

Series: "Church in Antioch: The Church that God Can Use"

QUALITIES OF A CHURCH GOD CAN USE - FOCUS: CHURCH IN ANTIOCH
SCENE SHIFTS BACK FROM JERUSALEM TO ANTIOCH
NOW THE CHURCH HAS BEEN MORE ESTABLISHED & ORGANIZED / STRUCTURE

LEADERS HAVE EMERGED AS HOLY SPIRIT HAS GIFTED THEM
combination of spiritual passion - natural talents- Spirit's gift
"how do I put all that together?" COME TO "NETWORK" on Wednesdays

APOSTLE PAUL one of the pastoral team in Antioch
LAYS OUT PRINCIPLES OF WORKING UNITY - Romans 12

WITH ALL THE DIVERSITY OF ANTIOCH
international church in pluralistic, cosmopolitan City
WHAT KEEPS THE PEOPLE OF THE CHURCH TOGETHER?

1. Basis of Unity

a. Commitment "in the church" EKKALASIA "called out from world"

Acts 11:26 The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- {5} one Lord, one faith, one baptism; {6} one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

NOT JUST OUR COMMITMENT- GOD'S COMMITMENT TO US IN CHRIST
Colossians 1:13-14 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, {14} in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

WE LOVE BECAUSE GOD FIRST LOVED US

ROMAN WORLD HAD ONLY ONE UNRIVALED LORD "Caesar"
TO NAME JESUS AS LORD MEANT REPUDIATING WORLD'S AUTHORITY
Romans 10:9-10 if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

XTIAN COMMITMENT IS A LIFE SENTENCE WHICH BEGINS WITH 2nd BIRTH

AMERICAN TRAGEDY IS THE CHURCH SPLIT
rarely see church splits anywhere in world / exc. USA INFLUENCE!

WE DO NOT CHERISH UNITY AS MUCH AS VICTORY
WIN / LOSE MENTALITY - I'M RIGHT, YOU MUST BE WRONG
INSTEAD - WHAT DIMENSION OF THE TRUTH CAN YOU SHARE WITH ME
WHAT WAYS HAVE I FAILED TO SEE THE TOTAL PICTURE?
VALUE TIME MORE THAN PEOPLE/ TIME NEEDED TO FORGE RELATIONSHIPS

b. Content "prophets and teachers" / FOCUS ON THE WORD OF GOD

MOST ESSENTIAL ASPECT OF CHURCH GOD CAN USE - MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Acts 11:26 THIS WAS FOCUS OF APOSTLE'S MINISTRY

So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

THEY LOOKED LIKE LITTLE CHRIST'S AFTER A YEAR OF GROWING IN WORD

"prophets and teachers"

LUKE DOES NOT EXPLAIN DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THESE MINISTRIES
NOR IF ALL 5 MEN HAD BOTH GIFTS OR ANY COMBINATION OF THEM

THEY DID NOT CREATE THE MESSAGE / COMMUNICATED GOD'S MESSAGE

DUTY WAS NOT TO BE CLEVER / BUT TO BE CAREFUL TO GOD'S INTENTION
WORK WAS NOT TO DISTORT MESSAGE / BUT TO DELIVER IT FAITHFULLY

BASIS OF UNITY CHRIST PRAYS FOR

John 17:17,20,21 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth...I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.

Psalms 68:11 The Lord announced the word, and great was the company of those who proclaimed it:

I HOPE AND PRAY EACH OF YOU ARE IN THAT GREAT COMPANY

2. The Unity in Diversity

GOAL FOR THE CHURCH IS NOT TO CREATE IDENTICAL CLONES

OUR CREATIVE GOD DID NOT MAKE ONE FLOWER - HE MADE THOUSANDS

ONE GENERIC BIRD - ONE BASIC COLOR - ONE STANDARD LANDSCAPE

IF GOD WANTS TO HAVE SUCH DIVERSITY IN CREATION - PASSING AWAY

HOW MUCH MORE IS HE PLEASED BY DIVERSITY IN NEW CREATION

Revelation 7:9 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.

