
Unity - Or Disunity: Can We Be One?

Week 2: Church History & Denominations

Kelly Steinhaus
Grace Chapel
January 14, 2018

Opening activity: The Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

We are the body of Christ, yet there is an estimated 33,000 Christian denominations
(World Christian Encyclopedia)

If you have experienced another Christian tradition, what aspect of their way of worshipping Christ has enriched your own faith?

Discussion: Gifts from Various Traditions

What gift do these various church traditions offer the others?

- Catholic?
- Evangelical?
- Pentecostal?
- Orthodox?
- Mainline Protestant?
- Messianic Jews?
- Others?



Big idea = The unity of the body of Christ depends on each person seeing and recognizing the gift that the other brings

“Ecumenism” - Efforts to bring Christians together, healing wounds of past conflicts, working towards goals common to all Christians

Ecumenism = root words oikos (house) and oikumene (humankind as one household)

Receptive Ecumenism - Gifts that various Christians traditions offer for mutual enrichment

Outline

- 4 Major Traditions (Catholic, Orthodox, Evangelical, Mainline Protestant)
- Brief lesson on church history and Protestant denominationalism
- Potential for denominations to strengthen one another
- Offer one way in which you can make a difference to bring about greater unity
- Our unity depends on our relationality

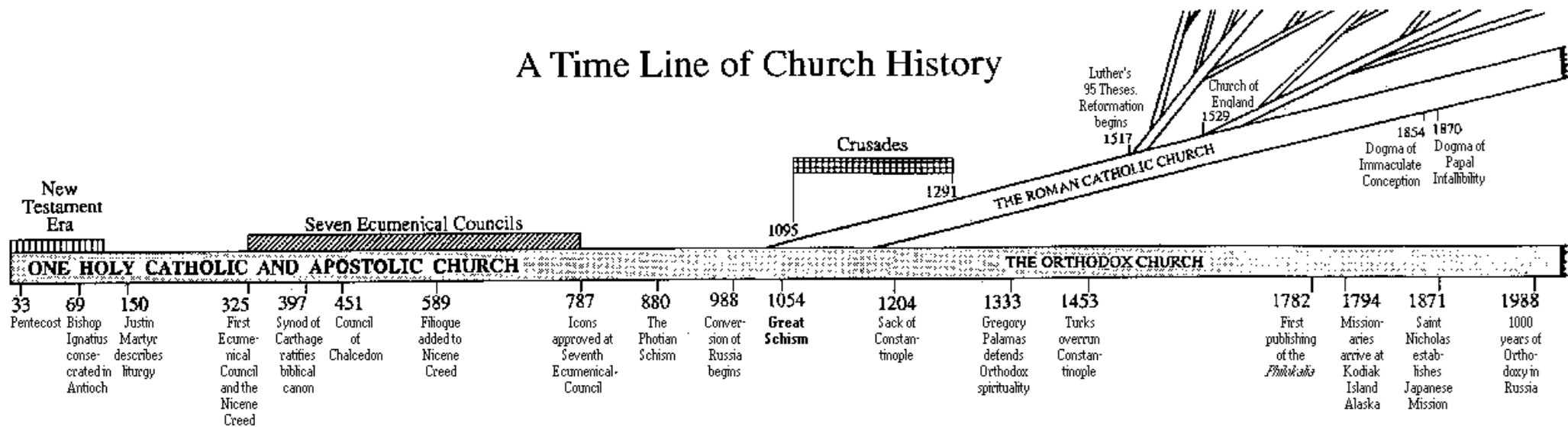


Church
History

The splintering
of Christianity

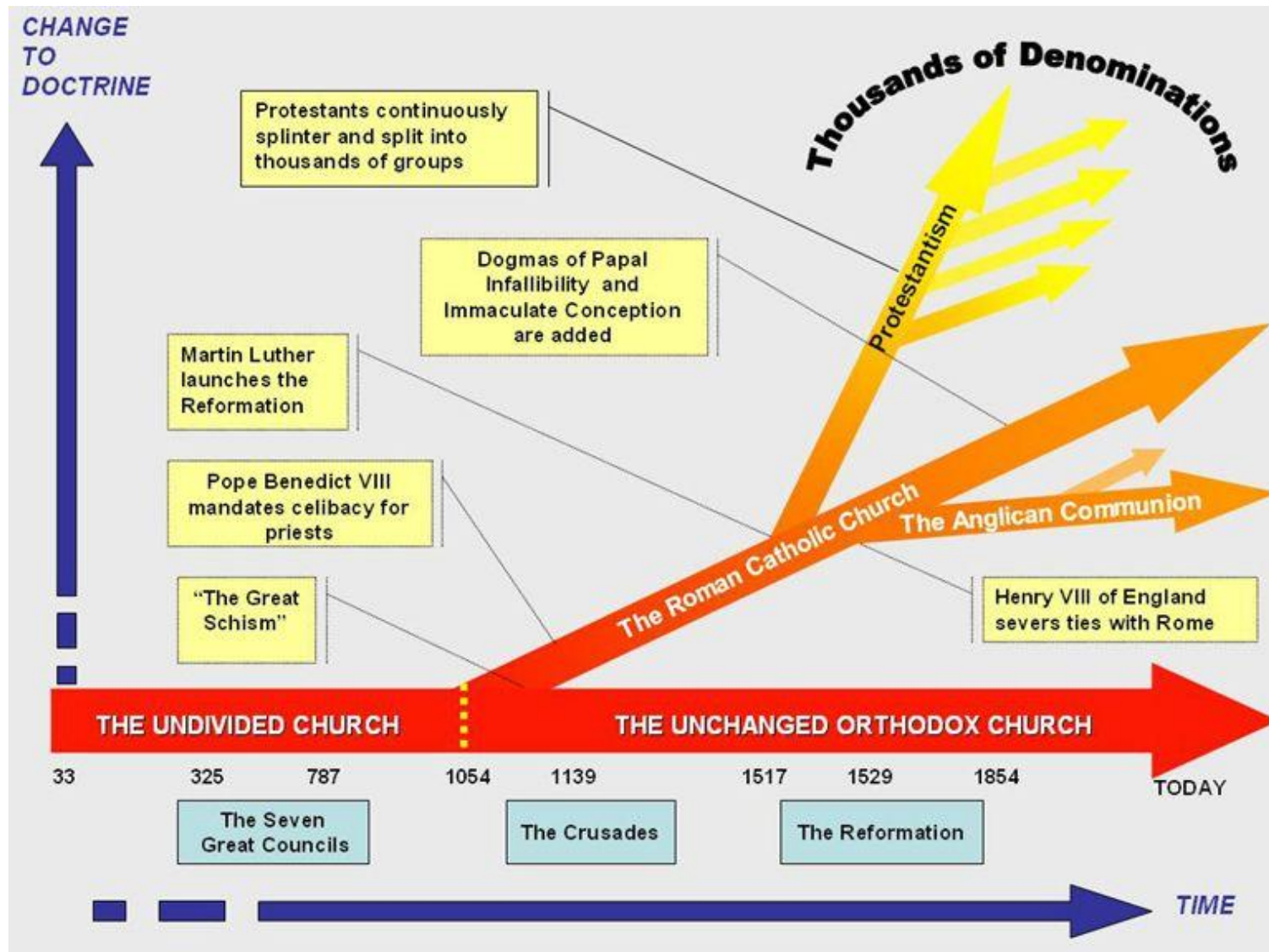
What happened to the Church?

Videos: [Church History in Five Minutes](#)



What happened to the Church?

