Core Discipleship Session Notes

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Where did the term Christianity Come from? (Acts 11:26)

Fundamentals

A Christian is a follower and disciple of Jesus - a person who live
the very centre of their identity and existence.
This is a dynamic growing experience and not a stagnant static c
Every Christian is actually in the process of becoming more Chri
Becoming Christian.

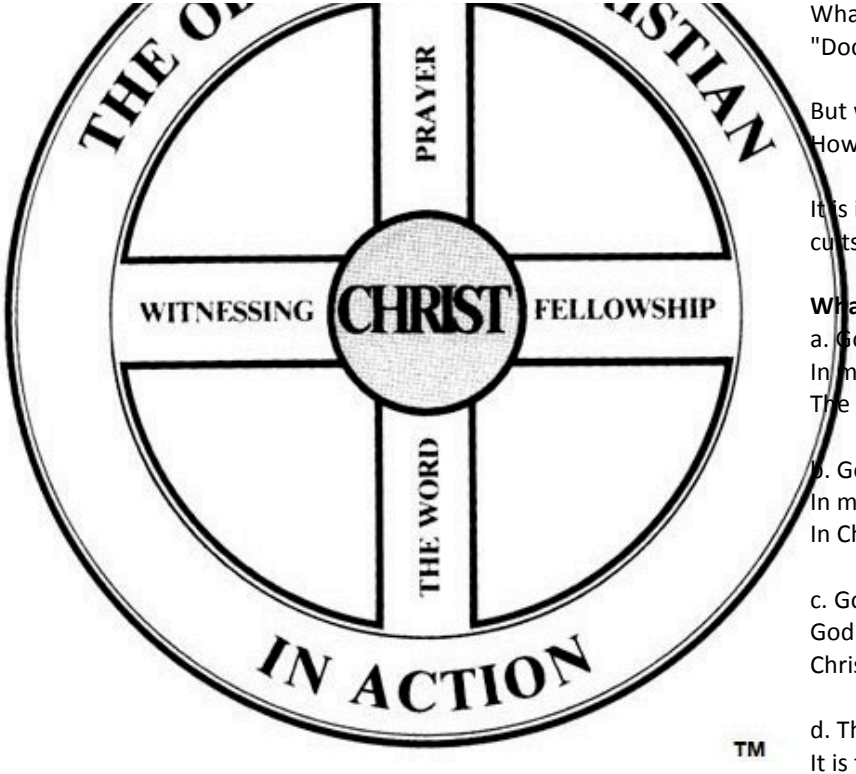
Christianity is not just a religion with a set of morals, ethics and
is a relationship with God.

Christianity is, therefore, a movement by which people come in
and allegiance with God as the centre of their lives.

It is not an individualistic approach but a movement of an entire

The entire purpose of Christianity is based on discipling people
to:

a) The Great Commandment: "Love the Lord Your God with al
with all your soul and with your mind and with all your stre
b) The Second Commandment: "Love your neighbour as your
c) The New Commandment: "Love one another."[3]
d) And the Great Commission: "All authority in heaven and or
given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations
in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the
teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
with you always, to the very end of the age."[4]



What comes to mind when you hear the words "Belief," "Theolo
"Doctrine?"

But what we believe and how we live is not always congruent.
How do you struggle in this?

It is important to know what you believe and why in light of oth
cults, philosophies and world-views.

What makes Christianity different from other religions?
a. God Loves Us
In most other religions their deity does not necessarily love ther
The death of Jesus on the cross for us is the evidence of God's lo

b. God Saves Us - We Can't Save Ourselves
In most other religions good works are seen as a way to salvatio
In Christianity, our relationship with God transforms us to do go

c. God is Triune.
God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Christianity is the only religion that recognizes God as three and

d. The Bible is primary source to knowing God.
It is the tangible source of knowing God.

Ethics of the Kingdom
The behavioural change in the Christian life is a result of system
It is a new way of life. Eg. Accountant to Farmer
Maturity is a gradual ongoing experience of the Christian life.

mysteries of God.

