

It Seemed Good to the Holy Spirit and to Us: Acts, Discernment, and the Mission of God, Mark Love; "The Church as a Discerning Community" (p. 2-3)

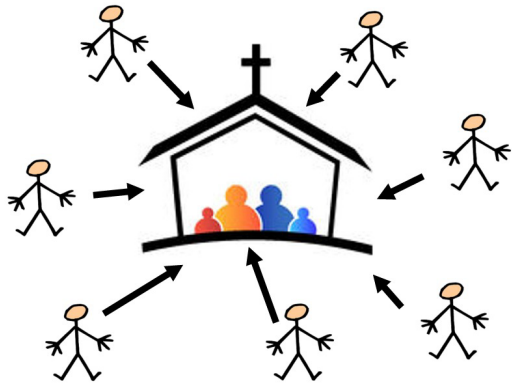
"To see the church as Luke does is to see it as a theological endeavor. By "theological endeavor" I mean that the church's life is conceived of and arranged in such a way that the pursuit of God remains its focus. The church in Acts is not first interested in questions of organization, or strategies for outreach, or institutional vitality. It is, instead, first interested in being swept up into the promises of God. Where is God leading? Who is God calling? To whom is God calling us? What will it mean to be obedient to God's calling? How do we make sense of our shared experiences of God in light of the testimonies to God found in Scripture?"

"I hope I am wrong, but I do not get the sense that these are the questions that drive the lives of most congregations today, at least not the way Luke envisions the church in Acts. I can say this as one who served congregations fulltime for over seventeen years. Though I certainly hoped that our congregation was focused on participation in the life of God, the questions that would hold this concern in focus were not my primary questions in ministry. I was driven, rather, by questions related to the success of the church as an organization or institution. Are we growing? What programs could we offer that would attract new members and keep existing members satisfied? These questions arose directly from my own anxiety about performance and affirmation, shared by other leaders in our congregation, which kept the questions about God on the back burner."

"I strike a chord with congregational leaders when I tell them that there are ways of leading the congregation other than customer service. This strikes a chord because so much of what constitutes the work of church leaders is keeping people happy, which is often unsatisfying work. And member satisfaction is real leverage in congregational life because we have nothing in our bag of leadership options that trumps personal dissatisfaction. By that I do not mean there are no arguments more important than personal dissatisfaction. I mean they do not work. They have little persuasive power. The primacy of the private judgment and experience of the individual bequeathed to us by certain Enlightenment ideals often reduces church life to a kind of spiritual marketing tied to program excellence. "There's always another church down the road more to my liking."

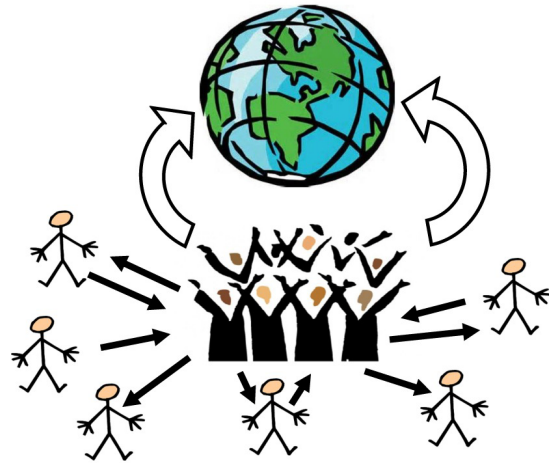
"Spiritual marketing and program excellence are exhausting. They require constant maintenance and energy, and, as a result, they make the question of God a luxury. Let me be clear. I am not saying that congregations do not teach about God, or worship God, or care about what God wants in the world. I am saying they lack the practices and inclinations to be attentive to what God might be up to in their midst. They lack the postures and practices to have "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" moments as a natural outcome of their way of life."

The Church as a Business "I Go to Church"



CHURCH AS A DISPENSER OF RELIGIOUS GOODS AND SERVICES. PEOPLE COME TO BE 'FED' AND HAVE NEEDS MET THROUGH QUALITY PROGRAMMING.

The Church as Sent Ones "I Am the Church"



THE CHURCH AS AN EQUIPPING CENTER

Missional Church - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arxfLK_sd68

Three Different Ways Church is Organized:

Church as...

- Non-profit Organization
- Voluntary Society
- Community of Faith