Should We All Be One Organization?

Organizational Diversity
& Relational Unity
Across Fellowships & Churches

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The Immediate Question

- Why do we have both ethnic specific and multi-ethnic fellowships/churches?
  - Is it divisive?
  - Is it a faithful witness to the unbelieving world?
  - ME asking ES: Does this promote cliques and ethnocentrism? Is racial reconciliation and forgiveness being sufficiently proclaimed?
  - ES asking ME: Does a multi-ethnic group distribute discomfort around equally? Does multi-ethnicity have to happen in a particular way?

Basic Info

- Both Multi-Ethnic and Ethnic-Specific ministries are biblical
  - ME: multi-ethnicity is a part of the kingdom of God (Lk.4:16-30, Eph.2:11-22, Rev.7:9, etc.) and unity is a witness to the world (Jn.17)
  - ES: "Peter was apostle to the Jews, Paul to the Gentiles" etc.
- Both have strengths
  - ME helps to provide a forum for cross-ethnic dialogue and witness
  - ES helps to focus on the evangelism and discipleship needs of a particular ethnic group
- But you're still wondering…
  - Is it because of sin, either past or present?
  - Is it just tolerable? "This is the best we can do?"

Identifying the Broader Questions

- Why have ministry by groupings at all?
  - Why have college ministry? Youth ministry? Elderly ministry? (Ministry by age group)
  - Why have singles/couples ministry? (Ministry by marital status)
  - Why have marketplace ministry? (Ministry by occupation or interest)
  - Etc.

Identifying the Broader Questions

- Mainline Protestant Christianity has had an uneasy relationship with organizational diversity.
    - Definition of *organizational diversity*: multiple organizations existing in a non-hierarchal relationship with each other; manifested by partnerships, parachurch groups, etc.
- Why the uneasiness?

Thesis Statement

- Organizational Diversity and Relational Unity is the best possible situation for Christians to be in.

- Outside of the early church, it is hard to locate in church history. But historically speaking, it has proven to make Christians better
    - understand Scripture
    - engage in world missions
    - empower indigenous leaders
    - respond to social ills

Case Study #1: Roger Williams

- Williams thought people should be free to worship God as they chose, or chose not, without fear of punishment by their government. He had already become a controversial figure in England because of his views on freedom of worship.

- The Puritans wanted a hierarchical, highly controlled one church - one society symbiosis.

- Williams also thought Native Americans should be paid for their land and that the Massachusetts Bay charter was invalid because the King of England had no right to give away land belonging to the Natives. This made him a threat all around!

- The Puritans of Boston stirred up so much trouble for Williams that he left Salem for refuge with the Pilgrims at Plymouth. There he enjoyed two years of relative peace, serving as assistant pastor. Meanwhile he did missionary work among the Native Americans, became well acquainted with Chief Massasoit of the Wompanoag, and arranged a friendly treaty with him.

Case Study #1: Roger Williams

- Eventually Williams caught wind of a Puritan plot to kidnap him and ship him back to England. Williams fled from Salem and was sheltered by Chief Massasoit. Hearing he was safe, other persecuted souls joined him. Massasoit sold them land on the Mooshassuc River. Grateful to God, Williams named their new settlement "Providence." We still call it Providence, Rhode Island.

- His life exemplifies organizational diversity and relational unity. He served as the first pastor of the first Baptist church in America but later resigned because of his dissatisfaction with the formal church.

- He also helped to start the first Jewish synagogue in America.

- Williams took an interest in many other Christian movements and even helped them. Later, as Governor of the colony of Rhode Island, he stamped it with freedom of worship.

