

April 2, 2017

Who are you?

"In reading this then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery that is through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise of Christ Jesus." Ephesians 3:4-6

Who are you? As we have already discussed, you and I are the product of our genes and the product of our life experiences. Our nature, what we were born to be, and our nurture, what we have been raised to be, influence who we are, but they do not dictate our true selves. God created us to be eternal and to have the power to choose, and because we have the power of choice, he calls us to choose to be what he has designed us to be.

God has called us to become his children. He has called us to be made alive again. He has called us to become a part of his people, and he has called us to become a part of the body of his Son.

What God intended the church to be and what most of us understand the church to be are often worlds apart. In our world the church is a building and possibly the people who meet in that building. Even in a community as small as Anaconda there are several of what we would call churches. But God's idea of church and what we call church are two very different things.

God's design for the church is intended to bring together a number of members who belong to a common body. In Acts 2:47 Luke reports that, "*...the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*" God adds us to the church those who are being saved. We do not join a church or attend a church but God desires to add us to the church, the body of his Son.

And in God's design that is what church is intended to be; the physical, functional body of Jesus. Paul told these Ephesians, "*And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*" Jesus is the head of the church, which is his body, and God wants to add us to the church that is his Son.

Like the parts of any body, God places us in the body of this Son to fill a purpose. In his letter to the church in Rome and again to the church in Corinth Paul talks about this concept of members of the body of Christ. In his letter to Rome he writes, "*Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*" (Romans 12:4-5)

God wants to add us to the body of his Son, the church. In doing so God takes our differences and forms us into a single unit and within that unit each of us has different functions. As believers we no longer belong to ourselves; now we belong to the body of Christ and to each other.

Paul would tell the Corinthian believers, "*There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works in all of them in all men. Now to each on the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.*" (I Corinthians 12:4-6)

God wants to add us to the church and in doing so he works in us to do those things which will provide for the common good of all of those who are a part of his Son's body. This synergistic relationship is very different from our usual idea of church as a place we sometimes go.

The church as God designed it, is a living, functioning body of believers that work together to provide for the common good of all. The church does not exist for you and me, but we exist for the church. We belong to something that is greater than us and in our unified existence we reflect the nature of the Son of God. Who are we? If we belong to God and if we have surrendered our lives to Jesus, then we are the church, the body of Jesus on earth.

Growing 
Together
in Faith