



FRIDAYFAX 2

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(+49)-07626-974-662; Freitagsfax2, PO Box 1248, D-79397 Kandern, Germany. Email
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How wild is the duck?

„Domestic ducks have a fine life. Their existence is safe, even predictable. With their clipped wings, there they sit in the barnyard, their life laid out for them as straight as an arrow: from the roost to the trough, and on to the pan. The ducks tell themselves and their children: that's life, it won't change, it can't change, it has always been so, and always will. Only twice a year, in springtime and autumn, there is great excitement in the barnyard, and the little duck-world is tumbled upside down. Their hearts beat faster, adrenalin is pumped through their veins, and they even try to leap in the air in a vain attempt to fly. It's the time when the wild ducks fly high and above the barnyard in their arrow-formation, off and away to a distant destiny. And down below, strange, forbidden and heretical thoughts shoot through the brain of the domestic duck: what *on earth* am I doing here? Is not my place up there, in the sky, with them, migrating together with my wild brothers and sisters, high above all barnyards, fences and troughs? But, for good or bad, the spooky feelings are soon gone, as the wild ducks have vanished beyond the horizon. And the tamed ducks lower their sights, pat each other affirmingly on their backs with their clipped wings, and nod to each other: only a dream, a fata morgana! Let's return to the real world, the world of barnyard, trough – and pan. For sure, to be a domestic duck has a lot of advantages. Usually it's warm, it gets the fodder in time, and hardly will it be eaten by a fox. But it has some drawbacks, too. Well, it can't really fly, and the routine numbs her beyond recognition. But, to be a wild duck has its drawbacks too. It has to stand against the coldness, uncertainties and hunger. Quite a price for freedom...” (From the book “Der Preis des Geldes” – The Price of Money – by Simson/Giudici).

The Migration of Christianity

Each autumn we experience a mass migration of many animals, like migratory birds, they fly to warmer areas. In spring the birds leave their winter exile and return to settle in again. Birds do this instinctively; follow their inbuilt wanderlust, rather than making a decision based on pros and cons of migration. This migration is inspired by an inner impulse of every bird – and a healthy herd instinct. **In Christianity, we right now witness such a migration of global proportions.** An ever-increasing number of followers of Jesus Christ are getting restless, start asking questions they never asked before, don't see or find their space anymore in traditional churches. And so they break camp, get out, skip the fence, entering a search mode, move away from the masses, breaking new grounds, finding new friends, and becoming part of an entirely new, exciting scenario. If you talk to these people, you will hear things like this: God has asked me to leave, I feel I need to move on, there is this little voice in me that won't be silent, telling me to search God outside traditional boxes. And they would follow others who are role models for them. Sure, there is a false and unhealthy herd instinct that does not listen to the spirit of God, but accepts to conform to the peer pressure of folks around us trotting along. This is the safest way to end up as a domestic duck, running with the masses, governed by traditionalism, fear, false security and fear of change. No, we won't even start to discuss their end here.

What does the spirit say to the churches - today?

„Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear what the spirit is saying to the churches“. This prophetic statement in the Bible is being understood in two ways: 1) inductive – based from our own small world we try to explain the big picture. What God tells me, he actually tells to everybody. The world would do well to conform to me. God bless what I do. And, my, if everyone would be just like me, what a wonderful world it would be. Even if now and then some lonely voices come out of their closet, proclaiming an accurate prophetic message after having struck gold in their own intimate encounter with God, we still need to align ourselves with the big picture, the greater patterns, and the great story. This is 2) deductive thinking: we conclude from the large to the small, from the big picture to the minute detail, where we can see how we as individuals better fit into a changed world. For this purposes we need to once in a while climb a mountain, get an eagle's perspective on things, and scan the general weather situation before planning our next steps. Here we need to ask: what does God do nowadays – without asking anybody's permission – and how do we join him? You no longer ask God to bless what you are doing, but ask a much different question: how can I do what God is blessing?

For that we need to know what God is up to. And therefore we need to watch him, follow him around with microphone and cameras, interview him constantly, and cling to his mantle, drawn or dragged away with him. This is the only way we will get to be where God is moving himself. For this we need a third perspective, the most important of all. Here we don't look into our own subjective life and small little world, neither do we look at what others are doing. Here we look first and foremost to God. Your mind won't be filled with impressions of the seen world, facts, figures and situations but with God himself. Where you don't look like sinking Peter at the waves, but to Jesus. If we succeed in that, we no longer have to be hypnotised by the mesmerising and fear-driven appeals of modern versions of the ten spies, who call everyone back to the safe meat pots of Egypt. But you will be free to hear and heed today's Kaleb and Joshuas, prophetic and apostolic people that were and are able to look forward, “because there was another spirit in them.”