- Because of his desire to see relational unity he is well known for his peacemaking efforts, especially between the English colonists and the Native Americans. His Narragansett dictionary, which, when it was published in London, made him the authority on Native Americans for a time. Today Roger Williams is regarded as the founder of American religious liberty.
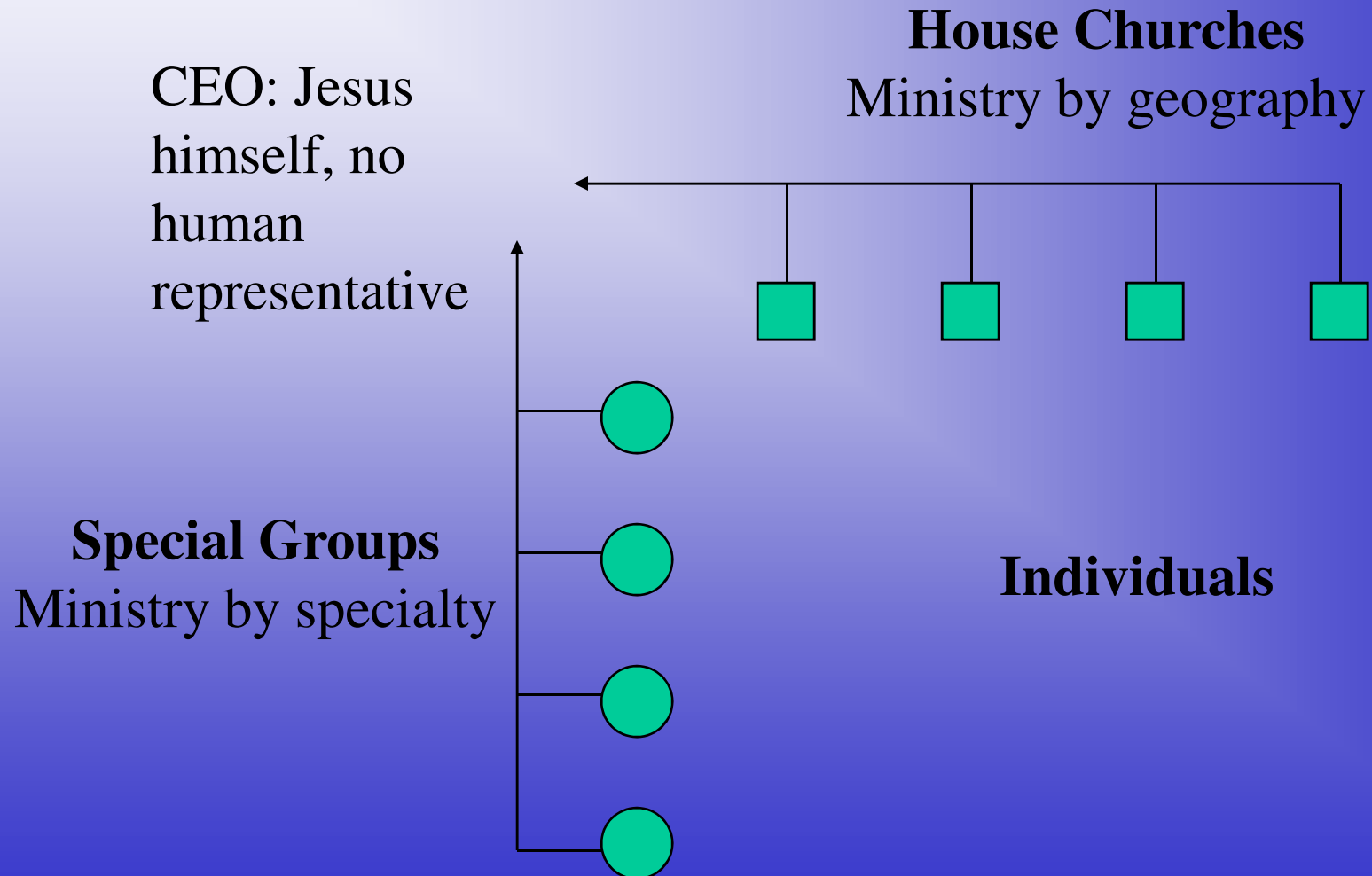
Case Study #2: Korean Christianity

- In 1884, both the Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Church appointed missionaries to Korea. The missionaries were quick to get involved in education and medical service. These two organizations started their work simultaneously in Korea, operating their missions side by side and cooperating substantially. They were two separate organizations, but had a large amount of relational unity.

- The early Protestant missionary work laid great stress on raising up indigenous leadership. This was in contrast to the Catholic church's hierarchical style of operation, which relied almost exclusively on distant Rome and wasn't quick to identify areas of need locally. "By 1910, in fact, Protestant missionaries had founded about 800 schools of various grades, accommodating over 41,000 students, which was about twice the total enrollment in all Korean government schools. It is not an exaggeration to claim that the church was in charge of the only complete educational system in Korea at the time--only the church provided education from primary to college level." By 1920 (~36 years), this combination of organizational diversity and relational unity yielded 200,000 Protestant Christians in Korea.

