**Leadership Development Group**

**October 26th 2017**

**Topic: THE CHURCH WE CAN BE – Part 2**

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How can we get our church family to look like the Acts 2 model?

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There’s a most enlightening passage from Paul’s writings that answer these two questions. In fact, if Acts 2:41-47 is the best **descriptive** passage of what a biblically functioning Church family looks like, then Ephesians 4:1-16 would have to be the best **prescriptive** passage on how to become a Christ-centred and Christ-like Church family that reflects the Acts 2 picture. This Ephesians passage is so key, that I’m going to spend the next four chapters opening these amazing verses up. Both the Acts and Ephesians scriptures reveal to us that Jesus’ church is the only hope for our world. This vision of the church that we can be, captured my heart as a young man and it has been seducing me ever since. I pray that what I have been attempting to outwork in practical church leadership over the past four decades, will be helpful to you.

**Ephesians 4:1-16** (NIV)

*“1As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. 2Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. 4There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.7But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. 8This is why it says: “When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people.” 9(What does ‘he ascended’ mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? 10He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) 11So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. 14Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”*

In Ephesians chapter four, the Apostle Paul has painted a detailed picture of how Jesus’ Church should function and what it should look like. He tells us that if we are to be the church we can be, we must be **a lovingly united family** (Ephesians 4:1-6), that **celebrates the rich diversity of its members** who have all been given a ministry-gift by Jesus to serve others. (Ephesians 4:7-12).

This is why it’s the only hope for a broken world that is desperately crying out for answers to the seemingly intractable relational and social problems that exist between individuals, cultures, religions, races and nations.

Paul then moves the image of Jesus’ church to its logical end game about what will be the result of this lovingly united and diversely gifted family. Well, **it’s to grow to full maturity and become truly Christ-like** as we journey together as a church family.

**The Challenge**

I am convinced that any church can always be growing both quantitatively and qualitatively and be a limitless source of faith, hope and love, when it wholeheartedly outworks these God-given, insightful and powerful **unity**, **ministry** and **maturity** truths of Ephesians 4:1-16.

To be the church we can be, let’s be fully yielded to having **loving relationships** with everyone, **actively pursue unity** **and** **release all the ministry-gifts** to find a service expression within our church community. If we do ministry and mission **the Jesus way**, Christ-likeness will result and there will be no limitations to what Jesus can do through us and we will become the church we can be as Luke describes in Acts 2:41-47.