

FTBC

GROWTH TRACKS


Dr Peter Ng

Welcome to Growth Tracks which is FBC's program designed to set the disciple on the firm foundation spiritual maturity.


In 2 Corinthians 4:6 (ESV) Paul writes "For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ".

The key to growth in our spiritual lives is encountering the glory of God through the person of His Son who is His perfect image. The more our hearts are filled with the knowledge of Him the more our characters are moulded, the more our hearts are filled with His love and more our lives will be directed towards the purpose for which we were created....to glorify Him. Each chapter is designed to provide a progressive track to show the face of Christ through selected but key passages in the Bible laying down the bed rock foundations of faith that will form the basis for a life -long learning and growing in to the likeness of Christ. Prayerfully follow these chapters and His Spirit will propel you into a trajectory of robust growth and spiritual transformation. Learn how to read the bible by tackling whole passages of Scripture rather than piece meal verses. See how principles from the passages will be translated to everyday life. For those disciples going into the Gamma program these presentations will help bridge the gap between the Alpha Beta programs and the more in- depth Gamma discipleship program.

For those who prefer to listen and see the contents of this book you can go to our website at [www.fbc.com .my](http://www.fbc.com.my) and each chapter will be presented in a series of slides at the resources section of our site under the title "Growth Tracks"



MODULE 18



THE CHURCH

The church is the body of Christ and we are all part of this glorious body hence it is vital that we know what the bible says the church really is and what our Lord's vision is for it so that we can call corporately play our part in this body.

The first thing that we noticed people often misunderstand what a church is. They think it is like any other religious building, like a temple, built to worship God, whether it is ancient times or in current times, you build it as high as possible because you want to be as close as possible to God. The church is not a building and its height or majesty will not bring you closer to God.

The church has been often misunderstood. Mick Jagger said, "Jesus Christ was fantastic, but I do not like the church. The church does more harm than good." A gross over generalisation no doubt but there have been times in history when the church has done more harm than good. Mahatma Gandhi, an ardent admirer of the teachings of Jesus until he was actually refused entry into a South African church because the white elders blocked his way in. Since that time, he never set foot in a church again. The church is a gathering of sinners who are not perfect as Jagger and Ghandi will certainly attest to but a body of forgiven sinners on a journey of expressing the image and character of God.

To gain a proper perspective of what a church is lets look at the letter of Paul to the Ephesians

Ephesians 2:11-16 (ESV) 11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility

The Ephesian church was comprised of believing Jews and Greek converts to the faith. Centuries of differences divided the Jews, who had received the Ten Commandments and the laws of God and the Greeks. All non- Jews were called Gentiles. And since most of the non-Jews in the New Testament at the time were Greek the term Greeks and Gentiles became almost synonymous. They had no circumcision because circumcision is a sign of covenant with God. Without circumcision they were separated from the Messiah which is Christ. They had no idea who the Messiah was. They were alienated from God's chosen people. They were not part of the chosen people of God called Israel. They had none of the promises of God, which are called the covenants of promise, so therefore they were without hope and without God in the world. So these privileges of the Jews and the lack of these same privileges in the Gentiles made up the deep chasm of alienation between them . There was no greater symbol of this deep divide than the dividing wall of separation that was found at the temple of Jerusalem. This barrier prevented the entrance of Gentiles to the temple premises. In fact there was a warning at the barrier that threatened death to any Gentile who had the audacity to transgress this barrier. The temple symbolized the presence of God and only Jews could come into the temple. This dividing wall caused animosity and hostility between the Jews and the Greeks not only symbolizing their alienation from each other but for the Gentiles from God Himself.

The differences were further compounded by much of the Jewish customs and in particular the requirement for Jews to only eat kosher or clean foods. Gentiles or Greeks will eat unclean food while Jews will eat only clean food

The separation made the Jews think as if they were more superior. Ovadia Yosef was the spiritual leader of one of the Jews and he is a modern Jew and he writes,

Goyim [non-Jews] were born only to serve us. Without that, they have no place in the world – only to serve the People of Israel.” “Why are gentiles needed? They will work, they will plow, they will reap. We will sit like an effendi and eat.”

It is a very dim view of non-Jews that comes from spiritual pride.

