

New Word, Old Enemy

There is a new battlefield and it is called ineptocracy.

PLOUGH through the Macmillian, Oxford and the Webster's dictionaries and you will not find this word – "ineptocracy". The word is believed to have emerged in October 2011, although some claim it was coined as early as 2007.

Ineptocracy is essentially a system of government where the least capable to lead are elected by the least capable of producing; and where the members of society least likely to sustain themselves or succeed are rewarded with goods and services paid for by the confiscated wealth of a diminishing number of producers.¹

Some call this "social terminal-ism."

It has been claimed that unless some presidents and prime ministers are removed, many countries will be headed for ineptocracy. Against the backdrop of economic catastrophes and political upheaval, whether in Europe or the Middle East, inept leadership that panders to populism clearly plays a hand in rendering many nations catatonic today.

Unfortunately, this disease is not confined to countries. Churches can be dupes of ineptocracy as well.

Sadly, this phenomenon is not new. In Scripture, as early as Exodus 32, when the crowd danced and demanded a golden calf, Aaron succumbed to the power of numbers. With Moses absent, Aaron fell victim to overpowering persuasion of the crowd. Being "the voice" or the designated leader does not necessarily mean one is not inept. No doubt seasoned as a priest, and mentored by the best, this anointed leader failed.

How a people and their leader, with such rich history and encounters with the Almighty, could sink into the abyss of ineptocracy holds both rich lessons and warnings for the modern-day Church.

In His wisdom, God may cause the Mosaic leadership of a church to step aside so that we can see the rise of the next generation of leaders. Tragically, what is seen may not always be a pretty sight.

What we call "transitioning" in many of our churches is more often than not a mere bungling, listless handover. The baton is passed, but the mantle is not.

¹ As defined in www.urbandictionary.com

While much is taught about the prodigal son, I believe there needs to be equal concern over prodigal fathers and leaders who have failed and are ill-equipped to handle the emerging challenges and moral onslaughts in this new era. The lack of good old-fashioned emphasis on godliness and the centrality of the cross in our preaching are all too obvious.

Having congregations who “love to have it so” (Jeremiah 5:31) does not help. This malady is often compounded by a leadership that does its own thing, no longer showing the “same diligence” and which has “become sluggish” (Hebrews 6: 11-12, NKJV) in its last lap of ministry.

Ineptocracy is not solely a top-down disorder; it has its roots in the people’s waywardness. Nehemiah 9: 17 recounts the intention of the people under Aaron - they wanted a leader to lead them back to bondage.²

Similarly, today’s congregations clamour for simplistic and instant solutions to living their faith. An iPad generation has emerged, believing things can be solved with a touch or a swipe. Left, then right, if not, just re-set. This attitude coupled with ineptitude leads to a myriad of social injuries. Indeed, it is rightly defined as social terminal-ism.

As the Church grows, the need for godly, principled and uncompromising leadership has never been greater. Unfortunately, we hear of churches being led by inept leaders, armchair committees, theorists and spiritual consultants with suspect track records, and even by simpletons. If left unchecked, the Church is doomed to implode.

Without godly wisdom, competency and prophetic foresight, the evolving drama playing out on the secular stage with its basket case economies and political turmoil may be an unfortunate mirror of what can happen to our worship centers.

May God grant us discernment, objectivity and wisdom to deal with what confronts us.

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² Neh 9:17 They refused to obey, and they were not mindful of Your wonders that You did among them. But they hardened their necks, and in their rebellion they appointed a leader to return to their bondage.