In close personal alignment with a larger number of prophetic and apostolic voices around the world that we have the privilege to be in contact with, we as editors of Fridayfax2 like to summarize our observations into a spiritual general weather report. In future issues of Fridayfax2 we will bring you fresh examples of these principles and their practical and exciting implementations:



Biblically

„Clean people have dirty bibles”, one of my spiritual fathers told me once. Find folks with tattered bibles, worn out by constant use, colored, ripped apart and sown together, and you find gold. Was once a fight here and there over accepting certain passages of the bibles as binding for life a normal thing, in today’s world the practical rejection of the Bible altogether has become epidemic in many parts of Christendom - even in the Bible belt. One of my friends, a pastor in a major “bible-believing church,” was asking a member of his church to finally quit adultery. The story became public, and who got fired? Right, the (unloving) pastor. The phenomenon of experience-driven rebellious Christians ready to celebrate themselves at every moment has a first symptom: the rejection of biblical authority as such – and a second: the readiness to believe absolutely everything, as long as it is not written in the Bible, and as long as it is fun. On the other hand we witness an astonishing rediscovery of the Bible, for example amongst new converts, or those Chinese Christians learning of by heart entire chapters of the bible, or western discipleship movements like the ones you find at Church Multiplication Associates (CMA, more @ www.organicchurchplanting.org/) with church planter Neil Cole (USA). Blessing, the bible ensures, emerges where people live and work within the ordinances and patterns laid out by God in his word. The internal and external poverty follows where people just won’t do that. The Bible also indicates a last, great harvest, and speaks of a last great persecution, both issues that God is making his people ready for today. The direction is clear: back to the word of God – or, in the language of Swiss prophet Erich Reber: “Learn to eat my word again, and go back to the mountain of transfiguration, where you will see noone than Jesus alone”.

Prophetically

Many healthy prophets, like Ugandan John Mulinde, warn Christianity since many years of a gigantic breaking of the covenant with God. God is a covenant-making and keeping God: If you do this, I will do that. If you won’t, I will not (Dt 28). Largest segments of the church today have systematically and principally broken every detail and principle of the covenant with God. It has built ecclesia in rebellion against God’s principles, and elevated the rebellion-turned-tradition to be the new standards. God absolutely has the right, as in the times of the judges, to hand over such a defected church into the hands of the enemies. Many prophetic voices therefore say: this is exactly what has already happened! And therefore speak of a second (Luther spoke of the first...) Babylonian Captivity of the Church. Ezekiel witnessed how the glory of God first left the temple, then the city. Where do we find the glory of God today? Where does God glorify himself – as in values, truthfulness, growth, miracles? I do not know of any prophetic person on the earth to speak of: “Steady, stay where you are, things will remain the same!”, but: “Return to God, renew your covenant, plough a fresh field, don’t keep standing there, everything changes...”

Apostolically

Either the Church accepts being sent by God to those unreached with the gospel, or she stops being church in the biblical sense. It speaks for itself when today’s Western Christianity spends 2% of it’s time, money and resources on others, and is generally retro- and inward oriented rather than missional in it’s planning, budgeting and acting. At the same time there are many new apostolic movements emerging – Prof. David Barrett speaks of 20.000 movements worldwide – who are rediscovering the architectural role of the apostolic (1. Cor. 12:28; 3:6; Eph. 2:20) and put it into practice. **There is an apostolic reformation going on.**

Financially

„Money makes you happy”; “Got money? Why do you need God...?” or a cynical “work and earn, pay taxes and burn” are part of the gospel according to Mammon – a message that many Christians have become glued to. If humans, however, don’t listen to God any more – anyone perks up when the issue is money. And so it’s no small wonder that Christianity experiences it’s greatest financial crisis of all times. Traditional churches sit on countless unsellable buildings, globalisation leads to a new poverty in the West, and many consumer-oriented Christians in a tightened economy discover a “me first” mindset. That is how many churches, Organizations and Missions have their plug being pulled out by God – and will soon be gone from the map. At the same time, more and more people are discovering New Testament finance principles – usually at a fair distance to traditional churches and their unhealthy teachings on money and work - and discover a financial freedom they never dreamed possible. **There is a financial reformation going on.**

Honesty

Honesty wins. More and more Christian leaders are laying their cards on the table and say – (unthinkable even 5 years ago) we are not really ready and prepared to face the issues of the 21. century – neither economically, politically, culturally (post modernity) nor spiritually. One symptom of this are burgeoning burnout-rates and sabbaticals.

Numbers

We live in a time of the greatest upheaval of Christendom. Constantine Christianity is divided like never before, into 37.000 denominations, and, in the West, shrinks inspite of (because of?) it’s hectic activity. Growth, if at all, is found outside the West. Prof. David Barrett and Todd M. Johnson spoke already in 2001 of 111 million Christians without a traditional local church. Today’s 20.000 “Neo-Apostolics” count for about 394 million Christians, who, so Barrett’s estimate, will be 581 million in AD 2025 – 120 million more than all Protestant movements together. Around 10% of all those living in the West, says Australian reformer Alan Hirsch, have realized: God yes, Church no; and are currently embarking onto a spiritual journey, completely reconfiguring their faith.



Speaking figuratively, this means that the Holy Spirit is standing at Babylon Railway Station, blowing his big whistle. He calls for repentance, return and migration back into the Promised Land of true New Testament apostolic-prophetic Christianity. And he calls not just for cosmetic changes, but to align our entire architecture and DNA to biblical standards. How this looks like in practice will be the subject of many Fridayfax2 to come. On this probably most exciting journey in church history, we will be happy to be your travel companion, serve as a lighthouse and give a weather report once in a while. (Go to www.ffax2.com/resources for more)