Depends on who you talk to... Orthodox perspective

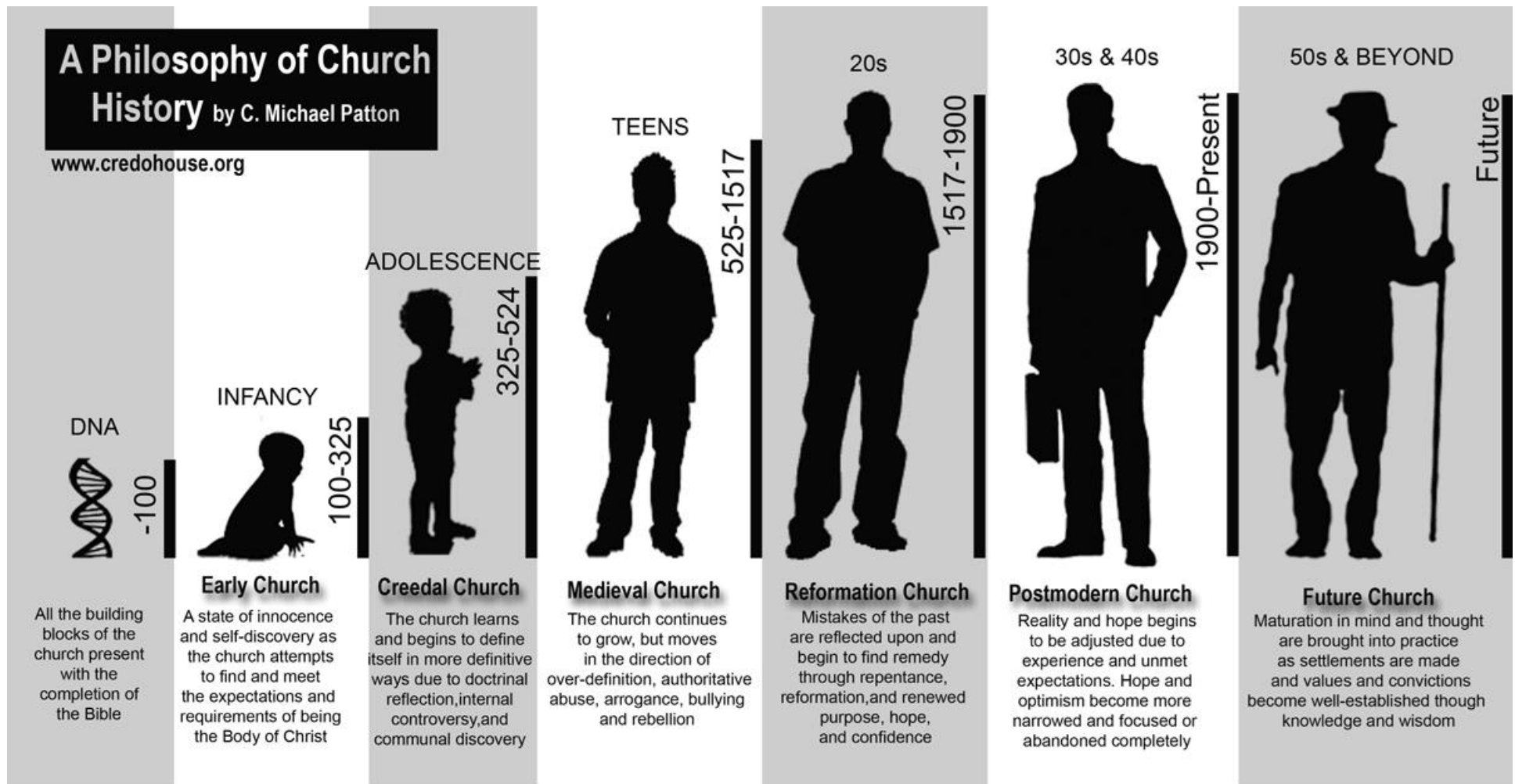


Church of Christ perspective



What happened to the Church?

Another perspective...



