

MAXIMIZING GLORY TO GOD THROUGH THE CHURCH

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I. Greetings from Denver and thanks for allowing me to come to visit you.

II. What does God want: Eph. 3:4-21

- A. God has ordained that “through the Church the manifold wisdom of God should be made known” (vs. 10)
- B. God has ordained that we should be “rooted and established in love” and “may have power together with all the saints to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ” so that we may “be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God” (vss. 17-19)
- C. God has ordained that the “glory . . . or excellence of God be disclosed *in the church* and in *Jesus Christ*” (Translation by Willard Taylor, *Beacon Bible Commentary*, Volume 9 (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1965), 199.

--God wants his Glory to be disclosed in the church his Body.

--What type of church does it take to make this happen?

III. Some Various Types of Churches that exist (Modified from *The Purpose Driven Church*, by Rick Warren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 125).

- A. The Soul Winning Church
 - 1. Focus = Evangelism
 - 2. Spiritual emphasis: Evangelistic (Outreach)
- B. The Feeling/experiential church
 - 1. Focus = Worship, Prayer, and expressive feelings (Upreach)
 - 2. Spiritual emphases: Singing, musical instruments, and worship leading, feeling God
- C. The Family Reunion Church
 - 1. Focus = Fellowship, Tradition and Loyalty to Tradition (Inreach)
 - 2. Spiritual emphases: Hospitality and Fellowship
- D. The Bible Classroom Church
 - 1. Focus = Bible Knowledge (Intellectual Inreach)
 - 2. Spiritual emphasis: Teaching and intellectual knowledge
- E. The Social Conscience Church
 - 1. Focus = Ministry to change society (Social Outreach)
 - 2. Spiritual emphasis = Serving, caring, meeting physical needs

Which type of church have we/you been in the past?

What type of church does God want us to be?

- None of these maximize Glory to God by themselves.
- None of these are necessarily bad
- But they only utilize part of the gifts of the Body
- As such the whole expression of Christ to the world is incomplete
- The Body is out of balance
- Members suffer
- The Spirit's work was hindered
- God wants us to be a church that embraces his whole purpose not just one aspect of it

- Solution: We need to discover and engage every part of the Body to bring glory to God and become the balanced church he wants us to be.

- For this reason I am so grateful and encouraged that you here in London are working toward implementing a balance of Spiritual Gifts into the Body! You are working toward maximizing glory to God!

IV Our ICOC Story: Focus mainly on the Gift of Evangelist and being a soul winning church.

What happens to the Body when we focus mainly on one gift? The members and the Body suffer and God's glory is not expressed to its full extent possible.

My Assessment of what happened in Denver:

A. We did well in the equipping of those with the gift of evangelist, including those who are good at inviting, persuading, preaching, and studying with non-Christians. We however did poorly in equipping those with other gifts.

B. Accountability was done mainly with respect to the gift of evangelist.

Evangelism was lifted up as *the* major part of being a disciple. Concepts such as "personal fruitfulness", "numbers of visitors", and "baptisms" became nearly the only important thing. The result was that people who were successful in these areas (those with spiritual gifts associated with that of an evangelist) thrived while those who did not possess those gifts floundered.

Those who were successful using this gift of evangelist were lifted up in the congregation when they had many visitors or baptisms. Those without that gift on the other hand felt like failures, were very seldom lifted up in public, and became guilt-ridden because they were not able to perform in a way that could fulfill their desire to follow Christ by being successful at evangelism, the only avenue they understood which would really please God. Excelling in doing things in their true gift areas was shunned and taught as not important as it was not explicitly evangelistic.

As a result many, even though they had desires and I think were prompted by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, did not practice their talent and did not even find out what their special talents were. There was no need to do so (in fact it was considered sinful by some as it was perceived as non-evangelistic) because functioning as an evangelist was the only important gift to use. As a result they, in this sense, quenched the Spirit in the non-use of the gift Christ had given them. They were like square pegs attempting to be put in round holes. But being good disciples with good hearts, they re-dedicated themselves over and over again to be evangelists while continuing to shun doing what they were truly gifted at in the church. Some eventually became deeply troubled, discouraged, and bitter at themselves, God, and leadership. Performance became key. If only they could be successful in personal fruit-bearing (defined as **personally** bringing someone to church or Bible Talk who then became a Christian and remained in the church), they felt, then they would know that God accepted them and loved them. By this they would also know they were saved and would not be the limb that was cut off by God because of lack of good fruit. Leaders too would accept them. This would be evident by the public praise they would receive. But since they were not successful in evangelism in this way and to the degree they thought God wanted, many questioned their salvation. They evidently were not being “good” disciples or they would bear much fruit. They had to settle in their hearts for being second-class citizens in the Kingdom, and some even left because they were never “good enough.” They were guilt ridden, down-trodden, like sheep without a shepherd. In some ways the church culture seemed to have tied “up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders” (Matt. 23:4). They were made to do things they were not built to do. It was perpetuated by not seeing the Body as a whole and not giving equal honor and place to **every member** no matter what their talent.

That is what we experienced in Denver from my perspective.
What did you experience in London in the past?

V. **Solution to bringing greater glory to God through the Church:**

A. **Embrace the Biblical Perspective on the Body**

1. God has given *each one* a “measure of faith” or gift and not all have the same function (Rom. 12:3b-6a)
2. To *each one* is given a gift for the *common good*. Hence each person and the expression of his/her gift is important for the health of the whole (I Cor. 12:7).
3. *Each disciple* is given certain gifts *just as God wants and determines and has arranged*. It is not up to us to force a gift on someone. We must accept that not everyone has every gift or all the gifts (I Cor. 12:11, 18).
4. *Each part/person* belongs equally and with the same esteem to the body. (I Cor. 12:14-20)

5. *Each person* is “indispensable” and to be honored. Indeed, the weaker parts and those without honor are to receive the greatest honor (I Cor. 12:21-26).
6. The church grows and builds itself up in love as *each part* does its own work including expressing its own gift (Eph. 4:16).

