

One Church.

In Dialogue with the Bride of Christ

#TMHOneChurch 

Week 2: Arabic (with Ashoor Yousif)

ARABIC CHRISTIANS – Ethnic Church / Kingdom Values

Origin of Christianity in Middle East:

1. Nativity (Matthew 2:1-12): The wise men of the East.
2. Pentecost (Acts 2:5-11): People from Mesopotamia, Persian, Egypt, Libya, and Arabia.
3. Early Missions (Acts 8, 9, 11):
 - a. Philip in Samaria. Philip with the Ethiopian.
 - b. Church in Damascus and Antioch.
4. Paul in Arabia (Galatians 1:17): Possibly the east/southeast desert of Jordan and Syria.

Contributions of Middle Eastern Churches in the West:

1. Unique Mission: Reaching and caring for a distinguished segment of society
2. Unique Opportunity: Representing and reflecting the Middle Eastern culture
3. Unique Contribution: Training and teaching Westerners

Challenges of Middle Eastern Churches in the West:

1. Resources: Usually small churches
2. Cultural Differences: Inter-generational differences.
3. Mission Field: Large but scattered field of mission.
4. Intertwined Identity: Religious, cultural, family identities are intertwined

A DIFFERENT TAKE ON – Leadership & Gender

Complimentarianism...

The distinction is only in the office of Elders (authoritative teaching and leadership). All other offices and context are open for both genders.

1. Biblical Argument:
 - No absolute teaching in support of female leadership in Biblical text .
 - Biblical teaching on male/female roles (1 Cor. 11:2-16, 14:33-36; 1 Tim. 2:11-15).
2. Historical Argument:
 - No absolute examples of female leadership in Biblical text and historical sources.
 - Church practice of male leadership throughout its history.
3. Cultural Argument:
 - The challenge of Middle Eastern context.

Note on Egalitarianism (What the Brethren In Christ believe)...

We believe that men and women are gifted and called by God to serve equally in the church – as equally as are Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free (**Galatians 3:28**). New Testament restrictions are seen as strategic concessions to help advance the gospel at that time, similar to head-coverings and slavery, but not God's ideal for all time. (**Luke 10:38-42; Acts 2:17-18; 1 Corinthians 11:11-12; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Galatians 3:28; 1 Timothy 2:11-14**)

LOOK TO THE BOOK – Authentic Practical Love

The Command: Love your neighbour (Luke 10:27)

- Love is sign of faith (1 John 2, 3, 4)
- Love is a part of Kingdom ethics (Matt 5:43-48)
- Love is the requirement of serving (1 Cor 13)
- Love through serving the outcast and needy (Is. 58:7, Mt 25:34-46)

The Method: Hospitality (Hebrews 13:2)

- Show hospitality (Abraham: Gen 19:1-38; Rahab: Josh 2:1-16; Zacchaeus: Luke 19:1-19)
- Accept hospitality (God/The Angle of God: Gen 19:1-38; Joshua & Caleb: Josh 2:1-16; Jesus: Luke 19:1-19)

The Principle: Paul's practical suggestions for (1 Cor 8-10)

1. Seek what builds up (1 Cor 8:1)
2. Stop what stumbles (1 Cor 8:9, 13)
3. Give up your rights (1 Cor 9:12b, 15)
4. Restrain yourself (1 Cor 9:19)
5. Humble yourself (1 Cor 10:12)
6. Avoid sin (1 Cor 10:14)
7. Practice what is beneficial (1 Cor 10:23)
8. Glorify God (1 Cor 10:31)
9. Aim for the goodness of others (1 Cor 10:33)
10. Follow the example of Christ (1 Cor 11:1)

TAKE OUT – I'll Have One Gospel To Go Please

NEXT WEEK... *One Church #3: Christian Reformed (with Henry Wildeboer)*



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Home Church Questions...

BEFORE YOU COME...

To get the most out of this week's discussion, become familiar with **1 Corinthians 8-10**. Write down observations, lessons, and lingering questions. We will only be focussing on **chapter 10** at home church, but these three chapters form a cohesive argument in favour of *other-centred ethics*.

HANGOUT [Warming Up to the Topic]

1. What was your denominational background (if any) prior to being a part of The Meeting House? What strengths do you carry with you from that experience?

HEAR [Listening to God through Scripture]

2. Read **1 Corinthians 10**.
 - a. What stands out to you as you read this passage through?
 - b. Paul says that the Hebrew story was written down for us to learn from (**verses 6 and 11**). He also points out four key things for us to avoid: idolatry, sexual immorality (from the Greek word *porneia*, referring to sexual activity outside of marriage), testing Christ (the context suggests taking the attitude of seeing how far we can go our own way before we are held accountable by God), and grumbling (that is, the opposite of an attitude of gratitude). For each point, name some examples of ways our culture tolerates, even normalizes, these things today. How have you seen examples of church culture following the way of worldly culture rather than the way of the Kingdom?
 - c. Paul speaks of "one loaf" (of bread used in the Eucharist) and one body (of Christ, the Church). Brainstorm: What lessons about church unity can we draw from these images?
 - d. Three excuses people often use when they sin are, "You don't understand what it's like for me – my temptation is more powerful than other people" and "I had to do it – that temptation was just too powerful for me to resist" and "I had no choice – there was no other option." How does Paul address these excuses in **verse 13**?
 - e. In **verses 23-24 and 33**, Paul summarizes the ethical attitude of a Christ-follower. This love ethic is very different than what our culture embraces as normal. Talk about practical examples of what it looks like to live this out (think of what is espoused in politics, entertainment, and among your friends).

HUDDLE [Making It Personal and Praying Together]

3. Read **1 Corinthians 11:1**. Who do you look to in your life as an example or mentor to help you follow Christ? Who do you play that role for? Are there any changes you feel you should make in this area of your life?
4. This text has raised issues of idolatry, sexual immorality, unthankful attitudes, church unity, excuses for sin, and the ethical attitude of a Christ-follower (not doing what we have the "right" to do, but what is most beneficial to others), and mentorship. What has God been saying to you from this text about your life? Which of those areas do you find most challenging in your life? How can your huddle support and challenge each other to grow in these areas?
5. Read **1 Corinthians 10:31**. All we do is ultimately for God, for his "glory", to honour him out of gratitude. How might your day be different if you consciously made decisions with the glory of God in mind? Talk about examples from this past week. What can you do to aim to cultivate this conscious attitude in decision-making this coming week?

Quotes...

How did the Gospel spread from Jews to Arabs early in Church history? What distinctives have Arab Christians developed? What challenges face the Arab Christian community today?

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, **Magi from the east** came to Jerusalem.

~ The Gospel of Matthew

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹... Cretans and **Arabs**— we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

~ Luke the Historian, in the Acts of the Apostles

I did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went into **Arabia**.

~ The Apostle Paul, to the Churches in Galatia