Case Study #3: African-American Christianity

- African American church gatherings were the only legally permitted assembly for blacks for centuries, and was of necessity organizationally diverse and relationally united. "Throughout history, the black church served not only as a place of worship but also as a community bulletin board, a credit union, a people's court to solve disputes, a support group, and a center of political activism."

  - In the abolitionist movement, black and white churches were the location of William Lloyd Garrison's efforts to educate African Americans during the abolitionist movement. Christian church buildings and households were coordinated in the Underground Railroad in the 30's until the Civil War.

  - The presence of the African American church can be felt in civil rights struggles, e.g. both sides of the Booker T. Washington – W.E.B. DuBois disagreement, the Niagara Movement in 1905, the formation of the NAACP in 1909, Nat'l Urban League in 1911, the Harlem Renaissance of black intellectuals and artists in the 1920's & 30's

  - Many parachurch groups spun out of the African American church during the Civil Rights Era of the 1950's & 60's (black colleges, CORE, SCLC, SNCC, etc.).

The Early Christian Church

- **RELATIONAL UNITY** & **ORGANIZATIONAL DIVERSITY**

House Churches
Ministry by geography

CEO: Jesus himself, no human representative

Special Groups
Ministry by specialty

Individuals

Organizational Diversity in the Early Church

- To Respond to Some Degree of Specialization
  - Apostles & Prophets
  - Widows (1 Tim.5:3-16)
  - Itinerant prophetic ministry (Didache)
  - Mercy (small informal house-hospitals)
  - Scholars of Scripture (Hebrew experts like Jerome, Origen, etc.)
  - Informal groupings of Christian soldiers in the Roman army
  - Teachers and theologians (councils)
- To Respond to New Demographic Awareness
  - Nationalities (Jew & Gentile), language groups
- To Imitate Secular Groups
  - Early church worship patterned after diaspora synagogue worship
- To Use Technology
  - Around facilities: homes, synagogues, schools
  - Around communication: amaneusis, scribe, Scripture-carrier
  - Around transportation: apostles and prophets
- To Respond to the Role of the Government
  - Unfortunately, the government seems to have provided a model for the church to steadily imitate.

Evidence of a Decentralized Organization

- Jesus' remark, "He who is not against you is for you."
- The apostles' way of managing themselves:
  - They do not give any evidence that they 'reported' to Simon Peter (they were not centrally organized). Simon Peter appears to be a spokesperson for, but not an authority over, the other apostles.
  - No central leader sends Barnabus and Paul out from Antioch; Barnabus and Paul part ways on their own discretion
  - Paul respects the other apostles as colleagues and checks on himself, but he doesn't refer to their formal authority over him
- The need for a council in Jerusalem and its decision making style
  - If a hierarchical organization was already in place, it would have been used in Acts 15, and the decision making process would have been hierarchical, not consensual.
- House church governance seems fairly decentralized
  - e.g. Romans 16, 1 Corinthians 16, Philippians, etc.
- Local elders (1 Timothy, Titus plus scattered references) are subject to the apostles (and on one occasion by extension the elders in Jerusalem; Acts 15:23), but otherwise work independently, respecting other churches.

Evidence of a Decentralized Organization

- The process of writing the NT Scriptures and its canonization
  - The apostles do not appear to have consulted each other before writing.
- The need for subsequent church councils in Nicea, Chalcedon, etc.
  - If a hierarchical organization was already in place, it would have been used, and the decision making process would have been hierarchical, not consensual.
- Later competition between Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch suggests that there was no clear understanding.
  - At the end of the sixth century, Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, denounced John the Faster (Patriarch of Constantinople) for his assumed title of "Universal Patriarch." In A.D. 606, Boniface III was proclaimed "Universal Bishop" over all the churches.

Relational Unity in the Early Church

- Corporate expressions of being one body
  - Table fellowship (eating together), communion (Luke, Gal.2:11-14)
  - Meeting in homes (vs. synagogues only) (Rom.16, 1 Cor.16)
  - Praising the other group and its members
    - "Now brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia…" (2 Cor.8:1)
    - "But concerning Apollos our brother…" (1 Cor.16:12)
  - Mentoring and teamwork across ethnic lines
    - "Luke, the beloved physician…" (mentored by Paul, e.g. Col.4:14)
- Sharing wealth & resources across human divisions
  - Gentiles giving to Jerusalem (Rom.15:27)
  - Paul's ministry to the Gentiles without support (1 Cor.9:15, 1 Th.2:9)
- Adjusting your cultural practices for the sake of others
  - Eating kosher foods or not (Rom.14-15)
  - Observing Jewish feasts or not (Col.2)
  - Eating meat sacrificed to idols or not (1 Cor.8-10)
- Doctrinal commitment & dialogue otherwise
  - "Unity in the essentials"
  - Some areas of difference: the end times, charismatic gifts

