

THE CHURCH GOD USES, #4
God Uses a Relationally Oriented Church
Dr. Greg Tyree, BBC, AM, February 1, 2004

INTRODUCTION:

The Church God uses is...

Christ-Centered Church

Heavenly-Minded Church

Uncompromisingly Biblical

Relationally Oriented

Consistently Evangelistic

Habitually Serving

The Power of Music!!!

There was a feud between the pastor and music director of a local country church. It seems the first hint of trouble came when the pastor preached on dedicating yourselves to service, and the choir director chose to sing "I Shall Not Be Moved."

Trying to believe it was a coincidence, the pastor put the incident behind him. The next Sunday he preached on giving. Afterwards... the choir squirmed as the director led them in the hymn "Jesus Paid It All."

By this time the pastor was losing his temper. Sunday morning attendance swelled as the tension between the two built. A large crowd showed up the next week to hear his sermon on the sin of gossiping. Would you believe the choir director selected "I Love To Tell the Story"? There was no turning back.

The following Sunday the pastor told the congregation that unless something changed he was considering resignation. The entire church gasped when the music director led them in "Why Not Tonight."

Truthfully, no one was surprised when the pastor resigned a week later, explaining that Jesus had led him there and Jesus was leading him away. Still, it would've been better all around if the choir director had resisted the temptation to close with "What A Friend We Have In Jesus."

Acts 2:41, 42:

⁴¹Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. ⁴²And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

PROPOSITION: There are at least four proofs of a Relationally Oriented church.

I. ***THE CHURCH GOD USES IS RELATIONAL IN ITS AVAILABILITY.***

A. It Gives Its **Time**.

Eph. 5:15, 16.

¹⁵See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Col. 4:5, 6:

⁵Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. ⁶Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

B. It Gives Its **Total** Attention. 2 Cor. 6:1-10:

¹We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For He says:

*“In an acceptable time I have heard you,
And in the day of salvation I have helped you.”*

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. ³We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. ⁴But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, ⁵in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; ⁶by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, ⁷by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, ⁸by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; ⁹as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

C. It Gives Its **Talents**. Eph. 4:11-16:

¹¹And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

D. It Gives Its **Treasure**. 2 Cor. 8:1-7:

¹Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: ²that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. ³For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, ⁴imploping us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. ⁵And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God. ⁶So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. ⁷But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also.

ILLUSTRATION:

Present though Absent

Barbara Brown Taylor (*The Best Spiritual Writing*, edited by Phillip Zaleski [Harper, 1999], p. 262) writes:

My husband, Edward, is devoted to hawks and especially to the golden eagles that are returning to our part of Georgia. Driving down the highway with him can be a test of nerves as he cranes over the steering wheel to peer at the wing feathers of a particularly large bird. *Is it an eagle or just a turkey vulture?* He has to know, even if it means weaving down the road for a while, or running off it from time to time. My view is a bit different: "Keep your eyes on the road!" I yell at him. "Who cares what it is? I'll buy you a bird book; I'll even buy you a bird—just watch where you're going."

A couple of summers ago, we spent two months apart, and I thought I'd get a break from hawks. Instead I began to see them everywhere—looping through the air, spiraling in rising thermals, hunkered down in the tops of trees. Seeing them, really seeing them for the first time in my life, I understood that I was not seeing them with my own eyes but with Edward's eyes. He was not there, so I was seeing them for him. He was absent—or was he? He was present in me.

II. ***THE CHURCH GOD USES IS RELATIIONAL IN ITS EXPANDABILITY.***

Gal. 3:26-29:

²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

A. This Church Transcends **Color**.

ILLUSTRATION:

Colored People?

At a Promise Keepers Conference in Detroit, African-American minister Raleigh Washington said:

When I was born, I was black. When I grew up, I was still black. When I go out in the cold, I'm still black. When I go out in the sun, I get more black. When I'm sick, I'm black, and when I die, I'm sure I'll still be black.

