

THE CHURCH - ACTS 2:36-47

In the O.T. God's people had:

1. Sacrifice
2. Priesthood
3. Tabernacle

In the N.T. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of:

1. Sacrifice (Heb. 7:27, 9:14, 25-28, I Pet. 3:18, Heb. 10)
2. Priest (Heb. 4:14, 8:1)
We are priests (I Pet. 2:9, Rev. 1:6)
3. Tabernacle (John 1:14 "tabernacled" among us) (Heb. 9:24, Jo. 2:19-21)
Church -(Eph. 2:21-22)
Holy temple (Heb. 3:6)

So the church was born in Acts 2 without Priesthood, sacrifice or tabernacle because the church and Christ together were all three for more than 100 years and it over-ran the entire Roman empire.

The progression of God's Revelation:

1. God symbolically dwelling among His people-Tab.
2. God actually dwelling within the hearts - H.S.
3. God dwelling eternally with His people in perfect spiritual communion in the age to come.

Church buildings are at best - a place to meet. At worst - idolatrous.

In Acts 2:42, 5:42:

Church met in homes - and how the believers multiplied! There was not a church built until A.D. 200 - so whatever church buildings they are not needed for: 1) numerical growth or 2) spiritual depth.

It is easy to forget when we are engrossed in our huge buildings that our:

- a) KING is at WAR and we
- b) are called to be HIS WITNESSING SOLDIERS
- c) we are to seek the sinner -
- d) going out among them
- e) and the fellowship is to be made up of all kinds of people - anyone who believes, slave & free, rich & poor, man & woman, Jew & Greek.

Church building and church property is fine if that is not an end in itself - property and buildings should be held "lightly", and be functional i.e. means, not an end

The minister: should not be a "super-star" - if he is the church is an audience, not a body. Also there are not enough "super-stars" to go around, thousands of churches, but only a few dozen superstars. And think of all the mediocre, struggling pastors who are doing the very best ~~thing~~ they can with their gifts: "holy envy". The Church of Jesus Christ cannot run on superstars - God never intended that it should. God promises to provide all necessary leadership through the various members and gifts of the Spirit (Eph. 4:1-16). Many many gifted young men today hesitate because they know they aren't superstars and never will be. Among the Apostles there was Peter and later Paul: that's all.

In the G. L. God's people and:
1. Secretary
2. Treasurer
3. Steward

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to the church was both in order and in accordance with the
100 years ago it overran the entire home.

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Church members and their families.

It is not to be forgotten that the church is not a
mere organization, but a living organism.

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All the others: James, John Philip, Bartholomew, Enanhras, Mark, Aristarchus, etc. etc. etc. We know little BUT they spread the church. The Gospel - and were used of the Spirit, each one according to his gifts. They worked together - fellowshipped, built each other up.

Christian fellowship = the Spirit's gift to the church II Cor. 13:14
Def: A sense of communication & community BEYOND the human kind - it is the fellowship OF and IN the Holy Spirit (Phil. 2:1)

Vertical & horizontal - need to be together (II Cor. 13:14) *Need both to be balanced*
"is a fellowship with (I) God which He shares through the indwelling (III) Spirit with those who are members of the Body of (II) Christ.
The fellowship of the Holy Spirit is the true description of the church"
This fellowship is more than just a function of our humanity. It partakes of the supernatural - and then unites us as humans also. It is real, wonderful and different -
a shared faith
a shared salvation
a shared divine nature

Produces UNITY - oneness of PURPOSE, Common LOVE and MUTUAL CONCERN. It is an earthly foretaste of the eternal communion with God and fellow believers without the limitations of our "body of sin" and the space-time-earthly-fallenness.

This "fellowship" & "unity" has a certain parallel to the "communion" of the Trinity. Jesus (John 17:11, 21) disciples may be one as We are One.

Remember, it is inseparably involving both vertical & horizontal.

The specific structures are left up to the (1) times, the (2) need, the (3) culture. We are free to create those structures as the Holy Spirit leads. The group utilized the gifts of the Spirit and the environment in which He may operate.

However, it is important to have:

- 1) communication among the members, not just a one-way, one-person to members.
- 2) Prayer - open and involving the members
- 3) Freedom & openness to "speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15).
- 4) Informal & intimate - loosely structured so that God's Spirit can move in exciting, unpredictable ways. Believers need to know that the Most High God is also the Most High God (Isa. 57:15)
- 5) "Koinonia" is naturally related to Bible study (Acts. 2:42) in the context of community, and central to it.