BUT, Growing Distinctions Around the Clergy

- Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* (first century, AD 57-58)
  - shows no awareness of a formal leadership structure (Rom.16)
- Ignatius' *Epistle to the Romans* (early second century, AD 110-120).
  - describes bishops as "representing" or "embodying" the local church
  - but does not address any centralized leadership structure at Rome
- Cyprian in North Africa (third century)
  - First to use the analogy of PRIEST:ISRAEL::CLERGY:CONGREGATION (clergy is greater than the congregation)
  - Opposite of Paul's analogy of PRIEST:TEMPLE::APOSTLES:CONGREGATION (1 Cor.9). (clergy is lesser than the congregation)
- Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* (fourth century)
  - Argues for apostolic succession from Peter in Rome and the conflation of the papacy and the emperor in Constantine

BUT, Growing Distinctions Around the Clergy

- Example – The Sacrament of Marriage: Who can do it?
  - In the early church, there was no formal marriage service. Neither episcopal blessing or benediction was necessary to validate marriages among the early Christians. We can only assume that marriage was witnessed and validated by the entire believing community, because not until the fifth century did an official benediction become a universal custom, and in the sixth century a special form of service became widely common. (Edwin Yamauchi, "Cultural Aspects of Marriage in the Ancient World," *Bibliotheca Sacra*)
  - This responsibility, originally left to the church community, was thus monopolized by the clergy.
- Can we find other examples? (e.g. baptism, communion, etc.)

# Led to a Growing Centralized Bureaucracy

- An Example: Pope Gregory the Great
  - When he became pope in AD 590, in the face of the insecure and unpredictable barbarian threat, Pope Gregory centralized the selection of church leadership (previously church leaders had been locally elected).
  - Financing, social welfare (hospitals), and education programs were also centralized.
  - Sacred actions, people, and times began to be reestablished.
  - It is not surprising that this bureaucratization of authority, jurisdiction, and administration occurred largely under Gregory, who had once been a secular bureaucrat: governor of Rome in AD 573. (Lewis Mumford. *The Condition of Man*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc. 1944. p.100-104)

However, 'Orders' Emerged in Medieval Roman Catholicism

- To Respond to Increased Specializations
  - Monasteries, Convents, and Orders
  - Guilds and Societies (secular medieval trades)
  - Hospitals
  - Artists
  - Confraternities and Brotherhoods (more recent; after 1840's sometimes suspiciously termed *extra ecclesia* due to potential bias against Irish)
- To Respond to New Demographic Awareness
  - Language groups, nationalities, classes
- To Imitate Secular Groups
  - Academies, schools and universities
- To Use New Technology
  - Around facilities: church-owned land & buildings, cathedrals
  - Around communication: writing and printing
  - Around transportation: knights, missionary orders
- To Respond to the Role of the Government
  - Concern for natural law, problem of usury, "Christian state," the "problem of outsiders," warfare