CATHOLICITY

Growing Rigidity

Growing Laxity

Sectarianism

Denominationalism

Latitudinarianism

Authority only

Authority and liberty

Liberty only

Everything matters
doctrinally

Some things matter
doctrinally

Nothing matters
doctrinally

Enlarged core of
orthodoxy



Historic core of
orthodoxy



Diminished core
of orthodoxy

Narrow ground
of fellowship

Broad ground
of fellowship

No ground of
fellowship

Tradition ignored
and confused

Tradition recognized
and used

Tradition
disregarded

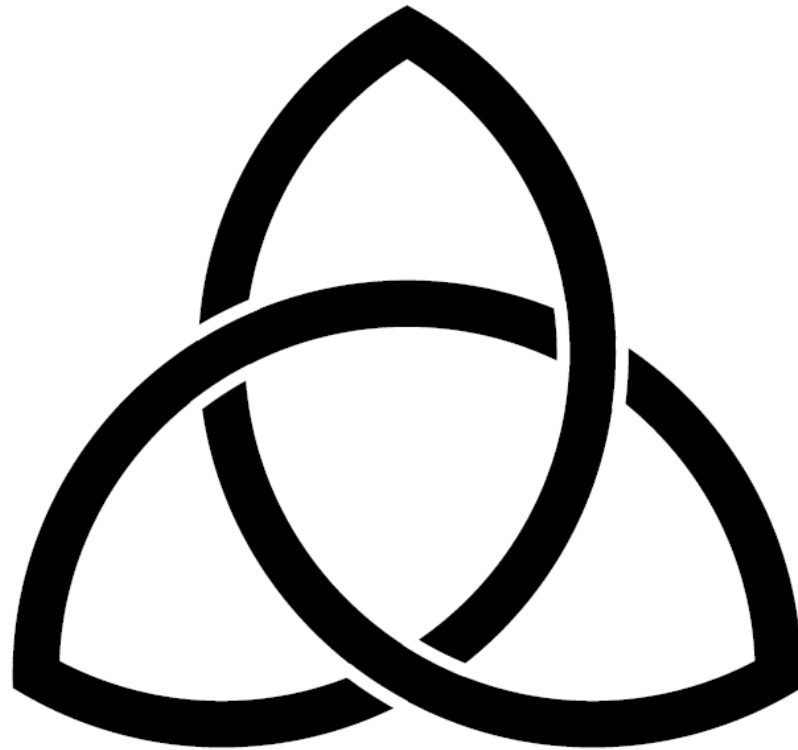
Figure 10.1: Taken from Rex Koivisto, *One Lord, One Faith* (2nd ed.; Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 116. Used by permission of Wipf and Stock Publishers. www.wipfandstock.com.



The
Problem

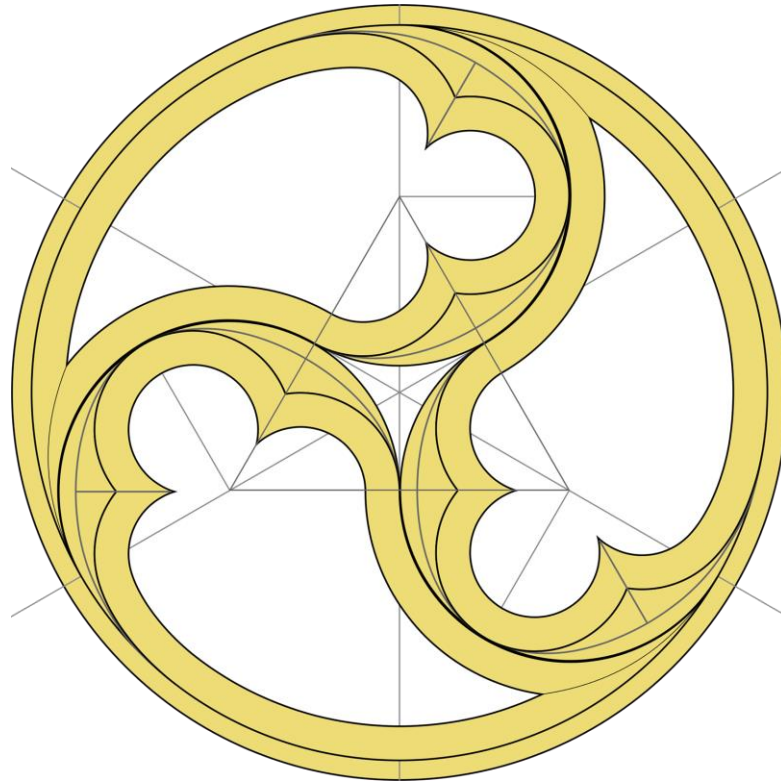
Siloed Parishes
Functioning
Autonomously

The image of God is perfect unity in community (Trinity)



As Jesus' body here on earth, we are called to become an image of God and take on God's way of being

Perichoresis: The Divine Dance



John Damascene - Described the Trinity as “perichoresis”

An encircling embrace, a mutual presence in love, a dancing around the other.





