

Session 1 – The church then and now

Who is writing the letter? (3.1, 4.1. 6.21)

Who is he writing to?

How was the Church established? Acts 18 & 19

What happened? Acts. 20. 17-36 troubles Rev.2.

In attempting to motivate his reader, the writer is concerned about their disorientation on account of an **insufficient sense of hope** and the **loss of clear goals and purpose**, and about their accompanying **flagging resolve**. He stresses the importance of hope, spells out what this hope involves for the whole cosmos, and gives the readers some sense of destiny by indicating the Church's relationship to God's purposes. In addition he sets before them the **goal of growth towards maturity** and towards the appropriation of the unity God has given.....He knows that the readers' future goals will not be achieved by neglecting the past but by recalling their individual and corporate narratives and building on tradition. Lincoln p.lxxxvii

1. The Ephesian vision (PLEROMA) - Cosmic fullness 1.10; 1.23; 3.19; 4.13; 5.18
God's plan ANAKEPHALAI00 (Sum up) (1.10) KEPHALE = head

2. The Ephesian models of Church

(i) Mystery -1.9, 3.3, 4.9, 5.32, 6.19

(ii) Household OIKOS = house OIKEIOI – Household members (2.19)
PAROIKOI – strangers (2.19) OIKODOME0 = build (2.20; 2.21; 4.12; 4.16)
OIKONOMIA (1.10, 3.9)= administration

(iii) Temple (2.21)

(iiii) Body (1.23, 3.3, 4.12, 4.16, 5.20) -

(v) People of the Light (5.8)

POLUPOIKILOS (3.10) - multiplicity of forms, shapes and incarnations of church.

3. The Ephesian understanding of mission 3.9-10

(i) empower the people of God

(ii) Confront the principalities and powers (6.10-11)

4. The Ephesian power source (ENERGEO) 1.19; 2.2; 3.7; 3.20, 4.16 :

(i) Grace 1.6 7; 2.5-8; 3.7-8; 4.7 & 29

(ii) Blessing BERAK (Heb) = Blessing BERAH = Create BERITH = covenant. (1.3) Beatitudes (Matt.53f)
It is universal – Gen.12.3; 15.5-18, Cannot be withdrawn – Gen 27.36f,

(iii) Hope The past 2.11-12 the present 1.18, 4.4

(iiii) power (DUNAMIS) - The Riches of his grace 1.7, 1.18-19, 3.7-8, 3.16

Session 2 – Your church

YOUR CHURCH

- **Vision**
- **Model (image)**
- **Mission**
- **Energy**

5. The Ephesian goal of growth towards maturity (4.1-16)

Issues - disunity (ecumenical), lack of ministry gifts, behaving like children, lack of maturity, chasing fads, not working together.

THE FOUR MARKS OF GROWTH (Orlando Costos)
(Give marks out of 10 for your church)

- 'Numerical' growth – increasing numbers attending worship.
- 'Organic' growth - The organisation and structure is fluid and flexible enough to take account of the Church's context and the movement of the Spirit.
- 'Conceptual' growth. If there is no theological, emotional and spiritual development then despite numerical increase, the Church is not growing.
- 'Incarnational' growth. This relates to the degree in which the Church is prophetically participating in the afflictions of the world through prayer, action and identification with the powerless and marginalized.

The Church is first of all a kind of space cleared by God through Jesus in which people may become what God made them to be (God's sons and daughters). What we have to do about the Church is not to organize it as a society but to inhabit it as a climate or a landscape. It is a place where we can see properly – God, God's creation, ourselves. It is a place or dimension in the universe that is in some way growing towards being the universe itself in a restored relationship with God. It is a place we are invited to enter, the place occupied by Christ, who is himself the climate and atmosphere of a renewed universe. *Rowan Williams*

Session 3 - The church here and there

Ephesus the context. – strategic – 3rd city – Artemis (p.19)

Despite the external political and economic unity brought about by the consolidation of Roman power, individuals felt little sense of social integration or of belonging. Instead, in a cosmopolitan environment, old traditions and allegiances, including religious ones, were seen as inadequate, and many people felt uprooted and alienated. The cosmos, once seen as ordered, was now perceived to be hostile and inhabited by demonic powers opposed to human well-being. In such a setting religious syncretism gained ground. Lincoln p.lxxxiv

6. Confronting the powers

Engaged in counter cultural activities against 'the powers' (6.10f)

Before 2006 - don't panic! (From 'The future of the Parish System- edited Steven Cross)

- religion mutates, lives on as 'non institutional' spirituality
- be confident. We do not live in a secular age people still ask questions and seek a 'feel-good' experience.
- The parish church cannot be disconnected from its ecumenical context. Then specialize
- Look to build new intentional faith communities (chaplancies, fresh expressions etc). Pioneer
- Ours is an age of consumption rather than obligation.
- Individualism.