This separation between the Jews and the Gentiles is given by Paul as an example of the separation that has happened after the fall of man. Man is related to God as he is created in the image of God meant to relate in worship, fidelity and love. It is from this relationship that man is also related to his wife and is related to the earth. When man rebelled against God, their relationship was broken because of sin. Sin is man choosing to be independent of God, so he breaks fellowship with God in the act of sin. Once that foundational relationship is broken so too goes his relationship with his wife and their relationship with the ground of the earth over which they were supposed to exert dominion. So therefore in its place, we have hostility, alienation, separation between God and man, man with each other and man even with nature itself. Ever since the advent of sin the world has been coming apart because the relationship between God and man is broken.

Humanity is hopelessly divided, separated and alienated along religious, cultural and racial barriers as well as self-interest.

Take human history, for the past 3400 years’ humans have been entirely at peace for only 268 of them, or just 8% of recorded history. We have been at war in more than 92% of recorded history. A total up to 108 million people were killed in wars in the twentieth century alone.

Even our very giftedness is the cause of divisions. Whether we are athletic versus those who are not, whether we are beautiful versus those who are plain, whether we are fat versus those who are slim and beautiful we are divided. We are also divided along our occupations, we have blue collars against the white collars. The trouble with all human relationships is we tend to compare and we are divided. Our differences provide the dividing wall of hostility.

This is a statement from Anwar Ibrahim on Bloomberg right after the May 9th election victory by Pakatan Harapan.

“Anwar Reassures Malays Who Fear Losing Racial Advantage”

He continues to say

“We would of course protect the position of the Malaysian Bumiputeras in terms of giving opportunities, but not enriching them to become billionaires,”

So it is increasingly obvious that no matter which party in this country is in power, the similarities are that we are always divided along racial lines, always trying to reach for that elusive harmony and constantly grappling with the huge divisions within our society. The reason is always the same, we always let our differences divide us, we always look through the strength of our own culture whenever we see others.

So God does not leave us in the state of alienation with one another. Jesus comes now to breakdown those walls of hostility, to create a new humanity, the church.

Ephesians 2:13-14 (ESV) But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

By his sacrifice on the cross, he has paid for the sins of Gentiles who cannot obey the law of God contained in our conscience. He has paid for the sin of the Jews because even the Jews having the law and commandments given to them by God, cannot even fulfil it, they have broken the covenant time and time again.

15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

So Jesus Christ comes in the world and the alienation between us and God and us and each other is actually totally removed because Jesus pays for our sin, our record is white clean and in doing so he created a new humanity. This is the church, the only place in the world where all walls of differences and alienation and hostility are broken down, which reflect the fact that we are also reconciled to God and our wall of hostility between God and us is also broken down, all because of the work of Christ on the cross.

So the cross changes the way we see ourselves and the way we see others. For the Gentiles, people like non-Jews, we will look at ourselves and we say our sins are so bad that it took God to die for me and yet we are so precious that God was willing to die for us and when the Jews look at cross, they say they can't even obey the very laws that they cherish, they can't even keep the promises to God and on the other hand the Jews are also so precious that God was willing to die for them. So when we look at the cross, we are all at the same level. The differences disappear, the hostility based on those differences go away immediately because our eyes are all fixed on Jesus.

Temple is a place which represents the presence of God and there is a part of the temple that is the most sacred part that no human being could go except once a year. It is called the holy of holies. In this cuboidal room tucked away at the heart of the temple, the high priest would prepare himself, cleaning himself, preparing a prayer for one whole week before he was even allowed to go pass the thick curtains that separated the rest of the temple from this most holy of holies.

The curtain was symbolic of the separation or the hostility between man and God, where man has sinned against God and God's wrath is shown towards man and the view of God from man's point of view is obscured by the curtain and behind that curtain is the ark of God with two cherubim on top and it represent the holiest place of God and inside that ark is the actual Ten Commandment tablets in those days.

When Jesus died, the moment he died it has been recorded that the thick curtain that separated the holy of holies from the rest of the temple was torn from top to bottom and the man in Christ could freely cross pass the curtain into the holy of holies. So this dividing wall of hostility between man and God was torn symbolically, so man is reconciled to God.

So what is the church, we look in verse 15

15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

The fundamental alienation of man from God right from the beginning has been sin hence when Christ died on the cross, He both paid the penalty of our sin, and in his sinless life he fulfilled the requirements of God's law. He created one new man in place of two. There are no more two kinds of humanity when one is in Christ. There are no more two kinds of races anywhere in the believing community. The church is that new humanity where the differences are obliterated and people are reconciled and united to each other and to God.

What is the church?

The church is not a building, the church is a gathering of people, a new humanity of people who have the walls that divide them whether it is racial, behavioural, ethnic, all torn down because sin which once divided us from one another, the curse of sin has been removed by Christ death on the cross.