USRowing Fall Speed Order 2008

Original UniteBoston Team



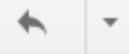
September 6, 2010 – UniteBoston's First Weekly Email Newsletter

Boston Christian Event Listing



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9/6/10 ☆



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Week of: September 6, 2010

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Congratulations! You have just received the *first* weekly events email from **UniteBoston**, a new organization with the mission of better uniting the Christian community in **Boston** through shared experiences.

Launched UniteBoston.com
April 30, 2011

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Tuesday, 05 June, 2012

07:00 PM - 09:30 PM [Theology on Tap - 'The Bow in the Clouds: Is there God in The Hunger Games?'](#)

Wednesday, 06 June, 2012

07:00 PM - 09:00 PM [Boston Justice House of Prayer Gathering](#)

Friday, 08 June, 2012

12:00 PM - 01:00 PM [Stand Up for Religious Freedom Rally on Boston Common](#)

06:00 PM - 07:45 PM [How Can One Religion be Right and the Others be Wrong?](#)

Saturday, 09 June, 2012

09:00 AM - 04:30 PM [6th Annual See His Glory Worship & Music Ministry Conference](#)

07:00 PM - 09:00 PM [Boston Justice House of Prayer Gathering](#)

Sunday, 10 June, 2012

04:00 PM - 06:30 PM [The Bethel AME Church 'Arts Explosion'](#)

Monday, 11 June, 2012

05:30 PM - 07:30 PM [Plumfield Academy Open House](#)

Wednesday, 13 June, 2012

07:00 PM - 09:00 PM [Boston Justice House of Prayer Gathering](#)

Thursday, 14 June, 2012

06:00 PM - 07:45 PM [How to Build Relationships that Last a Lifetime](#)

07:00 PM - 08:30 PM [Evangelistic Harvest](#)

Friday, 15 June, 2012

07:00 PM - 09:30 PM [UNOW's 3rd Annual Fundraiser Banquet](#)

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Friday, 08 June, 2012

[How Can One Religion be Right and the Others be Wrong?](#) 06:00 PM

Saturday, 09 June, 2012

[6th Annual See His Glory Worship & Music Ministry Conference](#) 09:00 AM

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[UNOW's 3rd Annual Fundraiser](#)

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UNITE BOSTON

**Mission: Nurturing Christian Unity
through Relational Connections**

www.uniteboston.com

Inter-Church Prayer & Worship

- Evangelical, Catholic, Greek Orthodox, & Mainline Protestant hosts
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BostonServe: Churches Together, Serving the City

October 2015, May, 2017



UB Neighborhood Dinners

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Transformation Through Relationships Within the UB Worship Team



Workshop

Christian unity:

How you can make a difference



3 Steps To Receptive Ecumenism

1. Consider - Which part of the Church do you want to learn about? One that you have questions about or are unfamiliar with?
2. Do you know anyone from that Christian background? If so, will you meet up for a cup of coffee?
3. If you don't know anyone, will you make plans to visit another congregation of that tradition and have a conversation with someone?



Key Attitudes to Receiving from Others

1. Humility - Be willing to admit that your tradition or way of understanding isn't the end-all-be-all
2. Curiosity - Seeking to mine the gold that the other brings
3. Bravery - It will be uncomfortable, but that is a sign that you are growing
4. Relational - Cultivate a desire for deep relationships across difference, and the commitment to stay in it even when it's hard
5. Honor - Call out the gifts that you see and remind them of what they bring to the whole

“It is groups of people more than sets of doctrinal propositions, it is communities of belief more than systems of belief that ultimately need to be reconciled” (Tom Ryan)

“...**the whole body**, joined and knit together by what **every joint supplies**, according to the effective working by which **every part does its share**, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