But I found out that when white people are born, you're pink. When you grow up, you become white. When you go out in the cold, you turn blue. And when you stay out in the sun, you turn red. When you're sick, they say, "You look green," and when you die, you turn purple. Now what I want to know is why do they call blacks "colored people"?

B. This Church Transcends Class.

ILLUSTRATION:

Who Gives Most?

Poorer Americans give a greater percentage of their income to charity. In 1998, those who: earned under \$10,000 gave 5.2 percent, earned \$10,000 to \$19,999 gave 3.3 percent, earned \$75,000 to \$99,999 gave only 1.6 percent.

Citation: "The New Philanthropy," *Time* (July 24, 2000); submitted by Jerry De Luca, Montreal West, Canada

ILLUSTRATION:

Ted Turner's Measure of Success

In a commencement speech given on May 15, 2000 at Emerson College in Boston, multi-billionaire Ted Turner talks about success:

It's all relative . . . I sit down and say, I've only got \$10 billion, but Bill Gates has \$100 billion; I feel like I'm a complete failure in life. So billions won't make you happy if you're worried about someone who's got more than you. . . . So don't let yourself get caught in a trap of measuring your success by how much material success you have.

Citation: Ted Turner, *People* (June 12, 2000), p. 62

C. This Church Transcends Culture.

D. This Church Transcends Categories.

III. *THE CHURCH GOD USES IS RELATIIONAL IN ITS RESPONSIBILITY.*

ILLUSTRATION:

Trying to earn money one summer, a young man went door-to-door to see if any neighbors wanted their grass cut. At one house, a woman told him no, her husband mowed their lawn. As the door

shut, however, he heard knocking on an upstairs window. Then a man opened the window and floated a piece of paper to him. It read: "Lawnmower in back of garage. Every Tuesday at 1 P.M. \$10 will be under the doormat. Shhhhh."

Rom. 14:10-13:

¹⁰*But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.* ¹¹*For it is written:*

*"As I live, says the LORD,
Every knee shall bow to Me,
And every tongue shall confess to God."*

¹²*So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.* ¹³*Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.*

A. It is Responsible in the Lord's **Worship**. John 4:23, 24.

²³*"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.* ²⁴*"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."*

B. It is Responsible in the Lord's **Word**. 2 Tim. 2:15.

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

C. It is Responsible in the Lord's **Work**. 1 Cor. 15:58.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

D. It is Responsible in the Lord's **Ways**. Hosea 14:9.

*Who is wise?
Let him understand these things.
Who is prudent?
Let him know them.
For the ways of the LORD are right;
The righteous walk in them,
But transgressors stumble in them.*

IV. ***THE CHURCH GOD USES IS RELATIIONAL IN ITS ACCOUNTABILITY.***

ILLUSTRATION:

The Mouse Trap... (the chicken, the pig, the cow)

A. Its Accountability is Seen Laity to Leaders. Heb. 13:17.

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

B. Its Accountability is Seen Leaders to Laity. 1 Peter 5:1-4.

¹The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: ²Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; ⁴and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

C. Its Accountability is Seen Laity to Laity. Gal. 6:1-5.

¹Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. ²Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. ⁵For each one shall bear his own load.

D. Its Accountability is Seen Leaders to Leaders.

E. Its Accountability is Seen Leaders and Laity to the Lord.

APPLICATION: Prior to their wedding, David and Susan met with the minister to discuss their marriage ceremony and various traditions, such as lighting the unity candle from two individual candles. Couples usually blow out the two candles as a sign of becoming one. Their minister said that many people were now leaving their individual candles lit to signify independence and personal freedom. He asked if they wanted to extinguish the candles or leave them burning. After thinking about it, David replied, "How about if we leave mine lit and blow hers out?"

1. Are You Available?
2. Are You Expandable?
3. Are You Responsible?
4. Are You Accountable?
5. Are You Changeable?