The Roman Catholic Church

- **ORGANIZATIONAL UNITY** & **ORGANIZATIONAL DIVERSITY**

Parishes
Ministry by geography

CEO: The Pope

Orders
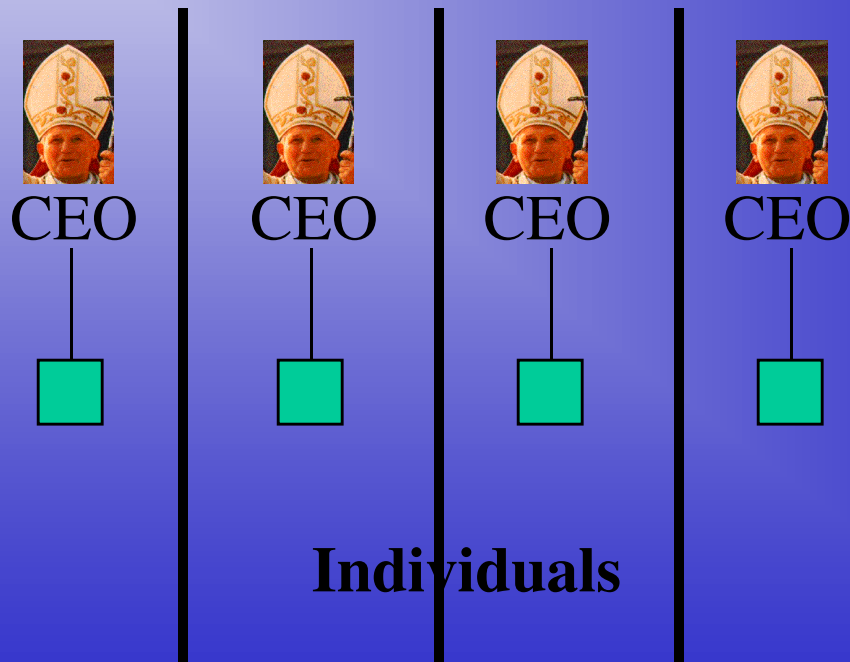Ministry by specialty

Individuals
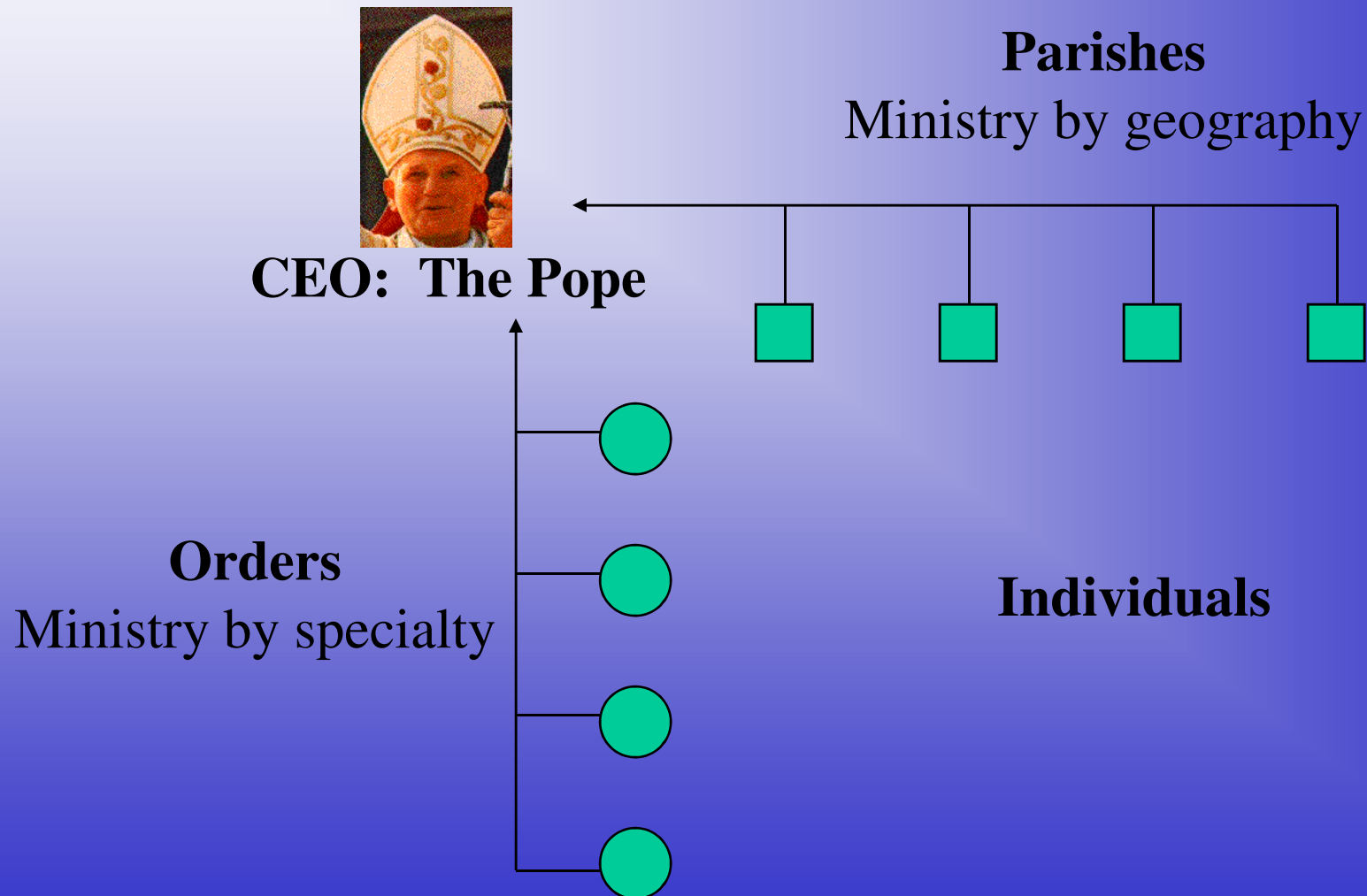
Magisterial (Mainline) Protestantism

