

from CHRIST to CHRISTENDOM

Part 1: The Era of the Apostles

PART 2: THE NEXT GENERATION
PART 3: THE PLOT TWIST OF CONSTANTINE

INTRODUCTION – Making The Most Of This Series

Luke 6:27-38; Romans 12:19-21

OUR GOAL = To investigate early church failures in order to:

- be humbled by our similar struggles, and
- to learn transferable principles for our lives today.

What Jesus Began VS. What It Became

We started off so well!... **Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35; etc.**

WAYS THE CHURCH BECAME THE THING JESUS WANTED TO AVOID...

- Exclusive and divisive rather than inclusive and peace-making.
Matthew 28:19; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:11-19; 1 Peter 2:9
- Led by Rules, Rituals, Routines, & Traditions rather than by Love.
John 13:34-35; Matthew 12:9-12; Matthew 7:12; Romans 10:4; 13:10; Colossians 2:13-23

Love motivates right action based on the value of another rather than fear of breaking the rules.

Love guides further than rules, when life calls for exceptions.

- Institutional instead of Organic (e.g., special titles, clothes, positions)
Matthew 23:5-7; Luke 20:46; John 2:21; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 12:12-13; 1 Peter 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:5

CHURCH AS BODY OF BELIEVERS

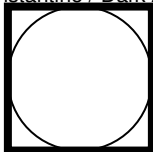
(Early Church & Anabaptist Understanding)



You are here.

CHURCH AS INSTITUTION

(Post-Constantine / Dark Ages)



○ = Organism / Body / Community

□ = Organization / Institution

First Century Adventures In Missing The Point

- Expecting a political kingdom (**John 6:15; Acts 1:6-8**)
- Fighting against death rather than embracing it (**Matthew 16:21-26**).
- Clamouring for power rather than submitting to service (**Matthew 20:17-28**).
- Misunderstanding hyperbole as a call to violence (**Luke 22:35-38 vs. Matthew 26:51-52; Luke 22:50-51; John 18:10-11**)
- Failure to understand Jesus' teaching due to not hearing the deeper meaning (**Luke 12:56**).
- Sectarian divisions (**1 Corinthians 1:10-17**)
- Abusing God's grace as license to sin (**1 Corinthians 5:1-2; 6:12-20; 11:17-22**)
- Using the personal nature of faith as an excuse to opt out of community (**Hebrews 10:25**)
- Returning to religious legalisms (**Galatians**).

When Lava Cools – The Routinization of Charisma

Max Weber [1864-1920]...

Faith movements are usually begun by a single dynamic, charismatic leader. But what happens to the movement once that leader dies? How can the core ideals be passed on to future generations?

- Replace him or her with an equally charismatic leader.
- Find social structures, traditions and systems that will help us pass on our experiences to others.
- Encourage every generation to go back to the source.

Hebrews 12:2; Mark 2:27; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-7

CONCLUSION – Seeing A Pattern

John 12:24

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS...

WARMING UP...

- After reviewing the message, talk about what aspect most challenged or encouraged you.

LOOK TO THE BOOK...

- Read **Galatians 2**. a) What verse or phrase stands out to you the most? Why? b) Paul wants people to understand that we should follow the spirit of the Bible and not the letter, the intent of the law and not the law only. Why is not circumcising Titus, a new Gentile convert to Christ, emblematic of his message? c) But also read **Acts 16:1-5**, where Paul does circumcise Timothy. What is the deal? Why the difference in approach? Is there a transferable principle for us? d) Notice Paul's public rebuke of Peter. Having to eat kosher meals was one way of keeping Jews from intermingling with Gentiles. It was God's will, for a season. In a world where meals were the focal point of friendship and hospitality, keeping kosher meant keeping separate. Peter should have known better (see **Mark 7:19; Acts 10**). What are some practices of today's Christians that might function to keep us more separated than unified in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, male or female, etc.?

SO WHAT?...

- Notice what the leaders of the Jesus movement highlight as the one central aspect of a genuine Christian life that must not be forgotten (in **verse 10**). In what ways do modern day expressions of Christianity model or fail to model this central theme? How might your own life better reflect this? Pray for each other about this.

Bruxy Cavey @ THE MEETING HOUSE – Sunday, June 11th / 18th, 2006