Since 2006

- economic crash 2008 - 'loss of confidence'
- Every increasing power of the internet
- Rise of populism 'a simple solution to complex problems
- Fake-news and post truth
- Brexit
- Terrorism
- Pollution of the planet

What are the external cultural powers which now need confronting? How are they affecting the Church (your church)?

ISSUES

7. Putting off and putting on in Church

Putting off the old & putting on the new (4.22), Living in the light (the exposure of false-hoods) (5.8)
Developing new patterns of family and economic life (5.22-6.9),

What should you stop doing?

What should you start doing?

Session 4 – Future shape of the Church

Robert Schreier (1984) mentions three aspects of a future catholicity: 'the acceptance of the idea of 'commensurability of culture', that is that Christianity will not be homogeneous; second, an awareness of the fragmented and partial experience of cultures; third, Churches will focus on 'the boundaries between those who profit from and enjoy the fruits of the globalization process and those who are excluded and oppressed by it.'

Note 'POLUPOIKILOS' (3.10)

We looked for a mission-shaped church but what we found was a church-shaped mission
John Hull 2006

8. Some Models of Contemporary Church

- Cathedrals, city centre churches which offer a professional product. (music preaching etc)
- Journeys to 'holy places'
- Fresh expressions (messy church, café church etc) – in church buildings
- Fresh expressions (in hired secular places)
- Chaplaincy to institutions
- Pioneer (church planting)
- Cells, faith groups, disciples
- multi-congregational
- social action/ demonstration

Some Contemporary Ministry Models of Leadership

Scapegoat, servant, herald, monarch, pioneer, bridge-builder, map-maker, navigator, speaker, gardener (Martin Grundy,2015)

EXPLORATION OF OTHER MODELS OF CHURCH

REDESIGNING CHURCH. (Phil Potter)

Focus on pastoral relationships. Weaving webs and creating networks. Cluster around a common focus. Church is not a swimming pool but a surfing board. Decentralize. Rejoice in being small.

Passion and the Holy Spirit

9. The Ephesian lessons.

- a) Seek new models of family, economic life and global –(5.22-6.9)
- b) Decide in your local church what to stop doing and then what to do (4.22)
- c) Expose false-hood (5.8)
- d) Be filled with the Spirit (5.18)
- f) Prophetic action against external controlling powers (6.10f)
- g) Soak it all in prayer [Adoration & thanksgiving (Ch 1), Illumination and inspiration (3.14-20), petition and intercession (6.18-20)]

Models of Church & Ministry

Ephesians:

Church

Mystery
Household
Temple
Body
People of Light

NO CO-RELATION
ATTEMPTED

Ministry

Apostles
Prophets
Evangelists
Pastors
Teachers
Warriors

Traditional

Secular
Lecture Room
Religious Building
Broadcaster
Political Institution
Social Club
Big Business
Theatre
Museum
Hospital
Fortress
Family

Mission
education
sacrament
news announcer
social justice
community development
running an institution
attract and entertain
preserve the past
healing and health
keep people secure
create sense of belonging

Minister
Teachers/Preacher
Priest
Evangelist?
Activist
Social worker/pastor
Manager
Performer
Curator
Pastor?
Policeman/woman
Parent figure

(a list generated by theological students in 1980)

Present and Future

Secular
Care Home
The Gym
Health Centre
Cruise Liner
Supermarket
The Garden Centre
Multiplex Cinema
National Trust
Coffee Bar
The Office
Political Institutions
Schools
University
Gigs
The Home
THE WEB

Mission
care of elderly
keep fit & active
healing
new things, people and experiences
unlimited choice of products

past roots?
meet friends

Minister

unlimited communication & information

MY LETTER/PRAYER

'To the saints inGrace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ'.

Vision and Purpose (ch.1)

'Blessed be God who.....

What God has done for us? (ch.2)

'Once we were.....

'But now....

What picture of church are we presenting to outsiders (models)? (ch2-3)

'We are....

What is God calling us to be & do? (3.9-10)

'Grace has been given for us to...

What we need to relinquish and what we need to take up? (ch,4,5 &6)

'We must no longer...

'We are now in the light and need to...

What do we need to pray for specifically? (ch.6)

'Pray in the Spirit for...