The Bible
The Bible is the Word of God and contains all we can know for sure about Him. It is the final word on how we are to live.[5]

The Triune God
God is three and one: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Not three gods, but one God and three persons. There's nothing that exists that has this same nature so it's hard to grasp. This is supported in the Bible and not merely a traditional belief. This understanding of God has very deep spiritual implications.[6]

Jesus
Jesus is God who became a man to live on earth among us in history so that we might know him. Moreover, we crucified him but his death was no victory for darkness; it was the way through which he sacrificed himself to pay for all our sins through all time. After three days, he emerged from death to life, revealing his divine nature. He was seen by many after his resurrection and was taken up into heaven. He promised to return again, but this time not merely as saviour of the world but also its judge. He has always kept his promises.[7]

The Holy Spirit
The Holy Spirit is God. He's invisible and works in the hearts of people to turn us towards God. We can resist and ignore his voice. For those who acknowledge him through trusting and believing Jesus, he gives power to understand and live the life God calls us to. He empowers the Church to carry out Jesus' mission in the world.[8]

Salvation
Jesus died for our sins. He paid the price so we can be free from the ju
of our sin. Only by believing this, humbly confessing our sin and accep
place can our relationships with God be restored.[10]

Christian Living
By the help of the Holy Spirit, we are to humbly and courageously follo
has taught us and grow more and more to adopt the values and practic
to.[11]

The Church
The Church is a people, not a place or an organization. It consists of all
follow Jesus and call him Lord and Saviour. It is expressed practically th
local churches, each working as a part of the greater body to serve and
Every believer lives out their relationship with God through a local chu

Rites of the Church
Jesus asks us to do two symbolic things as a Church. One is to baptize
to conduct the Lord's Supper (sometimes also referred to as Eucharist
Communion). Baptism is the rite of entering into relationship with Goc
the Church. Holy Communion is the rite of continuing relationship with
Church. Every Christian is to observe these two rites.[13]

Grace & Destiny
In the end everyone will be resurrected to face God. Those who have t
sin and committed their lives to Jesus by trusting and accepting his pro
will be blessed and be in relationship with him both in this life and the
Those who have not will face the terrible consequence of being separa
this life and the next.[14]

[9] Gen 1:26-27; 2:17; 5:1; Col 3:10; Eph 2:1-5, 12; 2:8-9; Rom 3:23
[10] Heb 2:17; 7:27; 9:12; 10:10; 1 Jn 2:2; 4:10; Eph 1:7; Rom 5:1-2,9; 10:9; 2 Tim 1:12; Tit 3
[11] Rom 6:5-14; 12:1-2; 1 Pet 2:2-3; 2 Pet 3:18; Col 2:6-7; 1 Cor 3:12-13

(b) We believe in one God, the Creator of all things, who exists eternally in three distinct persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—co-substantial in being, co-eternal in nature, co-equal in power and glory, and possessing the same perfections.[16]

(c) We believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He became flesh to reveal God to the world and to become the Saviour of lost humanity. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless human life, and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all by dying on the cross. He arose from the dead in bodily form after three days demonstrating his power over sin and death. He ascended into heaven where he is the only Mediator between God and humanity. All authority has been given to him, and he will personally return again to earth at a time known only to the Father to fully establish his kingdom and exercise his role as Judge of all.[17]

(d) We believe the Holy Spirit is present in the world to convict people of their sin and their need for salvation through Jesus Christ. He also dwells in every Christian and provides them with power for godly living, understanding of spiritual truth, and ability to produce spiritual fruit. He gives spiritual gifts to individuals in the Church for its edification and its mission.[18]

(e) We believe that humanity was created in the image of God to have fellowship with him but became alienated in that relationship through sinful disobedience. As a result, humanity is incapable of regaining a right relationship with God through its own effort by self-improvement or good works.[19]

God, every believer is to continually mature and be conformed
Christ.[21]

