

# MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

GBC EQUIPPING HOUR | OCTOBER 20, 2019



## Class 2 – The Local Church for Building Up a People

**PURPOSE:** Determining what biblically warrants a given congregation formalizing their church membership, as it becomes a springboard for genuine church growth.

### Introduction

He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”<sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.<sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter, and **on this rock I will build my church**, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.<sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

- Matthew 16:15-19

*Question: When Peter first heard that Christ was going to build his church, would he have ever imagined that it would involve not only his own confession of faith in Christ but also...*

- *The invention of the printing press to make copies of the Bible?*
- *Large sea vessels, and later, aircrafts to transport the message of Jesus Christ to the most faraway places?*
- *Global agencies intent on translating the Bible into every native tongue?*
- *An ever-expanding list of affirmations and denials to clarify what the whole counsel of God says on a large range of issues from Christian theology to the practical witness of the church?*

## I. **Becoming Complex but Not Too Complex**

### A. How the Church is Becoming More Complex:

1. Apologetics shapes the tenets of the faith; ironically false teachers draw out our vigilance for what is true leading to a truth better articulated.
2. Mature believers intersecting with weak believers.
3. New fears about the future of Christianity.
4. Broken lines of discipleship. Gaps in theology.

### B. How the Church Must Not Become Too Complex:

1. Our core: simple child-like *dependent* faith.
2. God can triumph against all odds without an elaborate manmade design coming to the rescue.
3. High-stacked layers of accountability, however well intentioned, are not helpful.
4. Pharisees & Roman Catholicism: both added things to Scripture not part of the pure original, which only hurt the community of faith.

## II. **The Book of Ephesians – A Vision for Future Church Life**

- A. Practical Strengths of Biblical Books: *Romans* articulates the essentials of the gospel; *John* proclaims the passion of the gospel; *Genesis* majors on origins; *Proverbs* majors on wisdom; *Psalms* majors on worship; *1 & 2 Corinthians* on biblical counseling; *Acts* majors on church roots; *Titus* on pastoral order; the list could go on...

*Ephesians* naturally reads as Paul's (really, Christ's) vision for the future of the church; *it has six chapters.*

B. Major Structural Passages of Ephesians:

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup> **in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.** <sup>22</sup> In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

- Ephesians 2:19-22

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup> from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, <sup>16</sup> that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, <sup>18</sup> may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup> and **to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge**, that you may be **filled with all the fullness of God.**

- Ephesians 3:14-19

He [Christ] who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) <sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the **unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood**, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

- Ephesians 4:10-14

## Conclusion

The above large visionary passages from the book of *Ephesians* are not speaking of the believer's glorification. They are not speaking of the eschatological future when heaven finally comes to earth. They are speaking in fact of the here and now.

The church, through the help of evangelists, pastors and teachers, etc., is to be unified, strong, resilient, holy, wise, and Christ exalting.

This undoubtedly is a tall order. And tall orders are not carried out by spotty attendance and random aspirations. No, they are accomplished by unity, organization, and a willingness to submit to the one another (Ephesians 5:21).

### **Membership Matters Course Outline:**

- Introduction
- Local Church as a Growing Structure
- Local Church for Building Up a People
- Vital Leadership Roles
- Examples of Accountability in the NT
- More Examples of Accountability in the NT
- Failed Systems of the Past
- (Thanksgiving Break – No Equipping Hour)
- *Trellis and the Vine* Book Review - Part 1 of 2
- *Trellis and the Vine* Book Review - Part 2 of 2