

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Open, Mutual, Every-Member-Functioning Participation vs. Passive Spectatorship (Handout 1)

Within the Godhead we discover mutual love, mutual fellowship, mutual dependence, mutual honor, mutual submission, mutual dwelling, and authentic community. In the Godhead, there exists an eternal, complementary, and reciprocal interchange of divine life, divine love, and divine fellowship. There is an absence of command-style leadership. There is an absence of hierarchical structures. There is an absence of passive spectatorship. There is an absence of one-upmanship. And there is an absence of religious rituals and programs.

Within the early church we discover mutual love, mutual fellowship, mutual dependence, mutual honor, mutual submission, mutual dwelling, and authentic community. In the early church, there existed an eternal [originating within the Godhead of which they were simply conduits], complementary, and reciprocal interchange of divine life, divine love, and divine fellowship. There was an absence of command-style leadership. There was an absence of hierarchical structures. There was an absence of passive spectatorship. There was an absence of one-upmanship. And there was an absence of religious rituals and programs.

Ephesians 1.22.23— . . . his body.

Revelation 21.2— . . . a bride . . .

Galatians 6.10— . . . the family . . .

Ephesians 2.15— . . . one new Person . . .

1 Corinthians 9.7— . . . a vineyard . . .
(see also Luke 20.9-16)

John 15.5—I am the vine, you are the
branches;

Revelation 19.19— . . . His army.

Revelation 21.2— . . . the holy city . . .

1 Corinthians 3.9— . . . you are God's
field, God's building.

Matthew 20:25, 26—Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it **OVER THEM**, and their high officials exercise authority **OVER THEM. NOT SO WITH YOU**. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.”

Matthew 23.8-12— “But you are **NOT** to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have only one Master and **YOU ARE ALL BROTHERS** [equal]. And do **NOT** call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have **ONE FATHER**, and he is in heaven. **NOR** are you to be called ‘teacher,’ for you have **ONE TEACHER**, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

John 17.20-26—My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one . . . ”

1 Corinthians 14.26—What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, **EACH OF YOU** has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.

Romans 15.14—I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent **TO INSTRUCT ONE ANOTHER**.

Colossians 3.16—Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you **TEACH AND ADMONISH ONE ANOTHER** with all wisdom through psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

Ephesians 3.10—To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers** in heavenly places might be known **BY THE CHURCH** the manifold wisdom of God.

Genesis 1.26—Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness . . . ”

2 Peter 1:4—Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the **DIVINE NATURE**, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

The One Others of the Kingdom

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”— John 10.10

*All texts quoted from the TNIV unless otherwise noted.

**Over and over withing Paul's writings we find him referring to beings such as: "principalities and powers" (Colossians 2.15), "thrones and dominions", (Colossians 1.16), "angels and archangels" (Romans 8.38 & 2 Thessalonians 4.16); "elements" (Galatians 4.3 & Colossians 2.8) "heights and depths" (Romans 8.39), "rulers, authorities, powers, and spiritual forces of evil" (Ephesians 6.12).

In Paul's writings we find them: 1) seeking to separate us from the love of God (see Romans 8.38), 2) ruling over the lives of those who live far from the love of God (see Ephesians 2.2), 3) holding us in servitude to their rules (see Colossians 2.20), 4) holding us under their tutelage or instruction (see Galatians 4.3)

Wherever the Kingdom is genuinely lived, the unmasking and disarming of the Powers takes place. And wherever genuine Ekklesia is accurately practiced through open participatory gatherings, the church demonstrates to other realms that Jesus Christ—God's manifold wisdom (see 1 Corinthians 1.23, 24)—is alive enough to lead a fallen race who used to belong to God's enemy.

Kingdoms of the this world & the ruler of this world.

Is the "Corporate Structure" all around us in this world really the BEST example to be used?

IVP New Testament Background:

The "Father's house" would be the temple . . . The "dwelling places" (NASB, NRSV) probably refer to "rooms" (cf. NIV, TEV) in the new temple, where only undefiled ministers would have a place (Ezek 44:9-16; cf. 48:11). In this context, John probably means not the Second Coming but Christ's return after the resurrection to bestow the Spirit (14:16-18).

1Peter 2.4-5—As you come to him, the **LIVING STONE**—rejected by human beings but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like **LIVING STONES**, are being built into **A SPIRITUAL HOUSE** to be a **HOLY PRIESTHOOD**, offering **SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES** acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2.19—Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of **HIS HOUSE**, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him **THE WHOLE BUILDING** is joined together and rises to become **A HOLY TEMPLE** in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become **A DWELLING IN WHICH GOD LIVES** by his Spirit.

