

## Is the church REALLY a Body?

Written by Bob Stone  
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Peter Marshall has described 20th century Christians with the following words. *"They are,"* he said:

*"like deep sea divers, encased in suits for many fathoms deep, marching bravely forth to pull plugs out of bath tubs."*

That's why when one reads the pages of the New Testament and tries to relate what he hears to the North American contemporary church, we are compelled to conclude that the relationship is sometimes more one of contrast, rather than of comparison. In other words, today's church is not living up to its potential.

Why? Why the tremendous disparity between the early church and the American church? Why are we not experiencing the same spiritual results and dynamic power? We are related to the same person. We have the same power available. We even have more Scripture available to us. Why is there this inconsistency?

Is it possible we have forgotten the church is a Body? Are we treating the church like an institution, when in fact it has a head, skin and bones, fingers and toes, sinews, joints, internal organs, all the parts of the body? The church is a living organism that can be wounded, lazy, or strong. It can serve, love and care, or it can be selfish and war even within itself.

The church is a Body, Christ's Body. It can become a disturbing element in society, a revolutionary force that will turn the world upside down, or it can be a pious, harmless group of religious people who are marching bravely forth to pull plugs out of bathtubs.

### What will make the difference?

Certainly our primary focus must be on the Head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ. We MUST look to Him totally for our direction, strength, and wisdom--Col. 2:3; Prov. 2:6-8.

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Next, we need a Body mindset. A mindset where each person in the church takes seriously the fact that they are a member of the Body of Christ and they have a critical function to fulfill within the Body. We must also willingly cooperate with other members of the Body and believe we are to continue the ministry of Christ today. The Scripture makes it clear our maturity in Christ and the growth of the Body of Christ depends on each part of the Body doing its work--Eph. 4:11-16.

### **How do we know how we are to function in Christ's Body?**

We all know each person has received gifts from Christ that help them determine how to operate in Christ's Body. But many of us have not taken this seriously enough to even discover our gifts and function. What would you think of a person who received a gift from you, but did not open it, value it, or even thank you for it? How do you think the Lord feels when He gives gifts to His children and they never take the time to open the gifts, or thank Him, or put them to use? Shelved away, never to be shared, that's where most spiritual gifts end up.

I am praying we will all take the time to discover and unwrap our spiritual gifts and put them into service. What a party! What great impact our service will have! It will give our lives dynamic purpose and enable a clear expression of Christ to our culture. Encased in our Lord's Body, we will be gifted and prepared to go deeper in ministry than pulling plugs out of bath tubs. No challenge will be too big or too deep!!!