

Spiritual Covering written by Johnny Mengarelli (Edited by Tom Kalianov)

There is much talk about spiritual covering within the Body of Christ. Spiritual covering is presented as a deep spiritual insight. Everyone in the Body must be under this covering.

What is the truth of the matter? Actually, this use of the word "covering" is taken out of biblical context. Below are some examples of the word "covering" in biblical context:

Numbers 4:8

And they shall spread upon them a cloth of scarlet, and cover the same with a covering of badgers' skins, and shall put in the staves thereof.

Numbers 4:14-15

And they shall put upon it all the vessels thereof, wherewith they minister about it, even the censers, the fleshhooks, and the shovels, and the basins, all the vessels of the altar; and they shall spread upon it a covering of badgers' skins, and put to the staves of it. [15] And when Aaron and his sons have made an end of covering the sanctuary, and all the vessels of the sanctuary, as the camp is to set forward; after that, the sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These things are the burden of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation.

Job 24:7

They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no covering in the cold.

Isaiah 30:1

Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:

1 Cor. 11:15

But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.

So when people are asking about your covering maybe they think you have long hair. Maybe you should thank them for the compliment.

Where does the word "covering" come from? Who came up with the idea of covering? If the idea of covering is valid for today, is there a true example of it? I understand that covering is needed in the body of Christ. However we must understand what true covering is in the body of Christ. Many have taken it and assigned their own meaning to it. Leaders use it for a sense of hierarchy, so they can control the body of Christ. The reason I am writing this is to discover the true meaning of covering.

I believe true covering comes through our relationships with each other. It comes through in-depth study of God's Word directed by the Holy Spirit. If we are walking in the true covering of God, then it will be demonstrated through relationships we build with each other. It comes through showing the love of Christ to each other. How is the love of Christ shown to each other? We must study God's Word and apply it to our lives. The Love of Christ cannot be demonstrated without first obtaining knowledge of it through God's Word.

Romans 10:17

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

A big organization, denomination, or fellowship does not provide covering nor will it ever be able to provide covering. Too many leaders fall through the cracks and then corruption occurs. Where was the Assemblies of God Denomination before Jimmy Swaggart fell? Where was Roberts Liardon's covering before he fell into homosexuality? Where was Jim Bakker's covering before he fell into sexual sin with Jessica Hahn? Where is the covering over some of today's ministers who rob the Body of Christ? Where is the covering over leaders who manipulate the Body of Christ for their own self interest? I want to remind each and every one of you that all of the above-mentioned were in organizations or denominations. They were not lone wolves without so-called "covering."

If we say that we have a covering or believe in a covering, then we need to make sure we truly have one.

Let's look at what we call covering. Denominations formed in order for religious groups to be more organized. This idea was taken from the Catholic Church. Organizations formed in order to break away from the tyranny of denominations. Fellowships formed in order to break free from the legalism of organizations. Now we find ourselves in a Catch 22. Who is covering whom?

If I belong to an organization that gives me covering, then who is covering them? Let's look at the diagram below:

THE COVERING OF SOME ORGANIZATIONS

Apostle or Pastor



Elder or Deacon



Elder or Deacon



Elder or Deacon



Church

The question which arises from the above diagram is: who covers the top man? Some would answer: “Well God is my covering.” However, if an average believer says this we all gasp in horror and disbelief. They must be under a covering!

Once again the leaders in the Body of Christ have become more than what God intended them to be. Many well-to-do leaders would have done away with the Corinthian Church. Paul fought and sacrificed much for the people of Corinth. At times they seemed very rebellious and disobedient. I guess Paul must not have been a great leader because he could not control the people of Corinth very well. Is that true? Of course not. The Corinthian Church was not giving a lot of money to the traveling ministry of Paul, but Paul still gave up his resources for them. He laid down his life for the Body. He did expect the same treatment in return, but it was not a requirement for him to keep touching lives.

He truly covered the Church through relationship building and through the power of the Word of God. Maybe it should not be who covers you, but who are you in relationship with. Who really knows your heart? Who really spends time getting to know you? Who really asks the tough questions about your life? Who really tackles the tough issues in your life? Who are you in relationship with? This must be the true question we ask each other.

God is neither overwhelmed by nor impressed with today's mega-organizations and denominations. In fact, I would say He is upset and distraught about what they have become.

The leaders in the Body use the mandate of covering to control the Body of Christ. Hence, the Leaders have put themselves above the Body of Christ.

See the diagram below:

THE CHURCH TODAY IN MANY CIRCLES



← Apostles, Prophets, Teachers

← Pastors and Elders

← Deacons and Lay Leaders

← Body of Christ

Some have set themselves high above the Body. Hence, Jesus is no longer the head. He isn't even the tail. Many have set themselves outside of the Body altogether. The Five-Fold Ministry was not intended to be a separate entity outside the Body. They are a part of the Body used to bring encouragement and maturity to the Body. Five-Fold Ministers are supposed to be servants of the Body no matter the cost. Let's look at what James and John's mother tried to ask Jesus and what Jesus' response was:

Matthew 20:20-28

Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. [21] And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. [22] But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. [23] And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. [24] And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. [25] But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. [26] But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; [27] And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: [28] Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Jesus said that the princes of the Gentiles (or world leaders) exercise dominion over their subjects. They desire to control those that follow them. Their idea of leadership is based on leading the people to themselves. The Greek word for exercise is:

katexousiazō, Greek 2715, Strong's

katexousiazō,  *kat-ex-oo-see-ad'-zo*; from Greek 2596 (kata) and Greek 1850 (exousiazō); to have (wield) full privilege over :- exercise authority.

