

From Pastor's Desk...

UNITY IN COMMUNITY

The word community is derived from the Latin word 'communis', which means 'common'. A community is a social/spiritual unit of any size that shares common values, traditions, faith and goals. The community that respects its diversity and mutuality maintains its unity to function well. "We are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided."

-J.K. Rowling

The church is a community, but also more than a community or a unified body. It is the body of saints that sense a mutual relationship within and a vital relationship to the body, Christ himself. The Apostle Paul's favorite description of Church is the metaphor of the head and the body. The body is composed of all those who are united to Christ through the baptism of faith (1 Cor 12:12-13).

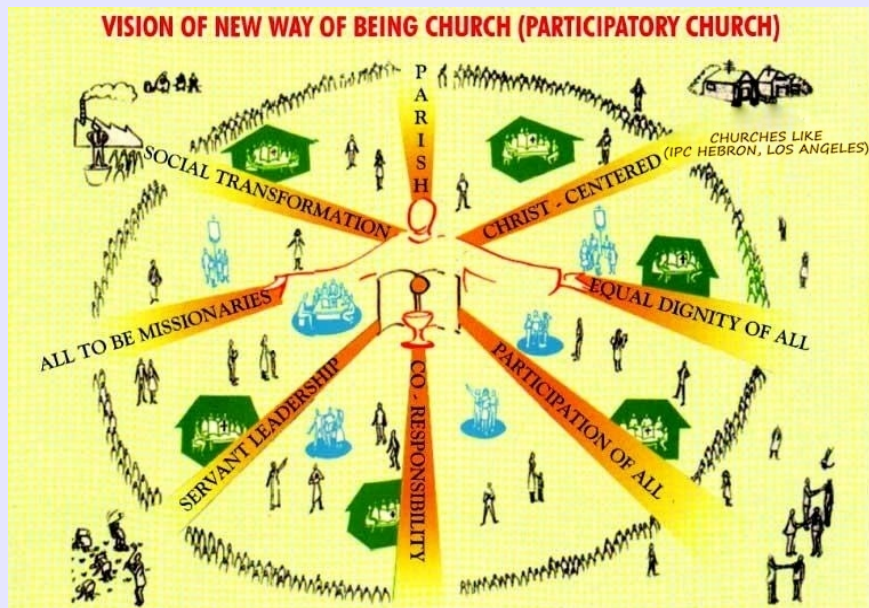
The three important facts drawn from the analogy of the body are: unity, diversity and mutuality. The body is composed of diverse members. The body of Christ demands unity and mutuality. Unity is a state of being united as a whole. Unity comes from holding fast to its head who is Christ. The diversity of the members of the body is its beauty and the basic factor for its function.

The church as a community requires a deep sense of belonging to one another, a concrete experience of mutual relationship of trust and common bond of interdependence. Unity in fellowship is heaven and life, and lack of unity is hell and death. Unity in fellowship is success and lack of unity is failure. The unity in community can keep the community strong, steady and successful.

God bless you.

Rev. K. M. Varughese

Senior Pastor



CHURCH COMMUNITY AS A COMMUNION OF COMMUNITIES

COMMUNITY IS NOT COMPLETE WITHOUT WOMEN

Community is not complete without women and their service. Women were involved in the ministry of Christ and Paul as well as the ministry of the early church.

Women in the New Testament church were more respected than the women in the non-church settings of that time. Jesus allowed Mary of Bethany to sit in His class as a student while Jewish Rabbis prohibited women. The names of the women are also written in the Book of Life as was the case with men.

Mary of Bethany had the insight to anoint Jesus for burial, which is worthy of a mention wherever the Gospel is being preached. *Priscilla* along with her husband *Aquila* made a major contribution to the ministry of Paul. *Lydia* was a wealthy business woman from Thyatira who served the church by opening her heart and her house.

Women are acknowledged for their faith, for being model mothers and for passing the faith to their generations. Timothy's mother, *Eunice*, and his grandmother, *Lois*, were devoted and successful in passing the true faith to Timothy. The Christian woman should set a perfect example in modest dressing and conduct before they serve our church and the community. Even though the New Testament does not support the concept of women being elders/pastors over a church, the New Testament does not prevent women to deliver auxiliary services in the church and community.

Sis. Annamma Varughese

Ladies Coordinator

A CHOSEN COMMUNITY: OF GOD! BY GOD!! FOR GOD!!! WITH GOD!!!!

We live, no, thrive in a "digital community" where there is no such thing as objective truth, reality, value, reason and so forth. This culture increasingly affects the youth, even those who profess faith in Christ. The 'Google waves' have influenced our culture also in the wrong way. Whether we like it or not, the knowledge we have obtained or continue to obtain, controls our beliefs, values, explanations and feelings.

Today, many Christian parents play defense with their children when they ought to be playing offense. To play defense means to just hope that our children won't go the wrong direction in life (no smoking, no addictions to alcohol, drugs, gambling or pornography). Our dreams for our children should be more than this and beyond their education, career and marriage. As good as it is, it's too low a goal for Christian parents!

We ought to raise our children to play offense – to learn how to change the world for Jesus. PYPAs have been a great launching pad for many youths to strengthen their faith in Jesus; and a source of guidance to face the world the right way.

A healthy youth ministry is not built on any one enterprising or charming individual who will save all the youths or attract all the youths to church; but it is built on a strong and understanding leadership of adult volunteers who care to express their passion by taking time from their busy lives to build relationships with the youth, and to help sharpen them like arrows angled in the right direction.

Amigos, Remember! We are handpicked by God to be His arrows. Arrows are not meant to just stay safe in the quiver. He wants us to make an impact in the world with the love of Christ. So may God continue to inspire us to think differently, move strategically and to be His arrows in the city of LA and to the ends of the earth for we are an integral part of a chosen community of God, by God, for God and with God.

Robin Tim David

Secretary, PYPAs