God's thing has in O.T. & N.T. times always been calling out His people. (Titus 2:14) "who gave Himself for us that He might purify for Himself a people for His own possession."

(I Pet. 2:9-10) "Once you were no people, but now you are God's people".
"I will be their God, and they shall be my people".

LAIKOS - 2000 times in O.T. Septuagint

"Laity" - 140 times in N.T.

The work of God is the calling of a people - the church should verify ~~the~~ message it proclaims (or else it betrays that message) The church is made up of individuals who are converted - and transformed - this reality working out produces the N.T. dynamic (unless we stifle it!)

The 'People of God' are - the Church - are:

- 1) a chosen people - identifiable and distinct from the world - it is not an anonymous, unknown people,
- 2) a Pilgrim People: this emphasis is difficult, but biblically necessary. It is not withdrawal, but a "calling out" to live in "active tension with the world" "looking for a city not made with hands" and yet a people whose mission is still reconciliation as we are "ambassadors for Christ."
- 3) The people of God is a people "under the Word of God" - the Bible. The People of the Book.
- 4) The church is a witness people - to witness to God's personal acts throughout history - supremely the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:32, 3:15, 4:33) and personal conversion - and genuine community (II Cor. 5:18) and a "ministry of reconciliation" that God might "make known ~~the~~ His Wisdom to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" - "This is in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. 3:10-11)
- 5) The church is a Holy People - "in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth" - This holiness is a sharing (containing) of the divine nature (immortal). Partakers of Divine Nature (II Pet. 1:4) - "having escaped the corruption that is in the world" . (Gal. 5:22) evidenced by the "fruit" of the Spirit.

Submitting I Cor. 16:16, I Pet. 5:5 Heb. 13:7

Smaller ~~units~~ of the Body of Christ must see and feel their unity with the larger body: A variety of forms ~~is~~ is possible:

- a) used to be camp meetings
- b) today, mass evangelism
- c) citywide rallies

The ONLY STRUCTURE God wants is a People - the People of God with the basis of the a) Word of God, b) the Person of Jesus Christ and the c) WORK of Jesus, d) the Gifts, Ministry and Fruit of the Holy Spirit.

With:

- 1) Small groups: community & Bible study "bearing one another's burdens", prayer.
- 2) Large group - coming together of people from small groups for a teaching, building in the "knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ".
- 3) Worshipping groups - praising God, reciting with joy the acts of God in Biblical history and in the history of this particular groups of God's people.

Result: (v. 43) "everyone kept feeling a sense of awe" - they saw that God was working through these people - the supernatural work of God was very visible and it baffled the on-lookers. It is in the spirit of a person - through God's transforming grace - that His Mighty Power is most clearly seen. The surrounding people responded daily.

the people of God are - the church - are:

1) A church people - identifiable and distinct from the world - 11:16

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This church is not a sect, but a community in which all are called to live in holiness. It is not a church, but a community in which all are called to live in holiness. It is not a church, but a community in which all are called to live in holiness.

3) The people of God are - the church - are:

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5) The people of God are - the church - are:

6) The people of God are - the church - are:

7) The people of God are - the church - are:

8) The people of God are - the church - are:

9) The people of God are - the church - are:

10) The people of God are - the church - are:

11) The people of God are - the church - are:

12) The people of God are - the church - are:

13) The people of God are - the church - are:

14) The people of God are - the church - are:

15) The people of God are - the church - are:

16) The people of God are - the church - are:

17) The people of God are - the church - are:

18) The people of God are - the church - are:

19) The people of God are - the church - are:

Form + Function of the Church

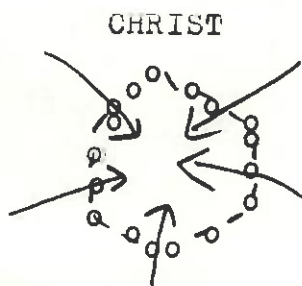
Rom. 8:9 One Spirit Eph. 4:4

One Hope - conformed to the image of Christ and His coming again.

One Faith - in the Object - I Cor. 12:11-13

at the moment of belief - "to put into"

vs. 6 God is the sphere of all of our lives



looking at each other's
fallen flesh - enmity & strife
root of bitterness springs up.

