

You join a new employer as a senior member of their staff. You have all the experience, knowledge, academic qualifications and confidence for the task ahead. Your brief from your manager is "*build the new division and find growth opportunities*". You are confident that this is not just a job for you, it's a God-given assignment. As you start your work you soon realise that, when God gives you an assignment, it will be challenged. You will find opposition. The saddest news is that opposition sometimes comes from within, unexpected and brutal.

Can anyone identify with this?

I am reminded of the prophet Ezra, who led the biggest number of those who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon, where they had been held captive. His mandate at his ancestral home was "*build the Lord's temple*", yet Ezra 4:24 records, "*So the work on the temple of God in Jerusalem had stopped, and it remained standstill...for twenty years*".

This really bothers me!

How can the Lord's work be delayed for so many years? How can building a new department in your new company seem to attract opposition rather than support from all concerned? There are parallels that I believe can be drawn between building a business in the modern era and building the temple in Ezra's time.

The old & the wise

As Ezra had started building the wall, the *old men* were concerned about how small and less glorious the temple was. Instead of guiding him, they instead compared him to King Solomon. Does this not happen very often in our lives? As you work hard in building your business, the supposedly old and wise, those who have been before you, start to pour water on your projects, telling of how wonderfully things were done in the past? *Ask God to surround you with mature people who will support your God-inspired project, and who encourage and guide you to the finish line.*

Discord

We learn from Ezra that as he was busy with the building project, the local residents began to discourage the people. They bribed agents to work against the project. They created disunity, which is an old trick of the enemy. As a leader you must learn to 'nip in the bud' any form of disunity in your organisation. *Ask God for a spirit of discernment and wisdom to deal with those who are secretly working against you.* Someone once said, "we are as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided".

Public shame

In Ezra's story the enemy solicited the help of politicians. Those who were against the building project wrote a letter to the highest political office. The project hit an immediate halt - for about 20 years. This irks me! We see it all the time, projects being stopped willy-nilly causing people to lose financial backings and their livelihoods. People being challenged in courts, putting a strain on their families and businesses.

As you persevere in your business you may be challenged by those who don't want to see you succeed. The devil's modus operandi hasn't changed. He continues to frustrate the work of God. *Be on guard and remember that, however long it takes, the work of God will be accomplished through and in you.*