Romans 16.5—Greet also the church that meets **AT THEIR HOUSE**.

1 Corinthians 16.19—The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets **AT THEIR HOUSE**.

Colossians 4.15—Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church **IN HER HOUSE**.

Romans 12.1—Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as **A LIVING SACRIFICE**, holy and pleasing to God—this is true worship.

1Peter 2.9—But you are a chosen people, **A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD**, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

John 14.14—Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house [Temple] there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place **FOR YOU**? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again [resurrection] and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going."

Luke 2.49—"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"

John 2.16—To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!"

John 14.18-20—I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Open, Mutual, Every-Member-Functioning Participation vs. Passive Spectatorship (Handout 2)

Clergy / Laity

The clergy/laity dichotomy is a tragic distinction that runs throughout the history of Christendom beginning in the third century. Despite the fact that multitudes dogmatically defend it, this distinction is without biblical warrant. The word “laity” is derived from the Greek word *laos*. It simply means “the people.” *Laos* includes all Christians—including apostles, prophets, evangelists, elders and teachers. The word appears three times in 1 Peter 2:9–10, where Peter refers to “the people [*laos*] of God.”

Significantly, the word *kleros* is never used to refer to church leaders. Like *laos*, it refers to God’s people—for they are His heritage. According to the New Testament, then, all Christians are “clergy” (*kleros*) and all are “laity” (*laos*). We are the Lord’s heritage and the Lord’s people.

See the extra—“Hierarchical Authority” for more information:
<http://www.rhmheartgroups.com>

Galatians 1.1—Paul, an apostle . . . to THE CHURCHES in Galatia.

1 Thessalonians 1.1—Paul, Silas and Timothy, to THE CHURCH of the Thessalonians.

2 Thessalonians 1.1—Paul, Silas and Timothy, to THE CHURCH of the Thessalonians

1 Corinthians 1.1, 2—Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus . . . to THE CHURCH of God in Corinth

2 Corinthians 1.1—Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus . . . and Timothy our brother, to THE CHURCH of God in Corinth

Colossians 1.1, 2—Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to God’s HOLY PEOPLE in Colossae . . .

Romans 1.1-7—Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God . . . to ALL in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people.

Ephesians 1.1—Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to God’s HOLY PEOPLE in Ephesus . . .

Philippians 1.1—Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to ALL God’s holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together WITH THE OVERSEERS AND DEACONS.

Hebrews 13.22-24—I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been set free; and if he comes in time, he will be with me when I see you. Greet ALL YOUR LEADERS AND ALL THE SAINTS. Those from Italy send you greetings. Grace be with all of you.

1 Peter 5.1-4—To the ELDERS among you, I appeal as a FELLOW ELDER and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be SHEPHERDS [pastors/elders] of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; NOT LORDING IT OVER THOSE ENTRUSTED TO YOU, [Kleros - Clergy] but being EXAMPLES to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd [pastor/elder] appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Ephesians 4.11-16—The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some shepherds and teachers, to EQUIP THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF MINISTRY, for building up the body of Christ . . . But speaking the truth [to one another] in love, we must grow up in every way into Him who is THE HEAD, INTO CHRIST, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together BY EVERY LIGAMENT WITH WHICH IT IS EQUIPPED, as EACH PART IS WORKING PROPERLY, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”— John 10.10

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Ephesians 5.23—Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

Colossians 1.18—And he is the head of the body, the church.

Colossians 2.19—They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

Hebrews 10.19-25—Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by **A NEW AND LIVING WAY** opened for us through the curtain [into His Presence], that is, **HIS BODY**, and since we have a great priest over the **HOUSE OF GOD**, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith . . . Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may **SPUR ONE ANOTHER** on toward love and good deeds, **NOT GIVING UP ON MEETING TOGETHER**, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging **ONE ANOTHER**—and all the more as you see the day approaching.

1 Corinthians 12.4—There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.

4th Century Reinstitution:

Temple, Sacrifice, and Priesthood

16 Century Reformation:

Temple: _____

Sacrifice: _____

Priesthood: _____

“When they have come together, they teach one another the divine Word and one asks the other: how do you understand this saying? Thus there is among them a diligent living according to the divine Word.” - 1527, Ambrosius Spitelmaier



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WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Understanding the Gospel through the Lens of the teachings of Jesus (Handout 3)

The Kingdom of God is centered on one thing: manifesting the beauty of God's Character. It is a radical new way of doing life and orienting a society based on a radically different way of seeing God, ourselves and everyone around us. It's a beautiful revolution.