(h) We believe that the Church is the body of Christ, of which Jesus
The members of the Church are those who have trusted in the
Christ through faith and have been regenerated by the Holy Spiri
the Church is to glorify God by loving him and by making him k
world.[22]

(i) We believe Christ instituted the ordinances of baptism and the Lo
of which are to be observed by the believers until he returns. V
initiatory rite of baptism a believer is personally and publicly ide
in his death and resurrection. We believe the Lord's Supper is a
remembrance of Christ's sacrificial death, a celebration of his pres
of continued communion with him. The elements of the bread an
of his body and blood. These ordinances are not regarded
salvation.[23]

(j) We believe that at the bodily resurrection from the dead, those
to God in repentance and received salvation through Jesus Chri
eternal blessedness and joy with him in heaven. Those who ha
Christ will face eternal and conscious judgment in hell, the conc
complete separation from God.[24]

[15] 2 Tim 3:16; Dt 8:3; Mt 5:17; Jn 10:34-35; Jn 17:17

[16] Dt 4:35; 6:4; Jas 2:19; Gen 1:1, 26; Ps 90:2; Ex 3:14; Isa 43:13; Gen 21:33; Isa 48:16; Mt 3:16-17; Dt 32:4

[17] Isa 7:14; 9:22, 28; Lk 22:70; Jn 1:1, 14; 5:16-23; 10:30; 14:9-10; Phil 2:6-7; 1 Tim 2:5; 2 Tim 4:1;

[18] Heb 2:17; 7:27; 9:12; 10:10; 1 Jn 2:2; 4:10; Eph 1:7; Rom 5:1-2,9; 10:9; 2 Tim

How the Bible was put together

The primary **approach** was not to "create" or cobble together a sacred text, but to recognize what was already given as God's revelation to humanity. In other words, what can we identify under the authority of the Holy Spirit to be given by God? What does he want us to know about him?

By the time of Jesus, the **Old Testament** had already been accepted by the Jewish people as sacred text. A Greek version of the Old Testament called the Septuagint was also already in use. Christians accept the same Old Testament text as Jews although the books are ordered and arranged differently.

The **New Testament** was used throughout the first three centuries, but in the third Century (331 A.D.) Emperor Constantine ordered that 50 copies of the Bible be prepared, a task that fell to Eusebius. Being most well versed and respected as a Bible scholar, he listed accepted, disputed and rejected material. The criteria of the books were that they had to be Apostolic, Orthodox, Catholic and Nurturing. Of those 50 Bibles, none survived except possibly Codex Sinaticus and Vaticanus as suggested by certain scholars. The Bible as we know it was accepted at the Synod of Hippo in 393.

The Apocrypha/ Deutero-canonical Material

Apocrypha means "hidden/secret" and is coined by Jerome.

It is a series of writings that are not a part of the Jewish Scriptures but were written within the Jewish tradition between 200 BC and 200 AD.

The apocrypha came about when Jerome translated the Bible into Latin (the Vulgate) in 382 AD as they are found in the Septuagint.

Jerome himself rejected the additions as apocrypha.

Protestants consider and arrange these 14 books as apocryphal.

The Roman Catholic Church accepts most of these into the canon while the Orthodox Church accepts other portions, some overlapping.

Paraphrase Translations: Focuses on conveying the original idea contemporary language and images. Good for young Christ reading or children.

Dynamic Equivalents: A balance between the literal and the par good all round pick.

Recommended English versions:

ESV, NASB, NRSV (study) NIV (general) CEV, NLT (read

Although not recommended the KJV or Authorized Version has

What do we do with the Bible?

Hearing - Radio, recordings, sermons.

Reading - Taking the time to read for yourself what the text says

Studying - Looking at truly understanding the text for what it ac

Memorizing - The discipline that allows significant passages to b

Meditating - Reflecting on parts of the Scriptures and how it app

Applying - Doing what the Bible teaches you to in practice and p

Spirituality

The Scriptures are not just for information but formation by the

Lectio Divina being the primary method of Bile reading.