The evil, heathen leaders thrust their authority over their followers. They obey no man and serve not anyone. They assume they have supreme authority because of their big organizations, denominations, or fellowships. Their richness or worldly success gives them the right to lead and control. Many church leaders are heathen leaders seeking to build their own empires. I have seen it time and time again. Jesus told his disciples not to be this way. Jesus came to bring in a new wave of leadership and "covering". It was based on relationship and accountability. It was based on sacrifice and suffering.

Jesus told the disciples that they would suffer the same suffering He would suffer. They would die horrible deaths for the Gospel. How many leaders really lay down their lives for the Body? Also, how many have excluded themselves from the Body? This is sad but it happens.

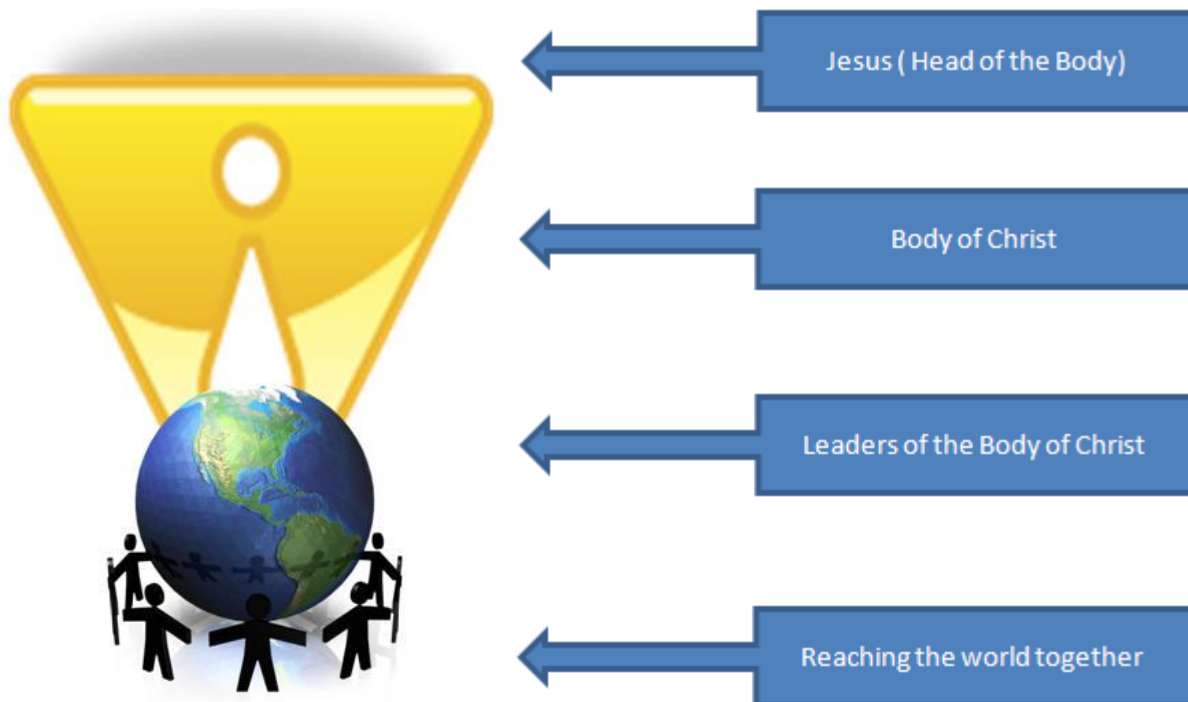
Jesus said that he did not come to be ministered to but to minister. The Greek word for minister is:

diakonos, Greek 1249, Strong's

diakonos, *dee-ak'-on-os*; probably from an obsolete diako (to *run* on errands; compare Greek 1377 (dioko)); an *attendant*, i.e. (genitive) a *waiter* (at table or in other menial duties); specially a Christian *teacher* and *pastor* (technically a *deacon* or *deaconess*) :- deacon, minister, servant.

This is where we get the word "deacon" from. Jesus came to serve or be a waiter over the Body. He came to be a servant. This is the new wave of leadership that must occur within the Body. When this type of leadership occurs then the Body will have a true covering. When the Leadership submits to each other and bring covering through relationship, then the Body will come to His maturity.

THE TRUE DESIGN FOR COVERING(RELATIONSHIP)



This is true covering: When each person within the Body of Christ has built relationship with the respected individuals. When leadership stops trying to control God's people. When we become servants to each other and support each other. When God's Word is being walked out in our lives. Then and only then can true "covering" take place within the Body. When this happens, the world will not hear about the corruption of the church. They will not hear stories about sexual sins and manipulation.

We are the Body of Christ, and we are sons and daughters of our Lord. We must reach this world with the power of God. It is not about our personal empires any more. It must be about God's Kingdom.

If you want true covering, then allow the right leaders and believers to build relationship with you. That is what this ministry is all about. We want to build the needed relationships in order to pursue God's purpose together. We want to be open books, so sin cannot enter in the back door. This is the life of covering.

**Send mail to jmengarelli@kc.rr.com with questions or comments about this web site.
Copyright © 2006 Oasis Fellowship Kansas City, Missouri**

