, highly centralized and very structured. When dealing with the leaders and department heads of their ministries, the senior leader of this kind of church just gives direction, presents his vision and expects everyone just to follow orders without being a vital part of the strategic process.

9. There is no room for critical thinking and creativity.

Personality-driven churches discourage open dialogue about the true condition of their congregation as well as critical

thinking and creativity. By “critical thinking,” I am not referring to being critical about the church—even healthy churches should discourage the spirit of criticism in their congregation—I am referring to the ability to learn how to think logically, to analyze and to problem-solve. Thus, personality-driven churches do not encourage people to be self-aware and think for themselves. All major thinking, strategy and creativity has to emanate from the senior leader or it is not viewed as legitimate.

10. The lead pastor leads a narcissistic lifestyle.

In personality-driven churches, the lead pastor attempts to live a lavish lifestyle because they have a sense of entitlement that everyone owes them something because of their “greatness.” Instead of being motivated to serve and feed the flock, the primary motivation of the personality-driven leader is the desire (conscious or unconscious) to be served. This is, of course, in direct contradiction to the clear teachings of Scripture as found in Jeremiah chapter 23; Ezekiel 34 and John 10. The godly shepherd will lay down his life for the flock; the personality-driven pastor will sacrifice the church for their own benefit and pleasure.

11. The church doesn’t outlive the lead pastor.

In personality-driven churches, the likelihood that the church survives after the lead pastor is gone is very slim. This is because the whole ministry was built upon the gifts and abilities of the lead pastor. It may have been a megachurch; however, it did not have a foundation of strong secondary leaders with a pool of potential successors who could take the reins of the lead pastor role. (Which is why some megachurches do not last beyond the first generation of their founding.) Even in the case of denominational churches where they choose a replacement for the lead pastor, usually said successor does not have the charisma to keep the church moving forward, resulting in a great demise in attendance and vision. In

healthy churches, there is a multi-generational vision that perpetuates the life of the congregation way beyond the years of the tenure of the lead pastor.

In conclusion, while there is no such thing as a perfect church on this side of heaven, my prayer is that this article will inspire churches to become healthier and pursue the way of Christ and His apostles in regards to local church culture.
{eoa}