Galatians 3:28 (ESV) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Paul is saying is that in the church there spiritual equality, of being united to one purpose, one body all one in Christ and whether we are Jew or Greek or whether a slave or free, whether a male or female, these differences no longer matter, they are there but they do not matter because we are all united in Christ Jesus.

So we are not equal, we are still different. A China man will always be a China man. A Jew will always be a Jew, a Malay will always be a Malay. We will have physical features and customs that are different but we are united because we are one spiritual body now, united in Christ.

Once we are united as one body through the cross, we no longer let our differences divide us.

Let's apply this to a practical situation which Paul addresses in the book of Ephesians as well. The relationship between slaves and masters. Now Paul doesn't advocate that the slaves all run away because of their new found freedom in Christ. He does not ask them to emancipate themselves and overturn their masters. The differences are still there, slaves are still slaves, masters are still masters.

Ephesians 6:5-9 (ESV) Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ,

They are asked to obey their masters, serve them even better as you will serve Christ.

6 not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man,

Yes, there are differences between servants and their masters, employee and employers, Paul acknowledges these difference but what he says is that we are to serve God and look at our masters or employers and serve them as if we are serving Jesus Christ.

8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.

The reward which the worker looks forward is not the reward he gets from his master but a reward that he gets from Jesus Christ. So that takes the master out of the equation and the service or employment history of the slave or the

employee is totally dependent on his devotion to his real master who is Jesus Christ. So therefore the differences between the two fade into the background.

Look at Paul's advice to the masters.

Ephesians 6:9 Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.

So therefore masters are the same, they are different from their servants, they are still employers and slaves are still the employee but they are to stop threatening, which means they have to treat their employers or their slaves kindly, gently, knowing that the way he treats them is accountable to his ultimate Lord, which is Jesus Christ, who is master in heaven. So he needs to treat his employees or his slaves in such a way that it will be glorifying to God. So therefore the differences are still there, but both masters and slave, employers and employees have the same goal to please their Lord Jesus Christ, so that they are united in that one purpose and a one new humanity to church.

So the cross changes the way we see ourselves and we see others. When we look at ourselves, we see that our sins are so bad that it took God to die for it, and yet I am so precious that God was willing to die for me. When we look at our neighbour, I was in the same boat before, just like them with my sins and they are just as precious as I was because it took God to die for them. So when we come to the cross, we are humbled. We receive our self-esteem and our acceptance in life and our pride in life from the fact that Jesus loves and accepts us. Once this happens then we can as a new humanity start to enjoy each other's differences and appreciate them. We no longer let these differences divide us and we can celebrate these differences because we are truly united.

Paul writes on about this church,

Ephesians 2:17-22 (ESV) And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

So what he is trying to tell us here is when Jesus Christ came, He established peace to those who are far off namely, the Gentiles and those who near namely the Jews. The death of Christ creates one humanity through the reconciliation of believing man to God who imparts the same Spirit who fills Jews and Gentiles. That same Holy Spirit of God unites us to God and each other.

He then uses a series of metaphors to describe us to actually paint a picture of what the church is in concrete terms we can understand. The first metaphor is that of being citizens of a country, we belong to one country even though we belong to different races. The second if family, we belong to one family, although we are as different as children to parents. Then the third metaphor is that of the temple, The one building which is the symbol of the presence of God. Each metaphor gives us an impression of increasing intimacy from starting broadly as citizens of a country to members of our family, to part of a building where we worship God.

If you look in a typical family, why is the family united? The family is actually united by the DNA as they say, "blood is thicker than water". In the same way, in spite of all our differences in the church of Jesus Christ, like a real family

we are united by the Holy Spirit. It is a spirit that is in every single one of us, no matter what the differences are, unite us as a family, as a real family would have been united by the DNA.

So not only are we united by one spirit to God and to each other, we are also united by being built on a common foundation.

Ephesians 2:20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

Here is a building metaphor. Paul is saying that church is like a building and the most important part of the building is the foundation. Foundation is made up of apostles and prophets and Christ Jesus who is the cornerstone, the most important stone of the entire foundation, everything is built over Christ.

So what does that mean?