- **ORGANIZATIONAL UNITY BROKEN** on the broad level but still **STRONGLY ENFORCED** on the local level; therefore for centuries Protestants had **LESS ORGANIZATIONAL DIVERSITY**

Parishes
Ministry by geography
"Local churches"

No Orders
No ministry by specialty

CEO CEO CEO CEO

Individuals

Magisterial (Mainline) Protestantism:
A Definition

- Does not include smaller Protestant groups like the Waldensians, Wycliffe, Huss, the Anabaptists
- Magisterial Protestants are called 'magisterial' because of their church-state alliances with magistrates and governments
  - Zwingli   Zurich
  - Calvin   Geneva
  - Luther   Germany
  - Vasa   Sweden
  - Knox   Scotland
  - Henry VIII   England

  (church-state symbioses very similar to Medieval Roman Church).

Magisterial (Mainline) Protestantism: Attitudes Towards Organizational Diversity

- Historically, mainline Protestant churches have had difficulties with organizational diversity because
  - (1) their local churches (parishes) perceived competition with each other
  - (2) their local churches (parishes) operated with no parachurches (orders)
  - (3) therefore, many still wanted one organization to do everything under one roof
  - (4) and they wanted a human person who represents Jesus' authority to run the show
    - the senior pastor at the local level
    - the executive at the denominational level
    - ideally, the Christian politician at the national level (remember that magisterial Protestants are into the church-state symbiosis!)

The Big Shift in Mainline Protestantism:

British Evangelicalism

Beginning in 1689 with the English Bill of Rights and the Toleration Act

Organizational Diversity: Britain & Europe

- Wesley's Methodist revival (1700's)
- Attempts to reform worship and liturgy
    - Oxford movement in England (1833)
- Creating missionary societies
    - Society of Foreign Missions - Catholics train native clergy (1663)
    - Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, British (1701)
    - London Missionary Society (1795)
    - Society of the Missionaries of France (1815)
    - Pious Society of Missions (1835)
- Social ministries targeting urban and industrial problems like alcoholism, desertion, vagrancy, child abuse
    - Clapham Society (1780): London evangelicals seeking abolition & settling blacks in Sierra Leone (abolition accomplished in British parts in 1833)
    - Society of Saint Vincent DePaul (1830's) in Paris

Organizational Diversity: British Evangelicals

- "Ours is the age of societies. For the redress of every oppression there is a public meeting. For the cure of every sorrow there are patrons, vice-presidents and secretaries. For the diffusion of every blessing of which mankind can partake in common, there is a committee."
  - Sir James Stephen, 1849, commenting on the Evangelical Revival, in what became a very popular and oft-quoted article

- In Britain, from roughly the year 1700 to the founding of the YMCA in 1854, the list of hospitals and medical charities, together with the list of religious, moral, educational, and philanthropic associations, spans 11 pages of very small text! (Ford K. Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians*. Cambridge, 1961, p.329-340)

Organizational Diversity: Slower in the U.S.

- Interdenominational movements, not incorporated
    - Prayer Meeting Movement in NYC (1850): by 6 months it had 10,000 participants; eventually credited with adding 500,000 new members to the city's churches
    - Abolitionism
- Interdenominational groups
    - American Tract Society (1823)
    - American Sunday School Union (1824)
    - American Education Society (1826)
    - American Temperance Union (1836)
- Interdenominational groups targeting urban and industrial problems (alcoholism, desertion, vagrancy, child abuse)
    - Women's Christian Temperance Union (1874)
    - Anti-Saloon League (1895)
    - YMCA (1844 from Britain)
        - grew from 10,000 volunteers at the Civil War; 263,000 by 1895; 720,000 by World War I

Organizational Diversity:
Let's Compare Britain and the U.S.