Questions

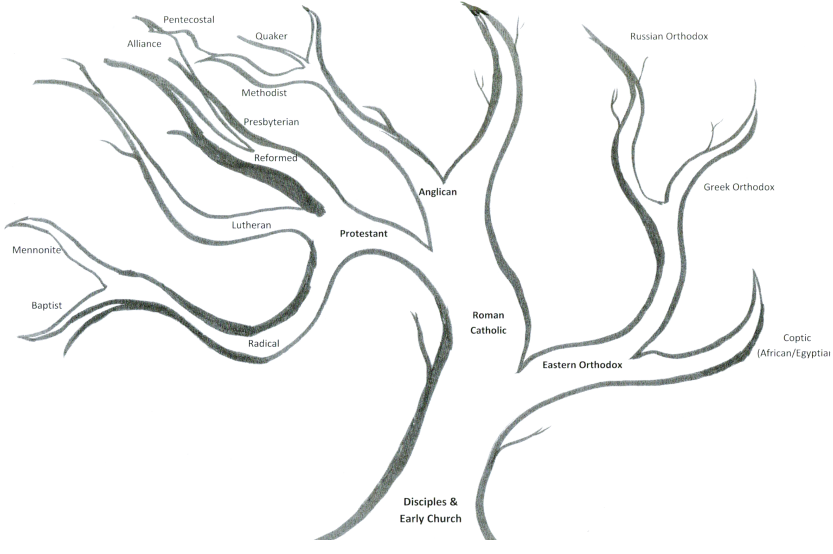
Do you have a Bible you can read and understand?

Do you know where to start reading?

The Holy Roman Empire
The Schism between East & West
- Catholicism
  - Vatican 2
- Orthodox

Anglicanism
The Reformation & Protestantism
- Three Branches of Protestantism
  - Lutherans
  - Reformed
  - Radical

Division & Unity
Tradition vs. Conviction



1 Timothy 3:1-13; 5:17-21
Issue of Power and Authority in relationships
A call to humility, service and empowerment
Episcopalian -- Presbyterian -- Congregational

F3C uses the Presbyterian model

Questions
What has been your experience of the church?
What does it mean for us to be the church?

world and that his rule will be established.
A Christian is one who says, "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done."
The gospel is received by realigning your allegiance from yourself and the world to Jesus.

What Was Jesus' Mission?
To reveal the Kingdom through his words and actions. This began with his teaching and signs but culminates with his death, resurrection and ascension.

How does salvation come to a person? (Romans 10:13-15)
Through action and proclamation of others.
One must see the kingdom alive in the lives of others and also hear about what they must do.

What is Salvation?
What are we being saved from?
Some forms of Evangelicalism influenced by revivalist history
Pilgrimage as model
Regeneration - Justification - Sanctification – Glorification
Process of having been saved (past), being saved (present) and will be saved (future).
Dimensions of Salvation - Confession, Faith, Commitment

Salvation is about systemic change, transformation and redemption.
It is the means by which we participate in the Kingdom of God.

Truth & Error regarding Faith, Works & Salvation
Works => Salvation
Faith => Salvation
Faith + Works => Salvation

How does a person enter the Kingdom?
Acknowledge Jesus as Lord & Saviour.
Sorry, Please, Thanks.
Disciple – friendship, relationship, connect to a local church.
Be a disciple of Jesus yourself.
The medium is the message.

Questions
If you are a Christian, how did you become a Christian and why Christian?
If you are not a Christian, questions do you have?
Who are you praying for?

At the same time people look for benefits without commitment. (2Tim 4:3) Some expect people in the church to be perfect and are the
disappointed when they are not.
Willingness to communicate and understand versus holding
expectations and making assumptions is paramount.
Become a member of a local church.