It means that Christ is the cornerstone. The reason for Christ being cornerstone is because of what He has done, which is the message of the gospel. His life, his death and his resurrection. What he has done is the cornerstone of the entire church. It is what the church is built up upon, how the church derives its purpose, its direction, its growth, its stability, its function from this foundation, the cornerstone, which is the gospel of Jesus Christ, his life, his death and resurrection. What happens is that apostles and prophets are the transmitters of that foundation. They transmit the gospel which build us up with teachings on Christ life, death and resurrection. So this foundation is actually the Bible. It is the revelation of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ, all that is actually revealed to us, it is passed down through history, to the words of the apostles with Paul and the prophets of the New Testament, all that is being passed down to us and encapsulated preserved in the Bible. So the church bases its existence and its continued ministry on God's speaking to us through the Bible, it will be our one invaluable standard and that of which we are united.

So the goal of the foundation is that gospel the good news we communicate of what Christ has done for all of us, that is the core of our beliefs. This is what we communicate in order to create community. There is really no point going to a church building and preaching some sort of interesting message every Sunday but in the end the message has no power to create community. The people just believe or have head knowledge that stays in their heads and never percolates to their hearts. They actually don't act like a family, they don't act like a growing community, then that preaching would have failed. The whole goal of church is when people in the church hear the gospel it creates a community that grows.

So what this means is that Christians were not meant to stand alone, we cannot be a free standing stone. We would be spiritually incomplete. We are meant to be part of a greater whole. Which means there is no privatized spirituality where we become monks, we go off into a mountain side and spend all our time alone in prayer, growing in our spiritual closeness to God. There is no privatized spirituality. True spirituality is always expressed in a church in community where believers will relate to one another .

In the old days, the pieces of bricks in the temples were not cemented together, they were merely cut to fit each other, it describes a dynamic process. The words used by Paul are "being joined together", "grows", "being built together", it is descriptive of a dynamic process. It is always growing; it is always joining together. A church is where corporate spirituality is expressed by believers being progressively growing more united to each other and more reflective of who God is in our lives.

So in order to grow, we need to meet in groups where we are in intimate contact with each other, in a sense that we experience a life with each other, we share spiritual experiences, we learn from each other, we resolve conflicts with each other by exercising love, we are accountable to each other. If we are never in groups, if we never share, we will never have conflicts and we will never have opportunities to resolve those conflicts and we will never learn to grow together. This is how God sanctifies us, how He makes us more like Himself.

So the church is dynamic where we are actually one family because the Holy Spirit has made us one family, but the expression of that oneness, will continue to grow as time goes on. The more the Spirit controls us, the more we are able to express that unity which is the reality of what Christ has done for us.

Let's push on. In the fourth chapter of Ephesians Paul says

Ephesians 4:1-3 (ESV) I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,

So he is asking Ephesians to live in a manner worthy to the calling of which they have been called. We are all called by Christ to be in one body. So in order to live in one body, there are couple of things we need to do. We need to be humble...

2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The unity is already there, which is created by the Spirit, in the bond of peace which is to established by the death of Christ on the cross. There is a spiritual reality that we are reconciled to each other and to God. The Spirit is in all of us, but we need to express that. In order to express that spiritual reality we need to call upon the Holy Spirit to move within our hearts. Humility is basically the ability to look out for the interest of others, as well as, our own or before our own. Gentleness and meekness is power under control. Patience, able to bear one another. This will not naturally happen in any fellowship, we will all necessarily fight but it is in applying humility, gentleness, patience and bearing one another in love, we would actually maintain this unity already created by the Spirit. He has done it, he has actually united us because of his death on the cross, but we have to express it. We have to live lives that are worthy of Jesus sacrifice on the cross. Famous theologian DA Carson writes

"The church is...made up of natural enemies. What binds us together is not common education, common race, common income levels, common politics, common nationality, common accents, common jobs, or anything else of that sort. Christians come together...because they have all been saved by Jesus Christ....They are a band of natural enemies who love one another for Jesus' sake."

So here naturally because of our sin we express self-interest which must necessarily bring us into conflict with each other so Carson calls us "natural predators". We bite, we fight, we have hostility because of our innate legacy of sin and its residual effects in us, but what binds us together is the death of Christ on the cross and the love by which he has loved us and by which we now learn to love each other for Christ's sake.

We need to experience the totality and richness of God's love as a church. Here is Paul asking Ephesians to pray

Ephesians 3:18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

He is asking the Ephesian Christians to pray that they really experience the entire depth and magnitude, the width, basically the enormity of Christ's love. In order to do that they have got to comprehend it with all the saints. His love is so expansive that you can't comprehend it all on your own. It is not a privatized spirituality, you actually experience the love of God in its totality and its magnificence as a church, as part of a body, never alone.