- Evangelicalism in Britain
  - British pragmatic, corporatist culture allowed for diversity of organizations both secular (e.g. East India Company) and religious.
  - Britain's historically earlier loosening of state and church (1689) influenced British evangelicalism in 3 ways:
    - *Spirituality*: Britain's evangelical revival in the 1700's; Methodist movement; strong interest in global missions
    - *Response to Social Conditions*: British evangelicals' political flexibility allowed for a more aggressive urban ministry to counter the ravages of the Industrial Revolution, slavery, etc.
    - *Scholarship*: Better historical New Testament scholarship at secular British universities emerged while Continental scholars attending seminaries under denominational control were stymied in higher criticism and pseudo-pastoral concerns. British scholars also responded to the challenges of the secular university concerning the Bible's historicity. (see also Ford, *The Modern Theologians*)
      - Sir William Ramsay's biblical archaeology in the early 1900's overturned consensus that the NT is historically inaccurate.
      - N.T. Wright in 1990's emerges as probably the leading 'historical Jesus' and 'theology of Paul' scholars

Organizational Diversity:
Let's Compare Britain and the U.S.

- White Evangelicalism in United States
  - Until World War II, denominationalism and fundamentalism affected white American:
    - *Spirituality*: Perhaps overly pragmatic, non-intellectual. Oriented around cultural preservation (school prayer, inerrancy of Scripture, creation vs. evolution) and preserving American mythology of being God's chosen nation
    - *Response to Social Conditions*: Very slow to address racism. Very slow to recognize urban problems because rural and suburban white congregations weren't directly affected by them.
    - *Scholarship*: Princeton, etc. focused on inerrancy of Scripture and creation vs. evolution debate
  - After World War II, white churches started to rapidly lose clarity into their own approach to politics and thus their political clout. Parachurch movements then swelled and major changes in American religious life (evangelical or otherwise) started to appear (see Wuthnow).

Organizational Diversity:
Let's Compare Britain and the U.S.

- The African American Church
  - African American church gatherings were the only legally permitted assembly for blacks for centuries. Tendency to be more fluid and informal. Thus, while this makes it challenging to get a thoroughly documented history of African American church and parachurch activity, there is evidence that: African American churches were organizationally diverse to address pressing spiritual, social, and political issues.
  - As evidence, the presence of the African American church can be felt in civil rights struggles, e.g. both sides of the Booker T. Washington – W.E.B. DuBois disagreement, the Niagara Movement in 1905, the formation of the NAACP in 1909, Nat'l Urban League in 1911, the Harlem Renaissance of black intellectuals and artists in the 1920's & 30's
  - The leadership role of black churches in the movement was a natural extension of their structure and function. Throughout history, the black church served not only as a place of worship but also as a community bulletin board, a credit union, a people's court to solve disputes, a support group, and a center of political activism.
  - Many parachurch groups spun out of the African American church during the Civil Rights Era of the 1950's & 60's (black colleges, CORE, SCLC, SNCC, etc.).

Organizational Diversity:
Let's Compare Britain and the U.S.

- Evangelicalism in Britain was vibrant, responsive to a wide range of issues, flexible and fresh in its approaches.

- White Evangelicalism in the United States was slow in its responses to the world, fixated on a few issues, rigid and convention-bound in its approaches.