Split off groups



Focus on Christ
and reconcile others.
Standing shoulder to
shoulder.

Koinonia - active participation-fellowship

Col. 2:18-19 - joints & ligament, so we need each other - gifts are
different - spontaneous

WORSHIP:

We make a mistake by identifying worship with a place - a person - a
time. God's attitude - any place, any time, with anyone, continually
primarily vertical as we respond to the Lord.

Deut. 6:5 Love the Lord with all.....

Only one definition of worship: Rom. 12:1 "a living & holy sacrifice
which is your spiritual service of worship". Summation & essence of
worship.

I Cor. 6 - we are the temple of H.S. Meeting, moments can be used for
worship. worship is the disposition of your heart where you are occupied
with God and the things of God.

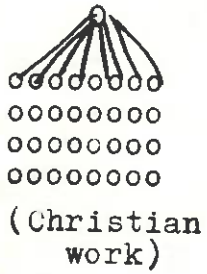
Math. 15:1-9 tradition vs. commandment of God (heart vs. acts)

John 4:20-24 - in spirit and in truth - H.S. & His Word, our position

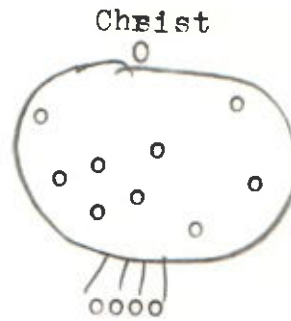
Phil 3:1-3 - worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus.

Meeting mentality: something must happen - an existential moment.

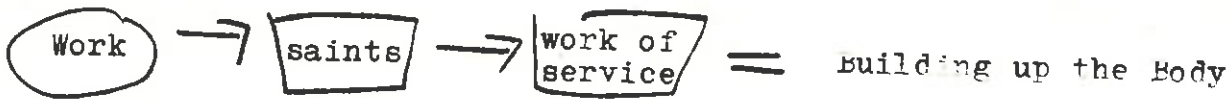
Wrong



Right



1. Deacons
2. Bishops (elders)
3. Workers



Need Eph. 4:13

- 1) Unity of the faith
- 2) Knowledge
- 3) Maturity

vs. 15 growing up in Christ

Extremes: truth without love - destroys
 love without truth - does no good

Not a lone ranger

(I Cor. 12:14) the body is not one member, but many - never live it alone
 (15, 16) - function as we are, not what we want! (to people who were unwilling to use their gifts)

or dictator (vs. 17) - Don't do everything yourself

II Cor. 10:12-13

vs. 25 - do divisions in the Body - Unity of H.S.

CHURCH

Worship

Rom. 12:1
John 4:20-24
Phil. 3:3

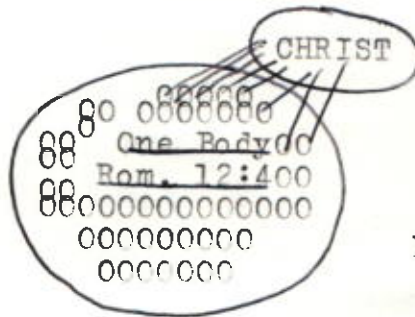
Apostles
Prophets
Evangelists
Pastor-teachers

leaders

The easy way is for man to trust a system - a highly structured, well-run organization

Church-Ekklesia
Called out of WORLD SYSTEM

Formation of church in one of 2 ways:



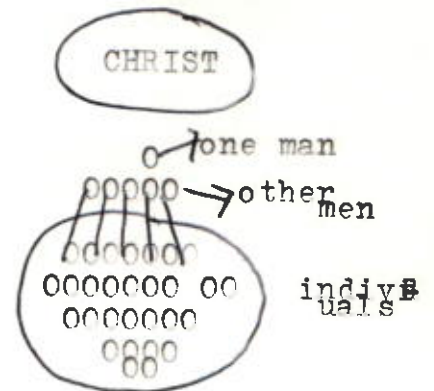
Each person relates to Christ personally

The way to get unity in the body is to get to know Christ better.

Access through what Christ did at the Cross. Unity is already a fact in the mind of God- we need to experience every day what Christ has already done.

Eph. 4:3 - preserve the unity need humility, gentleness, (strong but submissive), patience, showing forbearance, inlove.
in a system a man is expendable, but God says forbear

What has actually happened for 2000 years-



Men look to men rather than Christ

Result: spiritually starved and divisions