REDEEMED SAINTS - DIVERSE nations, tribes, peoples, languages
UNIFIED IN THEIR PRAISE TO GOD AND TO THE LAMB

a. Cities ANTIOCH 3rd LARGEST ROMAN CITY / 1/2 MILLION PEOPLE

BY ITS VERY NATURE - CITY IS MADE UP OF MANY DIFFERENT PEOPLE
different in background / tradition / philosophy / style

GOSPEL BEGAN IN QUIET RURAL VILLAGES OF PALESTINE
QUICKLY BECAME AN URBAN FAITH / GOOD NEWS CONFRONTED CITIES

BOOK OF ACTS IS ALMOST ENTIRELY URBAN - 40 different cities named
trace missionary journeys / lesson in ancient urban geography

HAILI CHURCH NEEDS TO SEE HILO AS OUR CITY / WE REACH FOR GOD
city God has called us to serve is diverse, challenging, complex
target audience not village of Hawaiians/ urban mosaic of peoples

WORLD GOD WANTS US TO REACH IS URBAN
VAST MAJORITY of world's population live in cities / MEGACITIES

b. Teams 5 DIFFERENT LEADERS AT ANTIOCH NAMED BY LUKE

NOT MEGACHURCH THAT SUPER PASTOR LED / OR BISHOP AND ASSISTANTS

THERE IS NO CHURCH IN N.T. EVER LEAD BY ONE MAN / LEADERSHIP TEAM

"Most churches have one of two extremes in leadership, one man who dominates or a
committee that stagnates, need team that motivates EVERY MEMBER TO SERVE IN
CHRIST'S MINISTRY"

TEAM WAS UNITED IN PRAYER, WORSHIP, AND SERVICE - MISSION TRIPS

A CHURCH GOD CAN USE HAS LEADERS COMMITTED TO MINISTRY
LEADERSHIP RETREATS- PRAYER MEETINGS - VISION SEMINARS - TRAINING
ALL ON THE SAME PAGE OF GOD'S PLAYBOOK

"Barnabas" Joseph a Levite from Cyprus / SON OF ENCOURAGEMENT

"Simeon called Niger = BLACK - a Black African / East? Uganda?
possibly Simon of Cyrene who carried the cross of Jesus

SONS BECAME BELIEVERS Alexander and Rufus = a leader in Rome??

((Mark 15:21 A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was
passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross.

Romans 16:13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me,
too.))

"Lucius of Cyrene" from North Africa / not necessarily black

"Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch)"

MEANING foster brother or intimate friend
CAME FROM GOVERNMENT CIRCLES IN JERUSALEM

"Saul" - Pharisee from Tarsus in Cilicia

MEN SYMBOLIZED THE ETHNIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN ANTIOCH

TRAGEDY OF AMERICAN CHURCH - Sunday morning at 11 a.m. is the most segregated hour in the week / HOUR WHEN XTIAN'S WORSHIP

WORKPLACE / SPORTS / POLITICS / ALL SHOW MUCH MORE UNITY

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF EACH LEADER WOULD BE OBVIOUS
INSTEAD OF CRITICIZING THEM - COMPLEMENT THEM WITH OTHER'S GIFTS

MICHAEL GREEN "These 5 LEADERS embodied the quality of togetherness that they were seeking to inculcate in the congregation at large. It is incumbent on the leadership of every church to be like that. Avoiding the dominance of one man and the facelessness of a committee, Christian leadership should be both varied and united. It should model a plurality of leadership striving to outdo one another in love and service. Nobody in that leadership ministers without being ministered to."

c. Styles "prophets and teachers"

2 VERY DIFFERENT WAYS OF APPROACHING THE WORK OF CHRIST

PROPHET - spontaneous, impulsive, fast moving / UNPREDICTABLE

RECEIVED DIRECT WORD FROM GOD - NEVER KNOW WHAT IS NEXT

TEACHER - methodical, predictable, slow moving

TEACHES AND EXPLAINS WORD ALREADY RECEIVED

CHURCH TODAY - "Charismatics" and "Traditionalists"

CRITICIZE EACH OTHER - Charismatics: Tradit. are dead & lifeless

Tradit: Charismaniacs are shallow and immature

WORK OF CHRIST NEEDS TO HAVE BOTH - deep roots and fast growth

EASY THING AT ANTIOCH WOULD BE TO HAVE 2 SEPARATE CHURCHES
CHALLENGE X CALLS US TO BE YOKED TOGETHER UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP

GREAT POTENTIAL HAILI HAS TO BE CHURCH GOD CAN USE

1) MULTICULTURAL - God forging inter-racial Ohana in Jesus

2) DIFFERENT STYLES - 3 different styles of worship in One Church

EASIER TO CUT ONE ANOTHER OFF / FORCE CONFORMITY
CHALLENGE TO REMAIN UNITED IN DIVERSITY IS THE WAY OF CHRIST

BOTTOM LINE - BELONG TO E/OTHER - WE NEED E/OTHER - SERVE E/OTHER

1 Cor 12:21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"

3. Maintaining Diverse Unity

PAUL SAW FIRST HAND HOW A SPLIT IN MINISTRY DOES NOT WORK

12:25 When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.