- The determining factor was organizational diversity earlier in Britain's Evangelical movement.
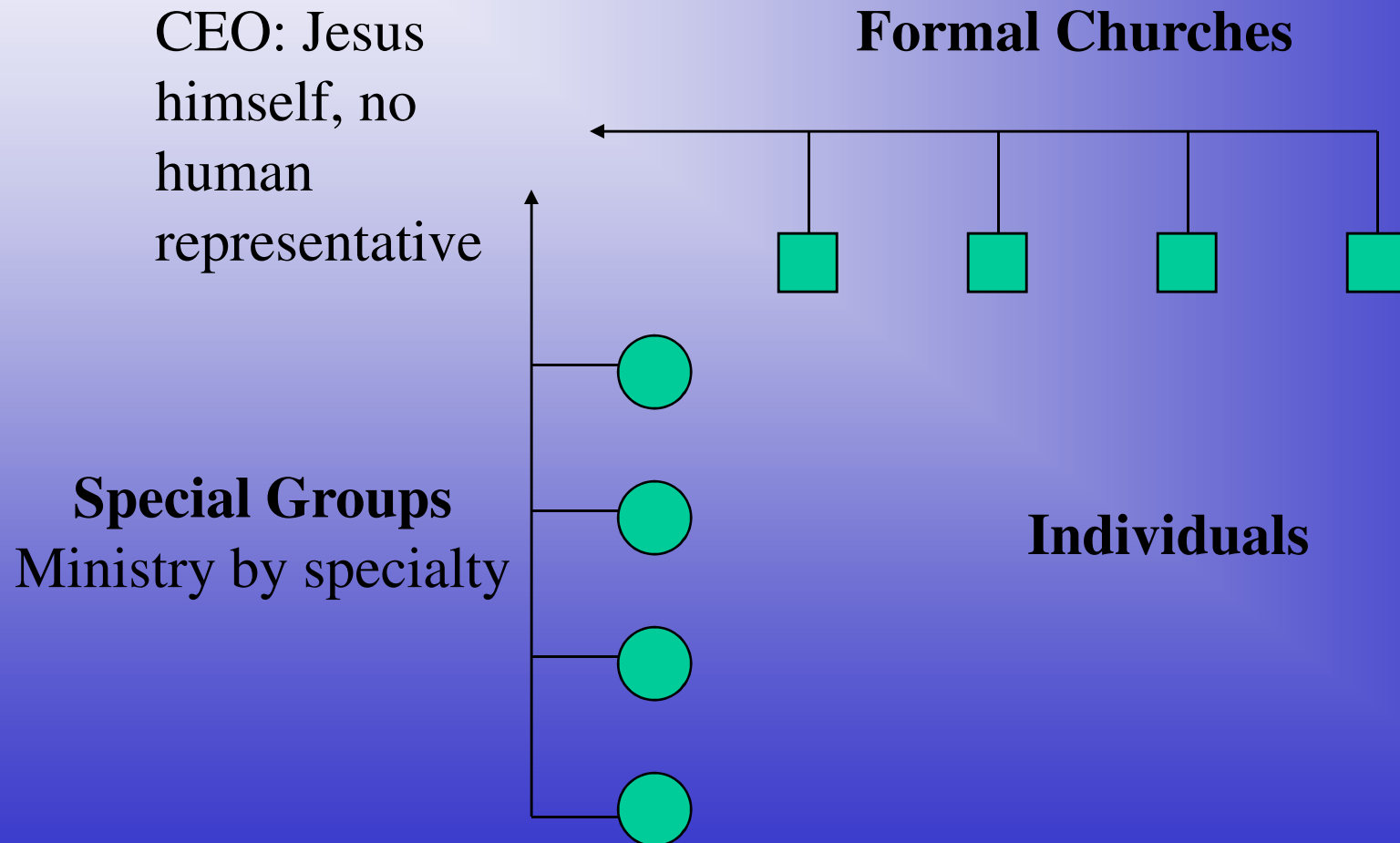
Some Surprising Observations

- Historically, there is some basis for saying that having very centralized churches leads to low spiritual and intellectual vitality of the Christian community, broadly speaking.

- Or, centralized church power and effective spirituality have been inversely related.

Some Surprising Observations

- Accountability for doctrine and practice is always a concern. But accountability through hierarchy seems to be at least as problem-generating as it is problem-solving.

- Organizational diversity, relational unity, common commitment to the apostles' teaching, and open dialogue concerning Scripture seem to have been the course of the early church.

Where We Are Now

- **ORGANIZATIONAL DIVERSITY**
- **RELATIONAL UNITY???**

CEO: Jesus himself, no human representative

Formal Churches

Special Groups
Ministry by specialty

Individuals

What about having both ethnic specific and multi-ethnic ministry?

Ethnic-Specific & Multi-Ethnic Ministry

- Is just one example of organizational diversity which, if this assessment is correct, is not just tolerable: It is God's desire for the body of Christ!

- To make this diversity healthy on campus and in InterVarsity, and in the wider church, you need relational unity

Relational Unity on Campus, in Church

- Corporate expressions of being one body
  - Friendship and table fellowship (eating together)
  - Praising the other group and its members
  - Common commitment and teamwork across organizational lines
  - Mentoring across organizational lines
- Sharing wealth & resources across organizational lines
  - Who needs assistance?
  - What can I give that is valuable?
- Adjusting cultural practices for the sake of others
  - Learning about history and culture
  - Making attempts to understand
  - Allowing your career goals to be affected by the needs of different communities
- Doctrinal commitment & dialogue
  - Unity in the essentials
  - Mutual attempts to understand
  - Openness to hear concerns from each other
  - Question one's own traditions
- Take the long view
  - Today's As-Am and Black fellowships are becoming multi-ethnic themselves