

## Information Summary - "God's Trademarks"

(George Otis Jr., Baker Book House Company, USA, 2000,  
ISBN 0-8007-9281-5 )

This book sets out to provide a methodology for discerning whether a message, ministry or strategy is truly from God.

Before setting out the basis offered in this book to achieve this, a number of quotations from the book are offered :-

"Many Old Testament prophets prefaced their remarks with the phrase And the word of the Lord came to me saying.... They wanted it known that they had received an articulate message from the living God. He had spoken to them without stuttering or equivocation. His intentions were neither vague nor arbitrary." ( page 28)

"The word of the Lord is a razor, not a butter knife . Like all sharp instruments, it is intended to cut and penetrate, to divide and discern. If we let it do its work, it will strip away our illusions and help us order our thoughts . It will take us beneath the flotsam and jetsam of life and point us to the basement of reality." . (page 28)

"This is the problem with abstract theology: People cannot live it . It is useful only as a moral cover or as an object of debate. Once doctrine becomes separated from what it is intended to promote – namely, intimate relationship with Christ- it becomes a stumbling block. The labyrinthine possibilities become an intellectual aphrodisiac that stimulates an almost mathematical approach to faith ". (page 33)

"While this type of guidance may suit us, God will not cooperate. He refuses to allow His will to be made into a coloring book in which we fill in the details according to our own discretion .He insists we do things His way " (page 33)

"Equivocators often migrate into the company of exaggerators. Their unwillingness to stick to the truth makes them easy companions for those who stretch it. An initial tolerance of slippery facts gives way to selective deception, and eventually to full –fledged "reality modification " ." ( page 48)

" He disillusion us with ourselves by the experience of our weakness and our corruption, in an infinite number of failures; and yet, even then when He seems to overwhelm us, it is for our good; it is to spare us from the harm which we would do to ourselves. What we weep for would have made us weep eternally. What we believe to have been lost was lost when we thought we had it." (page 76)

" So prevalent is this tendency to minimize (or rationalize) sin that penetrating words are often classified as judgmental and treated with the same disdain as

racial epithets. Some Christians are actually convinced that messages on holiness are a form of legalism.” (page 79)

“ Judging has lately become one of the most socially incorrect concepts in the modern church. Many leaders are so fearful of being tagged with this label that they refuse steadfastly to condemn any attitude or behavior that Scripture does not censure emphatically. ( Some are even reluctant to take a stand on more explicit prohibitions such as homosexuality, adultery and false prophecy) Instead of siding with God against sin and mixture, these ministers have adopted the “hear no evil, see no evil” habits of many medical and police fraternities. Some hold their tongues because they live in glass houses, others because they covet access to the crowds and riches controlled by character-poor leaders. “ (page 105)

The preceding quotations from this book give us a flavour of the writer; the author compares and contrasts the signs of God’s call with the marks of a false, deceptive teachers . On pages 18 and 19, a profile of a false teacher is offered, based largely on 2 Peter 2 :-

- ❖ False teachers despise authority; as self-willed, self –exalting operators, they neither want nor practice any form of accountability
- ❖ False teachers are arrogant and presumptuous; not only do they use God’s name to advance self –inspired plans and philosophies ; they make an artful habit of claiming spiritual authority they do not possess
- ❖ False teachers revel in pleasure ; having become addicted to self – indulgence, religious charlatans develop what the apostle Peter called “eyes full of adultery” (verse 14 of 2 Peter 2)
- ❖ False teachers are expert in greed ; they have learned how to milk trusting congregations and mailing lists for all they are worth
- ❖ False teachers seduce the unstable; the favourite quarry of these spiritual hustlers are seekers and new-born Christians “who are just escaping from those who live in error” (verse 18)
- ❖ False teachers are wells without water ; they enjoy being sought out by thirsty people but they offer no spiritual depth or nourishment

By way of contrast, the author offers the model of Jesus Christ, as a “servant leader” ; seven trademarks that Jesus offered (not the only trademarks ) are dealt with (page 7, ):-

- Authority
- Honesty
- Humility
- Love
- Creativity

- Productivity
- Endurance

My response to considering this book is to conclude that leadership under the call of God, is not something to be lusted after, but is a path that involves the one called into leadership taking up their own cross and going on a pilgrimage, as if an alien in a foreign land.

Such a leader would need to be well versed in the ways of God, before studying the ways of the world and to ensure that what they said and what they did were as close as humanly possible.