15:39 They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus,

PAUL WENT OFF WITHOUT HIS PARTNER - SENSED HIS NEED OF OTHERS

2 Corinthians 2:12-14 Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, {13} I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said good-bye to them and went on to Macedonia.

HERE WAS HIS ADVICE TO THE MACEDONIANS

Philippians 1:27 conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ...stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel

SOMETIMES PROBLEMS IN CHURCH / like marriage / NOT MINE OF COURSE CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT EACH OTHER / CANNOT LIVE WITH EACH OTHER

WHEN HE WAS NEAR END OF LIFE AND MINISTRY -

2 Tim 4:11 Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

a. Honest Evaluation Rom 12.3 1 Corinthians 1.26-31 15.9,10

Romans 12:3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

ORIGINAL GREEK - word "think" repeated 4 times
v. 2 Paul appealed for the RENEWING OF THEIR MINDS

HAVE PROPER VIEW OF SELF - ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH CHRIST DIED FOR US - WE ARE SINNERS DESPERATELY IN NEED OF GRACE

AVOID REJECTION - I have nothing to offer, I am not good enough

PAUL COULD HAVE SAID I AM TOO BAD TO SERVE CHRIST

1 Corinthians 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them--yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

AVOID BOASTING - COMPETITION what would God do without me?

SINGER- IF YOU DON'T LIKE THIS SONG, BLAME GOD, HE GAVE IT TO ME!
I REALLY NEVER KNEW BEFORE THEN THAT GOD HAD SUCH A LOUSY VOICE

b. Faithful Cooperation ANT. CHURCH DISCOVERED & DEVELOPED GIFTS

Romans 12:4-8 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, {5} so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. {6} We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. {7} If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; {8} if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

PAUL DRAWS AN ANALOGY BETWEEN HUMAN BODY & CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

IMPORTANCE OF EACH MEMBER / INTER-DEPENDENCE ON ONE ANOTHER

EACH ONE HAS A GIFT - IMPORTANT FOR THE HEALTH & WORK OF BODY

SHORT LIST - PROPHETS, SERVANTS, TEACHERS, ENCOURAGEMENT, GIVING LEADERSHIP AND MERCY - NETWORK ANIMALS STORY

AVOID PROJECTION YOUR GIFT ON EVERYONE
see world through your gifts / Wisdom - did not have good sense

MERCY - not everyone is as compassionate as you are

ADMINISTRATION - not everyone is as organized as you

WARREN WIERSBE "Spiritual gifts are tools to build with, not toys to play with or weapons to fight with"

c. Loving Participation NOTICE THEY ALL 3 GO TOGETHER -

HONEST EVALUATION - FAITHFUL COOPERATION - LOVING PARTICIPATION

MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT
EACH MEMBER IS CALLED TO A PRAYERFUL INVOLVEMENT

IT IS POSSIBLE TO USE A SPIRITUAL GIFT IN AN UNSPIRITUAL WAY

I COR 13 - LOVE CHAPTER / BEFORE CHAPTER 12 AND BEFORE 14!!!!
took me a whole week of study to figure that out!

12 - VARIOUS GIFTS GIVEN // 14 - HOW CHURCH FUNCTIONS IN MINISTRY
PAUL USES THE GREATEST EMPHASIS TO DESCRIBE THE NECESSITY OF LOVE

1 Corinthians 13:2 If I have..not love, I am nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:13 the greatest of these is love.

IF CHRISTIANS CANNOT GET ALONG WITH EACHOTHER
THEY HAVE NO CHANCE OF IMPRESSING THE WORLD

John 13:35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

1. Sincerity v. 9a "love must be sincere" WITHOUT HYPOCRISY

CANNOT GIVE SOMEONE BRUTUS ALOHA - KIND THAT BRUTUS GAVE CAESAR
kiss on cheek, stab in back

JOHN MURRAY "if love is the greatest virtue, hypocrisy is greatest vice, what a contradiction to bring these together!"