B. Discover your personal spiritual gifts and gift-ministry

C. Implement those gifts doing your part to build up the church in love.

- VI. Conclusion: To maximize giving glory to God, become a gift-based ministry church encouraging and equipping every member to “do its work,” its personal ministry.**

BRINGING GLORY TO GOD THROUGH THE CHURCH: THE SPIRITUAL GIFT BALANCE

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I. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW: MAXIMIZING GLORY TO GOD THROUGH THE CHURCH.

A. Passionately Embrace the Biblical Perspective on the Body

- a. God has given *each one* a “measure of faith” or gift and not all have the same function (Rom. 12:3b-6a).
- b. To *each one* is given a gift for the *common good*. Hence each person and the expression of his/her gift is important for the health of the whole (I Cor. 12:7).
- c. *Each disciple* is given certain gifts *just as God wants and determines and has arranged*. It is not up to us to force a gift on someone. We must accept that not everyone has every gift or all the gifts (I Cor. 12:11, 18).
- d. *Each part/person* belongs equally and with the same esteem to the body. (I Cor. 12:14-20).
- e. *Each person* is “indispensable” and to be honored. Indeed, the weaker parts and those without honor are to receive the greatest honor (I Cor. 12:21-26).
- f. The church grows and builds itself up in love as *each part* does its own work including expressing its own gift (Eph. 4:16).

B. Passionately seek to discover your personal spiritual gifts and gift-ministry.

C. Passionately implement those gifts doing your part to build up the church in love.

D. Become a passionate gift-based ministry church encouraging and equipping every member to “do its work,” its personal ministry.

II. GLORY COMES TO GOD WHEN SPIRITUAL RELATIONAL BALANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL DISCIPLE IS PASSIONATELY EMBRACED.

A. Three relational balance parameters:

1. Matt. 22:36-40: Love God and neighbor
2. Rom. 13:9: OWE nothing but love

- U = Upreach (Relationship with God)
- I = Inreach (Relationship with fellow disciples, i.e., one another Relationships)
- O = Outreach (Relationship with the lost)

UIO (It is YOU I owe) love.

B. Three Ingredients for successful human love/loyalty relationships

1. Structure
2. Expectations
3. Accountability

III. SPECIAL GLORY COMES TO GOD WHEN THERE IS A PASSION FOR SPIRITUAL GIFT/ONE ANOTHER RELATIONAL BALANCE IN THE CHURCH.

A. Many one another commands involve actions that are also spiritual gifts.

E.g., mercy (Eph. 4:32), encouragement (I Thess. 4:18), serving (Gal. 5:13), giving (II Cor. 9:7), instruct one another (Rom. 15:14).

These one another commands are universal so how do people relate to these as spiritual gifts?

B. Two extremes to be avoided with respect to spiritual gifts:

1. The mentality that “everyone does everything” *with the same ability of the one who has that gift.*
This is the “superman philosophy of ministry.
2. The mentality that “I will not and should not attempt to serve in *any* way listed in Scripture unless I have that gift.”

C. The Biblical balance: “Both and” not “either or.”

1. Unite the “one another” commands with spiritual gifts:
Universal one another relationships plus specific individual spiritual gifts.
2. Everyone is to develop the character depicted in the one another passages although they may not be able to express them as well as those with that spiritual gift.
3. Each one is to develop and express his/her special individual spiritual gift.

D. Illustration: The Hand Expression of spiritual gifts and one another commands.

1. The Palm = one another character expression for every disciple: Four expressions:
 - a. Love/loyalty toward one another.
 - b. Humility and service to one another (serve, forgive, be hospitable, wait on, be at peace with, honor one another).
 - c. Gracing one another with our presence (greet, speak, confess, fellowship, meet together with one another).
 - d. Instruct and encourage one another.

2. The Fingers = Expressions of various talents/gifts given by God. Fingers are extensions of the four expressions of the palm but express those things in a special, particular, and dynamic manner with more profound influence.
3. What is the difference? Those with the gift will usually have a greater *effect*. E.g., the person with the gift of encouragement will be able to encourage to a greater degree than one without that gift.

E. God is glorified when the Palm and Finger Expressions of His glory radiate from the church in a unified manner

1. All disciples express the palm (one another characteristics) but not every person will express the character of each finger (spiritual gift).
2. Each finger expresses its special function
3. Fingers are particular expressions of God's love to each other and the world.
4. The palm gives general expressions of God's love to each other and the world.

IV. GLORY COMES TO GOD WHEN SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE PASSIONATELY USED TO BRING THE LOST TO HIM

A. Determine how to use your gift to influence the lost

B. Determine how you can use your gift in conjunction with other's gifts to win the lost.

C. See outreach as a body effort not just an individual effort.

V. LET US GLORIFY GOD WITH OUR HANDS (PALM AND FINGERS) WORKING TOGETHER IN UNITY WITH ALL OUR HEART, MIND, SOUL, AND STRENGTH!

A. Inreaching to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

B. Outreaching to the lost.

“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written: Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name” (Rom. 15: 5-9).

ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE CONSUMES ME

(Ps. 69:9)

TO HIM BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH

(Eph. 3:21)