The vision of the church is to be a holy temple, a dwelling place for God by the spirit. In the Old Testament, the temple is the only place where the presence of God is experienced and worshipped. However today the church, a gathering of his people is no longer a building, but the gathering of God's people is a place where the presence of God is experienced and felt.

So we don't live in the Old Testament times, there are no more temples, but the new temple is the church of Jesus Christ, all the believers meeting together. Wherever they meet together, it is the church, the presence of God is in the temple which then denotes holiness and devotedness. The presence of God is with his people. Wherever his people are, his people are holy and devoted to him, we worship and grow as a believing community and we minister God's presence to the rest of our community and the world. The world is going to see and experience God and have God come into their lives has to be through the church, the community which bears and ministers the presence of God.

How does the presence of God build us up and how do we minister God to the rest of the community? Well He does this by verse 7

Ephesians 4:7 (ESV) But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. ...

Grace is unmerited favor and a gift God gives us without us deserving it. He just gives it free and this gift is given to every single believer. It says that each one of us according to the measure of Christ, which means each one of us at least have one gift and how great the magnitude of gift will also depend on God's sovereign will, He will give one person measure of one particular gift and he will give another person a larger measure or smaller measure, it is up to God, but whatever the point is we are each given at least one gift.

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

These are all gifts, individually given, chosen by God in different measure to each of them and the purpose is to equip the saints for the building up of body of Christ. So the body of Christ ministers the presence of God into the world. He equips us by giving each of us gifts and all these gifts are given to apostles, prophets, evangelist, shepherds and teachers in order to equip the saints for the work of the ministry.

Who does the work of the ministry?

The work of the ministry is not done by apostles, prophets, evangelist, shepherds and teachers in this example. Their job is to equip the saints, their job is to train the saints, their job is to teach the saints, prepare them, ground them in the word, so that the saints go into the community which is every single believer, go into the community and they do the work of ministry and build up the body of Christ.

This concept of church is completely different to many of modern day ideas of church, where the church seemed to be like a dispenser of religious goods and services. People come to church to be fed, to have their needs met through

high quality programs and professionals teach their children about God. So therefore in this sort of church, people say “I go to church”. Church is a place that you go to. It is different. The real church is a missional church. It is a body of people sent on a mission, who gather in community for worship, community encouragement and teaching from the Word in addition to what they are self-feeding themselves throughout the week. So the missional church will be the one to say, “I don’t go to church, I am the church”. Now that is the true vision of a real church.

Hence at our worship meetings ,we are all singing the songs and worship in hymns or praise songs together. The important thing is praising, not performance. It is not the guys who are on the stage, whom we watch as a performance but we all participate because we are the church.

In another letter Paul writes to the Corinthian church

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—1Cor 12:12

So again Paul says, using the metaphor of baptism to illustrate that we all belong to one family because we all have one Spirit, but the body has many members and all of them are part of the entire body. They all play a vital role.

Here is Pastor Rick Warren who says, **“God gave me a gift, not for me but for you, and God gave you a gift, not for you but for me. If you don’t use your gift, you’re depriving me; If I don’t use my gift, I am robbing you.”**

So each person’s gift, however small or large, is absolutely vital in church. If we don’t have that person exercising that gift, then the church will be lacking in a particular area. So many areas in church where we could actually serve. We could serve in ushering, we could serve in teaching Bible study, we could serve in encouraging each other, we could serve in finance, we can serve in the office, we can serve in washing plates, everybody has a role. It would be ideal that in this church that we will not find a single person who has no ministry because God has said, everybody has a gift, everybody has a measure of Christ’s grace.

Lastly, Matthew 8 tells us about the great commission when Jesus said to his people

Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV) And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Our Lord’s great commission to the entire church is to make disciples of all nations but we can only do it as a church. Each of us playing our different roles in order to fulfil this great commission, this great task. So the church of Jesus Christ, the task of the church of Jesus Christ is to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, to share the multitudes of blessings that God has given us through his son Jesus Christ. That is our function, that is our goal, that is our privilege to honor God by doing so, but we can only do this together as a church.

Questions

1. What is the church?
2. How did Jesus create the church?
3. What does it mean to say that Jesus is the corner stone in the metaphor of the building to explain the nature of the church?
4. How does the cross make us all equal in the church and not allow our differences to divide us?
5. What are the roles of church leaders in the church?
6. What are each of our individual roles in church?
7. What is the unique feature of our individual gifts in church compared to the normal notions of what a gift is?
8. How do we express or maintain the unity of the Spirit in the church?