2. Discernment v. 9b "hate what is evil, cling to what is good"

LOVE IS NOT BLIND SENTIMENT / NOT A BLIND LOYALTY

IF SOMETHING IS WORTH PASSIONATELY LOVING
THAT WHICH IS ITS OPPOSITE IS WORTH PASSIONATELY HATING

IS IT REALLY TRUE THAT GOD LOVES THE SINNER AND HATES THE SIN?

Psa 5:4-6 You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil...The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong.

3. Affection v. 10a "Be devoted in brotherly love"

PAUL USES A WORD FOR LOVE USUALLY RESERVED FOR NATURAL FAMILIES
LOVE MEMBERS OF BODY OF CHRIST LIKE YOUR OWN FLESH AND BLOOD

4. Honor v. 10b "honor one another above yourselves"

5. Enthusiasm {11} Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

PEOPLE IN BALTIMORE, NY, ATLANTA, ST. LOUIS
SCREAMING HEADS OFF FOR THEIR BASEBALL TEAMS - FANATICS

MANY OF THOSE SAME PEOPLE WILL SIT SILENTLY / SLEEP IN CHURCH

NOT NECESSARY TO SCREAM & SHOUT - FILLED WITH JOY OF THE LORD

6. Patience {12} Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

CHRISTIAN'S CONFIDENT EXPECTATION THAT JESUS IS COMING AGAIN
SOURCE OF ABIDING JOY - BASIS OF SOLID HOPE - ENDURANCE

7. Generosity {13} Share with God's people who are in need.

MEANS BOTH SHARE IN THEIR SUFFERINGS AND SHARE OUR RESOURCES

Acts 2:44 All the believers were together and had everything in common.

8. Hospitality v. 13b Practice hospitality.

EARLY CHRISTIANS HAD NO HOTELS OR RESTAURANTS - OPEN HOMES

MUST HAVE OPEN HEART TO HAVE AN OPEN HOME

ORIGEN - Early Church Father - at least was sound theology!

"We are not just to receive the stranger when he comes to us, but actually to enquire after, and look carefully for, strangers, to pursue them and search them out everywhere, lest perchance somewhere they may sit in the streets or lie without a roof over their heads"

ONE CLEAR EVIDENCE AMERICA IS NOT A CHRISTIAN COUNTRY - HOMELESS

ONE QUESTION GOD WILL HAVE FOR EVERY CHURCH Why more concerned about clean carpets than homeless person on street?

Matt 25:41 JESUS will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. I was a stranger and you did not invite me in

9. Good Will 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

ALTHOUGH WE ARE ENEMIES OF THE WORLD / NOT BY OUR DOING OR CHOICE WE WANT TO RECEIVE CHRIST'S BLESSING AS PEACEMAKERS

10. Sympathy {15} Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

LOVE NEVER STANDS ALOOF FROM OTHER PEOPLES JOYS OR PAINS
LOVE IDENTIFIES WITH THEM AND ENTERS INTO THEIR EXPERIENCES

11. Harmony {16} Live in harmony with one another.

THINK THE SAME TOWARD ON ANOTHER
SINCE TRUE BELIEVERS HAVE A RENEWED MIND / THINK ALIKE IN CHRIST

WHY WE SHOULD SEEK GOD'S GUIDANCE AS A CHURCH - CONSENSUS

12. Humility v. 16b Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

FEW KINDS OF PRIDE ARE WORSE THAN SNOBBERY / IGNORE A PERSON

GENTILE LOVE - LOVING THOSE WHO LOVE YOU
KINGDOM LOVE - LOVING YOUR ENEMIES = LOVE OF CHRIST

TOO HARD TO REMEMBER 12 POINTS OF "Loving Participation"

make it more easy - summarize it all in ONE WORD = JESUS

It is in Him that we see the perfection of all these virtues

It is because of Him that we want to try and live them out

UNITY BEGINS WITH HIM MAKING A COMMITMENT TO US - TO SAVE US

Ephesians 2:12,13 remember that at ONE time you were separate from Christ...without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

IF YOU HAVE NOT PLEDGED TO FOLLOW HIM - WHAT IS HOLDING YOU BACK?