



Chronicles of Diversity

26 July 2006 ; Volume 8, Number 22

Chronicles of Diversity Contact Information:

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Building

It has been a few weeks since our last Chronicles. Some of you may have begun to ask yourself, I wonder what happened to Jerry? The one word answer is that I have been building. And for the foreseeable future it looks like I will continue. But my building really is not what I want to discuss this week.

When talking with a friend last week the question came up, "What is it about the church that turns off so many men?" This was followed by a corollary question, "What is it that men are really supposed to do in church?"

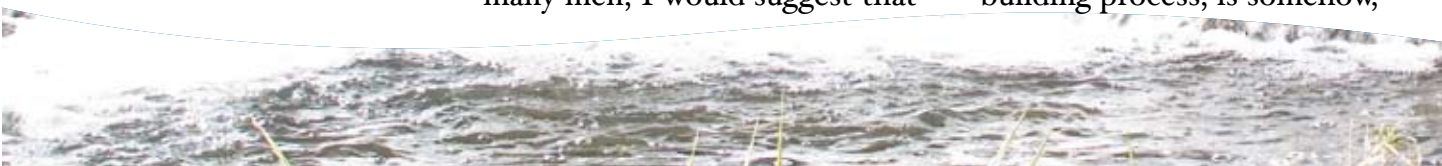
My first response is that men go to church because that is what Jesus called his disciples to do, to be part of the so called fellowship of saints, the body of Christ, and to be the spiritual head of the family.

But having said that, neither of those responses at all really answer either of the questions. In fact, to be honest in the case of many men, I would suggest that

the answer to the first question is, "Almost everything." and the answer to the second, "I haven't got a clue!"

On a recent Sunday, being with the family of God experiences took me to Columbia River Bible Church, just a few miles outside of Kettle Falls. CRBC is the home church for one of my high school friends, but I really didn't go to see him, I just sort of felt like I should go there to church. That Sunday morning my friend was not present and neither was the pastor. They had a guest speaker, a former pastor there, Larry Windle, currently the President of Rio Grande Bible Institute.

Larry began speaking on how the Lord is building His church in Latin America and how it is being done initially without any of the wisdom that church leaders have devised to plant and grow churches. The essence of the Lord's church building process, is somehow,



or somewhere, one person hears about the doctrine that Jesus Christ died for their sins, through His death on the cross, their sins can be forgiven, and by faith in that work they can receive eternal life. That person then tells others in their isolated village and pretty soon, there are a group of believers that meet together regularly to discuss how this is changing their lives. Soon, they think they need to know more about what all this means and so they begin to look to form a church, whatever that is. Eventually, they come in contact either directly or indirectly with Rio Grande Bible Institute so that they can receive some training or materials.

So Jesus, the Christ is building His church, without any of the initial direct expertise of missionaries, mission organizations, denominations, seminaries, or the other support groups that American evangelicalism thinks is necessary for church planting and growth.

Let's see, Jesus is a man as well as God and He is building something that is near and dear to His essence, His church. It also seems that, at least initially, the programs of the established church are not what he has determined to use in these unchurched areas of the world.

Does this have anything to say to us in the churched areas, especially in the context of the two questions posed earlier?

So could the answer to our first question be: "There is nothing in church that a man can build that is near and dear to his created essence. In church he is expected to be a wall flower, or at best a flower child."

That makes the answer to the second question, "The church to men should be an extension of their worldly created essence to be builders and the developers of life."

To this I'm sure most pastors and ministry leaders will respond, "We have all these impoverished and wonderful programs that need all sorts of volunteers to make them work and to carry out the great commission, but men just don't seem to care."

And for good reason! Should I repeat myself, for good reason! Hum, for good reason!

Men are created as builders, one, if not the

prime essence of building, is ownership. There is nothing in "these impoverished and wonderful programs," that allow for ownership or really leadership for that matter. In church it is you do it our way, or the highway, you trouble making buffoon. That in the business world is politically correctly called micro management, or less PC, petty, insecure, interference. In such a church, contrary to stated policy, Jesus is not the CEO, or even on the board of directors.

The pastoral and ministerial response to that is that they need to protect the church from the profane effects of the world i.e. the worldliness of men . There are books written on the feminization of the church, but it is really much more serious. There is really nothing for a man to do in the church as it is constituted in most of America and the world, for there is nothing to truly build that someone has not already fouled up beyond all hope of redemption, and men are expected to fix it as spare time volunteers, without anything but pizza and a soda for lunch. Is that why so many men would rather watch the Seahawks, who have built a winning team, or the Mariners, who are rebuilding a winning team, rather than watch from the sidelines of church which really doesn't seem to be doing much at all.

I have never attended what I would call a "megachurch" for any reason that I can remember. I would call a megachurch that somehow claims attendance in five figures. I suppose in a megachurch their would be the possibility of worldly career networking which would be a type of manly building. However, many of these churches have a different gospel than by which Jesus is truly building His church, but that definitely is a sermon for another time.

Larry mentioned that at the Rio Grande Bible Institute they have a Winter Worker Program where retired people from the north head to Texas each winter to help them build the Institute's facilities. There of course are similar building programs for retired people throughout the church, both locally and abroad. The merit of all these programs is that these people, in their later years are finally able to build something visible and tangible for their Lord and Savior, and the Christian leadership wherever, is genuinely thankful for the help.

Most Christians would confess that a building does not make a church, people do. In the context of

our original questions, is there any people things that men can do within the context of modern evangelicalism to facilitate Jesus in His church building. The one word answer is no! What part of no don't you understand?

And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18

In modern evangelicalism you can talk about a lot of things, be part of any number of worthwhile programs, give all your money to the church, eat pizza and drink pop until you look like Santa, but you dare not discuss the "D" word. That "D" word is related to damned, but is really "doctrine."

There is a lie within evangelicalism that doctrine divides and plastic love and music unites. The truth is that true doctrine unites, and plastic love and music, is plastic love and music.

The context of Matthew 16:18 above is the confession that Jesus is Messiah. That is the basis by which Jesus has, does, and will build His church. Water that down with programs, plastic love and music, and I would say that the context pretty much states as a pastor, leader, or pew setting Christian, you are not working with Jesus, but with the powers of Hades.

Bear with me for a moment, the basis for church is not what Jesus would do, it is what Jesus did. That doctrine is repulsive to the very nature of all humanity, except of God's elect in Christ. Any concept of election by God is un American, at least in contemporary America and the rest of the world for that matter. Election is what the Bible teaches, however. We don't even begin to understand it, but we say we do, and that is where doctrine begins to get it's divisive handle. But as apparent the problem is not really the doctrine, the problem is the way WE interpret the doctrine in the context of our sinfulness, public and private mores, the need to be cool and accepted by others.

The point is however, we don't know what type of church the Lord would build in America if preachers did not preach anything but Jesus Christ crucified and raised for our justification. I would suspect that men would then find something they could build upon in church that

relates not only to their real lives but also facilitating church growth beyond building walls and ceilings. In other words Jesus Christ would set them free to build the church not just watch from the sidelines, while wondering what the Seahawks or the Mariners were doing. The Supersonics, they took their boring game to Oklahoma.

In that freedom in Christ and His church is the basis for changing the world in short order. Continued separation of the visible church from the true gospel gives us more of the mess that is leading this world more rapidly to Hades door.

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Creation Speaks; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2006pdffiles/creationspeaks5-10-6.pdf>

It's all about time; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2006pdffiles/abouttime5-17-6.pdf>

Rootless in the world; PDF link: <http://www.wondersprings.com/2006pdffiles/rootless5-24-6.pdf>

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