

# Lonely Innovators by Dr. Jerry Porter

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Let me share an important concept that I learned as a young missionary. I wrote an article for the Spanish Herald of Holiness with the title, "Inovadores Solitarios" (Solitary Innovators). Innovative leaders are called to be LONE RANGERS. When the Lord is asking me to introduce new methods to the church, that assignment often includes the call to be a lonely prophetic voice. The Church cannot bless and support every new idea that comes down the pike. The best we can expect when launching a new idea is to be granted permission to "experiment." That is all we need. "During the next year may I experiment with \_\_\_\_ new method?" The Church leaders give permission and if it turns out well, everybody jumps on board and they comment, "I knew that all along!" If the experiment fails, they never knew us and they forget they gave us permission to experiment!

Thus the two primary temptations for the God-called creative innovator are:

1) **BITTERNESS**

2) **PRIDE**

**BITTERNESS** because I am sacrificing everything, working so hard, enduring all kinds of hardship to launch this new beginning method for the Church . . . and all I get in return is criticism, rejection, and even ridicule. The enemy of my soul will lead me to believe that I deserve better; and with sweet self-pity, bitterness springs up within me to poison and curse me. The Church will not follow a bitter person, no matter how great his/her ideas or methods may be. We have lost some Spirit-empowered visionaries because they became bitter.

**PRIDE** because I listen to Satan's lie that I really am smarter, more perceptive, more talented, etc. than all those other boring Nazarene leaders! I believe the lie that I am innovative because I am so amazingly sharp compared to the second-class leaders around me! This temptation will curse my soul as I am filled with pride and arrogance. Many times Satan uses the voices of people close to me who genuinely admire me. I forget, however, that every good thought or idea I have is a gift from God who prepared me from my childhood to be who I am today. I forget that it is all about the Kingdom and not about me or my grand ideas.

If I have been called to be an innovator in the Church, which I feel has been one of my callings, then I must keep a truly humble spirit and a Christlike gracious spirit. I feel that God has infused in your hearts and lives many new ideas that we desperately need in the Church. You may become weary because of the slow rate of change you see as many of your ideas lie shattered on the floor of a variety of board rooms . . . but please do not give up! We need your fresh eyes, your fresh questions, your fresh insights. I have found that often good ideas die twice and resurrect the third day!

Do not get bitter . . . get better at finding creative ways to obtain permission to test new methods. Don't get proud . . . get into your prayer closet and humble yourself before your God, grateful for

the privilege of escaping hell, by God's grace, and grateful that you will be able to bless the body of Christ with your life and ministry.

Our God is a spectacularly creative God. We are made in the image of God. By the Holy Spirit we join in the creativity of the Kingdom. New methods and ideas are not always better. But we cannot miss the obvious: NEW is all about the Kingdom. NEW life, NEW birth, NEW beginnings, NEW Testament, NEW converts, NEW churches, NEW pastors . . . We must embrace the NEW that God gives the Church. From time to time you and I are called to be the ones who will introduce the NEW. May we do so with HUMILITY and with a GRACIOUS spirit, to the glory of God.

"I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some." 1 Cor 9:22 (NIV)

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