Ephesians 4:16

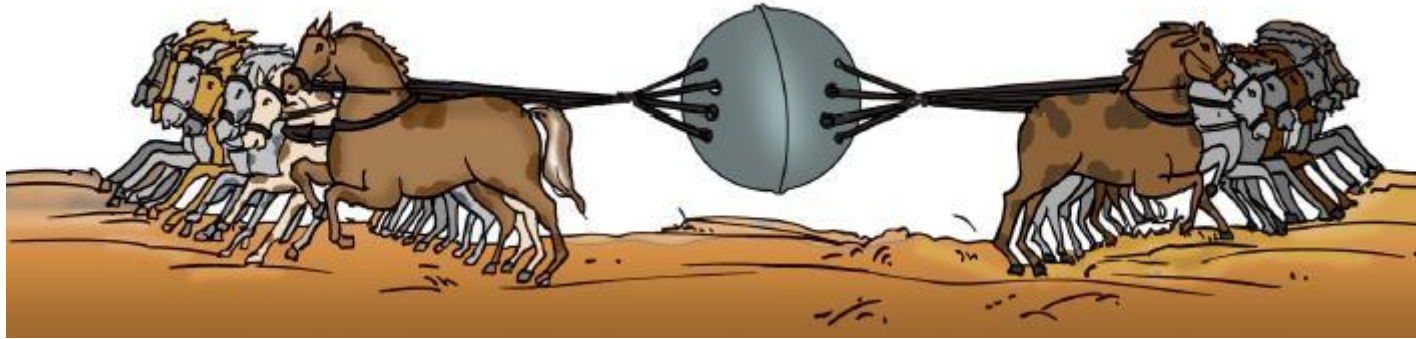


What is your next step? What is God's invitation to you today?

Catherine Lacugna: "It's as we exist together perichoretically, in mutual giving and receiving, without separateness, or subordination, or division, the church is an icon of the Trinity. And inasmuch as the church has saving significance, it is an icon of God's saving and healing love." (God For Us)

