



Information Summary -  
"The Church and the Powers"  
*James F. Cobble Jr., 1988,*  
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**(1) Summary of the influence of the powers in modern life**

- spiritual powers are both personal and impersonal. They exert their influence /control through structures/systems, etc.
- complexities of modern life can be discussed /approached in many different ways
- philosophical frameworks provide a point of reference for establishing primary and secondary qualities that are valued
- "quantification of life" is a current philosophical framework
- self image, self worth are established by this framework by reference to the material possessions of the individual
- reality becomes contextual and subjective, absolutes cease to exist
- Christians are engaged in daily conflict with the powers that are opposed to Christ and his Father

**(2) Examples of dimensions that develop a healthy faith community**

- ◆ Believers, empowered by the Holy Spirit, who act towards each other with mutual respect, love and trust
- ◆ Active in listening for, receiving and then acting in obedience upon the word of God
- ◆ Experiencing and sharing the grace of God with one another
- ◆ Creating structures that enable these dimensions to be explored, to the glory of God and in partnership with Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church.

### **(3) The Quest and the Search for meaning**

A lack of shared values and goals, coupled with confusion, uncertainty and upheavals in society, leads to disintegration of meaning, the loss of signposts and the rise of gnostic doctrines and beliefs, to give meaning to the lives of those not quickened by the Holy Spirit.

### **(4) The role of personal sanctification in incorporating the will of God Into decision making**

- Sanctification (holiness) is not something to be achieved; sanctification is an outcome of the salvation process, bestowed by grace. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the basis of this process, to which nothing can be added. Divine sanctification is revealed, comes about, through personal consecration.
- Sanctification requires a new understanding of life. This process enables us to take on the character of Christ and to deny our own self interest. If self is not denied then "God told me " becomes a cover for self deception and bondage, resulting in a manipulation of the truth and of others, for selfish ends.
- We can only come to know and understand the will of God if we come to know and understand Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit, through both the scriptures and the body of Christ here on Earth (the Church) reveals Jesus to us.

### **(5) The foundations of Ministry**

- Ministry arises out of an understanding of reality
- Ministry occurs in specific cultural and historical settings
- The Scriptures provide normative guidelines for ministry
- Ministry is a mixture of normative and relative components
- Ministry is a spiritual activity, dependent on the Holy Spirit
- Ministry depends on the commitment of the individual
- Ministry is a corporate enterprise
- Ministry is to glorify God

## **(6) The social structure of the early church**

- Born out of a personal encounter with the living, risen, Christ, Christian life is a relationship built on trust and characterised by love. No fixed pattern of church organisation existed in the early church.
- The true key to the dynamism of the early church, or for any assembly of believers, is founded not in an organisational structure, but in that structure of life which is empowered by the Spirit, grounded in faith, expressed in love.
- The central event in the founding of the church was the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

## **(7) Developmental processes for new and maturing Christians**

- Spiritual growth occurs only in the context of partnership and service. This involves not only personal relationships and shared commitments, but also corporate relationships.
- Therefore, as Christians, we must always be seeking to deepen our spiritual relationships to others, as our brothers and sisters in Christ, developing a shared sense of mission based on serving Christ rather than ourselves.
- The elements of a developmental process for all Christians would include:
  - (a) increasing biblical knowledge
  - (b) ongoing devotional life
  - (c) committed Christian friendships at increasingly deep levels
  - (d) growth in wisdom and spiritual discernment
  - (e) responsible commitment to and involvement in a community of faith , ensuring that there was as small a gap as possible between what was said and what was done.

### **(8) Christian leadership**

- Leadership involves accepting responsibility for teaching ( and by modelling the way of Christ in own life) members of the body of Christ about developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- The best way to teach this is to :
  - expounding the scriptures
  - demonstrating the fruits of the Spirit (Philippians 4:8) in the life of the leader
- Leadership can only be understood as a quality of relationship between people, which builds, sustains and values such relationships.
- Leadership involves both power and authority; in Christian leadership, weakness and powerlessness in own right are the starting place for developing both power and authority. The principal resource for this is the Holy Spirit and all motivations should have as their source the love and grace of God.

### **(9) Forms of coming together, Reasons for coming together, as a community of faith.**

- Worship
- Fellowship
- devotional prayer
- bible study
- business meetings
- administration
- fun and games
- relaxation
- retreat
- share experiences
- grow together in the Lord