A Biblical Team or a Committee

I came across an article a while back titled, "You Are Plural." It was written by a professor of biology at Trinity College, Clayton Carlson. He emphasized scientific research that shows that mankind, made in the image of God, bears the need for plurality.   Our human body speaks of this creation design. (http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2016/november/learning-to-love-our-gut-bacteria.html).

God is plural unity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit perfectly united), and designs us to operate in that manner. This is especially true for leaders. Jesus prayed 3 times in His final prayer on earth (John 17 a leadership context) that we would walk in the same type of relational "oneness" that the Godhead walks in, "so the world may believe."

How we view Team

Team leadership can be the greatest springboard for Kingdom expansion or it can be one of the greatest impediments. Team can provide both safeguards as well as hindrances.

Godly leaders don't use team for personal benefit, they walk in team for mutual benefit and Kingdom advancement. Like the Godhead, they constantly exalt the others because the good of each one is the good of the whole.   They have John the Baptist's mentality *John 3:28-30... He must increase, but I must decrease,* not ministry culture's attitude *I must increase for Him to increase*. Leaders commit a serious error when they expect

> **Committees tend to see themselves as the people's representative, while Biblical teams see themselves as God's representatives serving His people (Acts 20:28).**

people to submit to their authority according to Scripture, while at the same time never truly submitting to anyone but themselves (Acts 20:28, Rom 13:1-5, Eph 5:21, Heb 13:7, 17, Titus 1:7, 1 Tim 5:17, 1 Thes 5:12-13, 2 Thes 3:14-15, 1 Pet 2:13-14, 5:1-6, Jude 1:8). If you look at how God dealt with leaders in the Bible, holding them to "a higher standard" (James 3:1), then leaders are crazy to think they can get away with an unsubmitted and unaccountable life.

The problem isn't Committees but Committee-itis

In our submission to others as a team (family/team like the Godhead) there can be a downside if we are not careful about God's design. A phrase that defines the problem is committee-itis. I was visiting with a couple not long ago who had been in a large church and relayed that they not only had committees for every area, but even had a committee to oversee the committees.

It is not just a committee, but a committee mentality that can be a problem for both charismatics and evangelicals. The charismatic movement of the 60s-80s, along with the marketplace movement of the 80s-2000s brought a fresh rediscovery of the idea of team leadership. It isn't just one man (pastor/mega-star) leading congregations but a team of leaders in family relationship leading together.

With this rediscovery of team there are some who use the word "team" but still apply in an old way, like a "committee." So what's the difference? A main difference is in the overall thrust. Team encourages innovation by the Spirit through its members, while committees often work to keep innovations in check.

Think about the forward movement in the book of Acts through the various leadership teams. Initiatives of Holy Spirit often preceded team consensus. The team element usually came after the initiative of Holy Spirit. The team helped shape and support it with wisdom and direction (Acts 2,10,13,15 etc.).
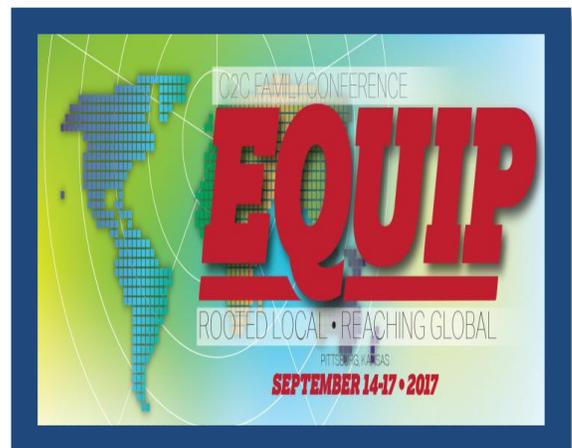
Committees on the other hand have to come with a consensus before fully exploring or launching an idea, even a God birthed one. This has a cost. Consensus kills courage, initiative, and often struggles with Holy Spirit inspired movement. This often holds back breakthrough or innovative directions. When new initiatives are brought forth, committee mentalities don't make them better they tend to dilute aspects of them they are uncomfortable with. The result is everyone loses. Consensus kills passion, hope, initiative, Spirit inspired spontaneity, and vision.

Think about some of the things that may have happened throughout the history of God's people if leaders were hampered by a "committee-itis" mentality.

- Moses may have left the Israelites in slavery or partial slavery until the elders felt good about his direction (Ex 5:1-23).
- Jesus may have let the disciples talk Him out of the cross (Mt 16:23).
- Philip may have never gone and preached in Samaria until the Apostles felt more comfortable with it (Acts 8).
- Peter may have remained more Jewish instead of embracing God's thrust to the Gentiles (Acts 10).
- Paul wouldn't have broke completely out of the Jewish/Christian mode until the synagogue leaders agreed.
- Paul may not have gone to Jerusalem, but let the committee, including Agabus talk him out of it (Acts 21:10-15).
- Luther may have waited for more approval from the Catholic leadership before launching his debate and initiatives for change.
- Whitfield and Wesley would not have continued to preach open air messages to the coal miners until the rest of the Anglican leadership was in agreement.

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I am not advocating for independent leadership, but I am warning about something that can turn a team into a committee.

Characteristics of a Holy Spirit inspired team versus a man centered committee.

- Real teams encourage their members to dream big and hear from God knowing it will help the overall, while committees play it safe with group think. This ends up putting consensus boxes around vision.

- Real teams make it comfortable for real leaders to fully engage God in their gifts, while committees tend to attract more managerial types who simply want to keep things as they are rather than press ahead.
- Real teams sharpen and modify ideas more on the back end of a process than the front end. Committees want all things in place on the front end and end up modify ideas with too many details. This results in a dilution of impact with God ideas.
- Committees tend to only dream dreams that are manageable with human ability, while real teams dream God sized dreams that only He can fulfill.
- Real teams give members permission to go out on the edge and the rest of the team will follow and explore. Committees keep things in a safe middle which ends up being like a hamster wheel spinning round and round but going nowhere.
- Committees will get prophetic dreams and vision and anesthetize them to the point that it isn't real vision. Real teams encourage hearing from God.
- Real teams would rather step out with "partial knowledge" and fail in faith knowing that the step may move them forward to where God is leading. Committees tend to move in circles in the wilderness with a faithless generation that ends up dying without entering God's promised land.
- Committees are good at measuring the size of the giants and obstacles (like the 10 spies with the bad report), while real teams are like Joshua and Caleb who see God and His plan ahead of them as they go forward into His vision.
- Committees tend to see themselves as the people's representative, while teams see themselves as God's representatives serving His people.
- Real teams know they need each member to be 100% of who God made them, while committees want their members to only bring a percentage of who they are in the leadership process.

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