Christian Unity

From



To

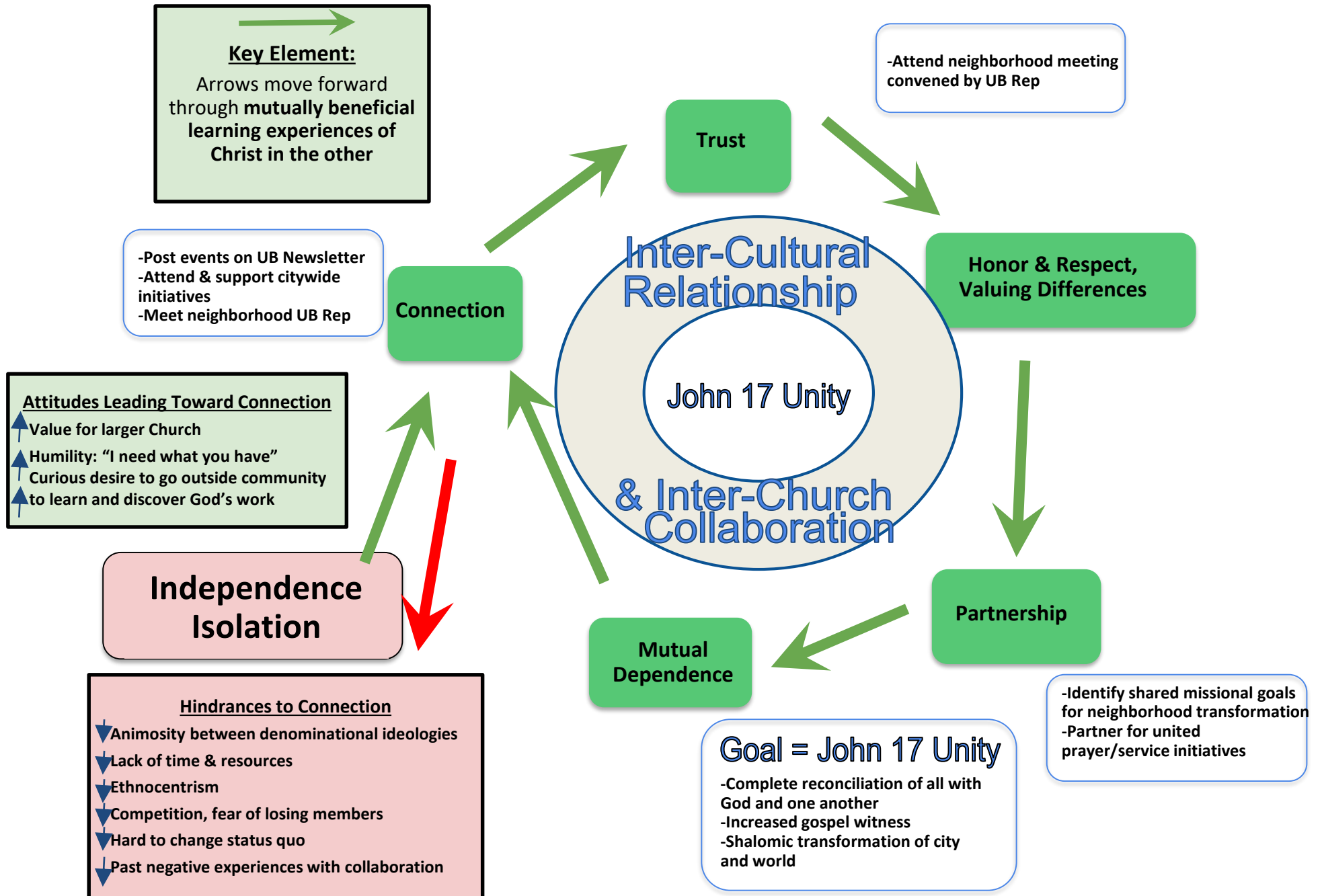


Questions & Feedback



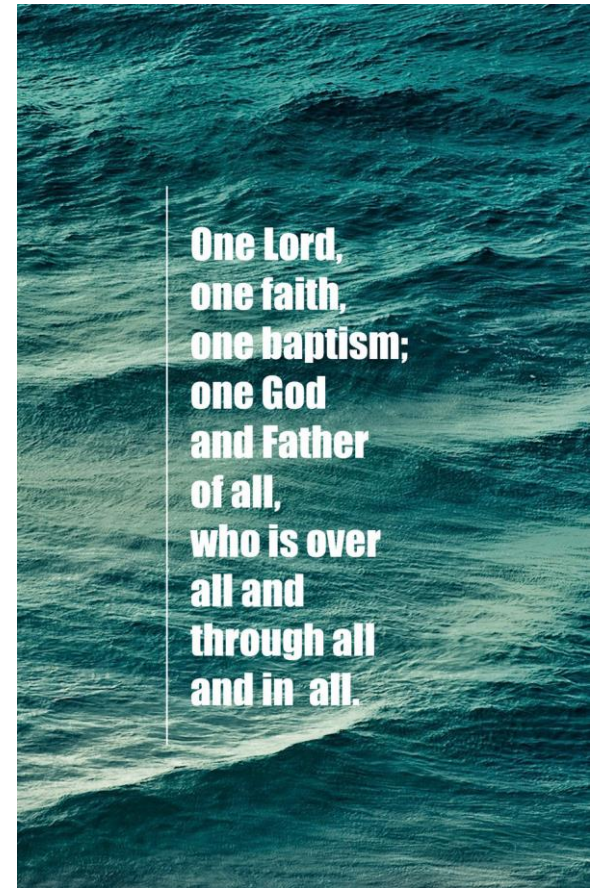
Kelly Steinhaus
kelly@uniteboston.com
928-600-3236

UniteBoston Theory of Change



4 Approaches to Ecumenism

1. **Missional** : Churches coming together to realize Great Commission
2. **Structural**: organizational frame which coordinates institutional Christianity.
3. **Theological**: Dialogues around doctrinal differences
4. **Relational**: Healing through relationships