It's not so much about a list of beliefs as it is a way of life.

It's not about conquering the world for Jesus but humbly and lovingly serving the world like Jesus.

It's not about going to church, but about being the church.

It's not about confessing Jesus, but about loving the world like Jesus, and thereby putting on display the beauty of God and His Kingdom.

Jesus is the focal point of God's revelation. We are committed to a Jesus-centered approach to the Bible, and to the community of faith as the primary context in which we read the Bible and discern and apply its implications for discipleship.

Jesus is our example, teacher, friend, redeemer, and Lord. He is the source of our life, the central reference point for our faith and lifestyle, for our understanding of church, and our engagement with society. We are committed to following Jesus as well as worshipping him.

Western culture is slowly emerging from the Christendom era, when church and state jointly presided over a society in which almost all were assumed to be Christian. Whatever its positive contributions on values and institutions, Christendom seriously distorted the gospel, marginalized Jesus, and has left the churches ill equipped for mission in a post-Christendom culture. As we reflect on this, we are committed to learning from the experience and perspectives of movements of Jesus followers that have gone before us and that rejected standard Christendom assumptions and pursued alternative ways of thinking and behaving.

Churches are called to be committed communities of discipleship and mission, places of friendship, mutual accountability, and multivoiced worship. As we eat together, sharing bread and wine, we sustain hope as we seek God's kingdom together. We are committed to nurturing and developing such churches, in which young and old are valued, leadership is consultative, roles are related to gifts rather than gender, and baptism is for believers.

Spirituality and economics are interconnected. In an individualist and consumerist culture and in a world where economic injustice is rife, we are committed to finding ways of living simply, sharing generously, caring for creation, and work-

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ing for justice.

Peace is at the heart of the gospel. As followers of Jesus in a divided and violent world, we are committed to finding nonviolent alternatives and to learning how to make peace between individuals, within and among churches, in society, and between nations.

John 14.9—Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.

Ephesians 5.1.2 (The Message)—Watch what God does, and then you do it, like children who learn proper behavior from their parents. What God does is love you. Keep company with him and learn a life of love. Observe how Christ loved us. His love was not cautious but extravagant. He didn't love in order to get something from us but to give everything of himself to us. Love like that.

Sermon on the Mount

Sermon on the Plain



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THE ONE ANOTHERS

A Glimpse of the lives of the First Century Jesus Followers

Mark 9.50—Be at peace with each other.

John 13.14—Wash one another's feet.

John 13.34,35—A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

John 15.12—My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

John 15.17—This is my command: Love each other.

Romans 12.10—Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Romans 12.16—Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not think you are superior.

Romans 13.8—Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another.

Romans 14.13—Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.

Romans 14.19—Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

Romans 15.5—May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had.

Romans 15.7—Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

Romans 15.14—Instruct one another.

Romans 16.16—Greet one another with a holy kiss.

1Corinthians 11.33—So then, my brothers and sisters,

when you gather to eat, you should all eat together.

1Corinthians 12.25—So that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

1Corinthians 16.20—Greet one another with a holy kiss.

2Corinthians 13.12—Greet one another with a holy kiss.

Galatians 5.13—Serve one another humbly in love.

Galatians 5.15—If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

Ephesians 4.2—Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Ephesians 4.32—Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 5.19—Speaking to one another with psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord.

Philippians 2.3—Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves.

Colossians 3.13—Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Colossians 3.16—Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

1Thessalonians 3.12—May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.

1Thessalonians 4.9—Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have

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been taught by God to love each other.

1Thessalonians 5.11—Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

1Thessalonians 5.13—Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

1Thessalonians 5.15—Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

2Thessalonians 1.3—We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing.

Hebrews 3.13—But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.

Hebrews 10.24,25—And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

James 4.11—Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.

James 5.9—Don’t grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

James 5.16—Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

1Peter 1.22—Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.

1Peter 4.8-10—Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.

1Peter 5.5—In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.

1Peter 5.14—Greet one another with a kiss of love.

1John 1.7—But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

1John 3.11—For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.

1John 3.23—And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.

1John 4.7—Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.

1John 4.11,12—Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

2John 5—And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another.



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