Bounded Set Vs. Centered Set

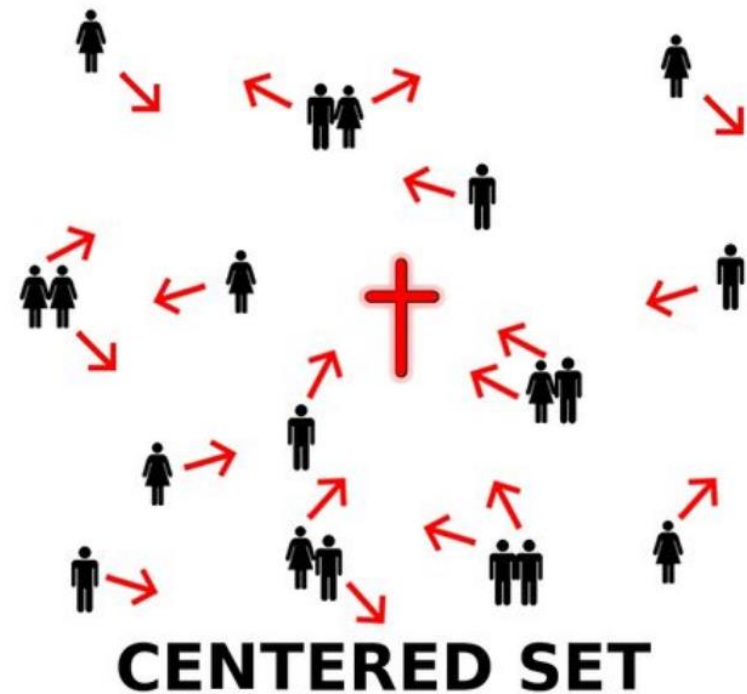
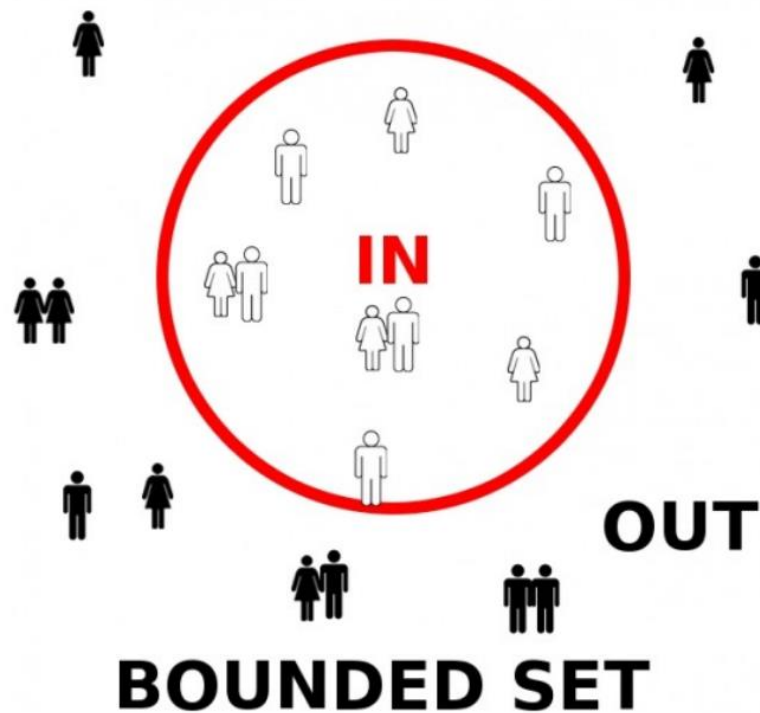


Figure 2: Centered-Set Ecclesiology

Convictions

- Private Conscience
- Personal formulations and lifestyle
- E.g. "What is holy a lifestyle all about?"

Doctrines

- Group/denomination conscience
- Theological formulations
- E.g. "How, when, and why to be baptized?"

Creeds

- Universal Church statements
- Unchanging formulations
 - Unchanging fact
- All people, all time, everywhere

JESUS IS LORD

I would die for this...
because without this I am not
a Christian. This is central
to salvation.

I would debate you for this. . .
because I, and the part of the church I fellowship
with, have found this to be true. This is body
dynamic truth.

I will dialogue concerning this. . .
because I have found this to be truth for my life.
This is personally directing truth.

"DANGER ZONE"

When we make
convictions
creeds we enter
into legalism.

"I am the Vine, you are the branches" (Jesus in John 15.5)

Credits: Initial idea for Family Tree graphic comes from Evangelical Covenant Church via davidswanson.wordpress.com. Numbers of adherents and many founding dates found on adherents.com and wikipedia.com.

**Nourished in
the soil of:**

Laws of Torah
God of Faithful Love
Expectations of Messiah

Shared Koine Greek / Culture
God of Universal Reason
Mode of Philosophical Inquiry



Schismatic groups have broken themselves off of Common Christianity. Other groups above are in danger of doing so and barely hanging on.

Key to Denomination Ratings:		## T# W# S#	1536 T4-7 W2-4 S2
# =	Approx. Year(s) of founding		
T =	Use of Tradition:	Conservative	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Liberal
W =	Style of Worship:	Sacramental	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Experiential
S =	Structure:	Hierarchical	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Congregational