What is the Mission/Purpose of the Church? (Matthew 28:19-20)

"It's not so much that the church has a mission, it's that the mission of God has a church." – Alan Hirsch

The primary mission of the Church is to make disciples – to call people to follow Jesus. (Discipling, Baptizing, Teaching, Obedience)
This is accomplished through many means in which a community draws each other and others closer into relationship with Jesus.
It exists to declare and embody the Kingdom of God.

What is the Church?

Universal & Local Church

The Church is God's people, not a place or an organization.
The Church consists of every person to whom Jesus is Lord and Saviour.
The local church is a practical and localized expression of the Kingdom.
God is worshipped in time rather than mere space (Sabbath).
We are all a part of the universal (catholic) church in concept but must belong to a local church as a matter of living out a practical faith.

Visible and Invisible Church

The physical structure or what is seen may not be the true church.
The church must spend time with each other.
The basic building blocks of the church are in missional living, family devotion, spiritual friendships and discipling relationships.
There are many different ways in which to do church although the purposes are the same.
Different styles of worship, programs, values, outreach but same purpose.
There is a balance between contemplative and active spirituality.
F3C has a very unique set of values and practices.
Two practices almost every church practices are baptism and communion.
When a church places its self-preservation above the mission of God, it

Faith Community Christian Church

We hold to 4 values in particular as a Christian Community:

1. Missional Discipleship
2. Authentic & Intimate Relationships
3. A Community of empowerment & accountability through C and Apprenticeship
4. Embracing Diversity

Ordinances

A Christian Participates in Two Sacraments/Rites/Ordinances as commitment to and faith in Jesus:

Baptism – The rite of acceptance into the people of God and the
Infant Baptism
Adult Baptism
Immersion
Sprinkling
F3C's policy and acceptance of forms

Communion – The rite of continued membership/fellowship am of God and the Kingdom.
Roman Catholic Transubstantiation understood but not acc
Lutheran perspective of "within" the elements.
Reformed perspective of "with."
Zwinglian perspective of symbolic representation.

God's Covenantal Kingdom Community

communication.
Prayer is fundamentally living with God.
The practice of the presence of God (Brother Lawrence)is one of the best examples of a life of prayer.
It is the very centre of the spiritual life.

Why Pray?
It is God who calls us to pray.
The secret of prayer that we have lost in our rational society is that there are some things that cannot change without prayer.
God actually entrust to each of us a ministry of prayer.
When we pray, something happens.
When we do not pray, we are on our own.
[Illustration - College Prayer Group]
We are to be active not passive.
We are to pray the kingdom come.
God makes it so that when we pray, something happens.
It's more art than science but it works.
It is closer to miracle than anything else.

How do you learn to pray?
Prayer is an Art that is learned.
We learn by observing and then practicing.
The prayers of the Bible and the Psalms are the primary source of learning.
Other traditional and historic prayers can be helpful.
You learn to pray by simply praying.
Pray as you can, not as you can't. - In other words, be authentic.
We are most ourselves when we truly pray.

We can feel, see and sense through words, pictures and feelings
Scripture remains the primary guide to prayer.

Individual Prayer
The dimension of personal prayer reveals the reality and depth
relationship with God.
Intimacy with God.

Corporate Prayer
We begin to learn prayer in a communal setting.
Prayer is never to be restricted to being personal.
In fact, without corporate prayer, one's spiritual life with God is
Corporate prayer reveals the reality and depth of relationship w
We learn to trust others in prayer.
Corporate prayer can be the most intimate thing you can do wit
person.

Appendix: Prayers to Learn
The Lord's Prayer - Matthew 6:9-13

The Psalms:
Psalm 139 - Authenticity
Psalm 51 - Confession
Psalm 25 - Help
Psalm 103 - Praise

The Magnificat - Luke 1:46-55

Blessing - Ephesians 3:14-21

3. You cannot serve both God and *Mammon* (Money)
4. Trust & Truthfulness will bring Freedom, Integrity and Conter

Practices:
1. Tithing (Leviticus 27:30-32; Numbers 18:20-30)
2. Generosity in Material Things
3. Fairness & Honesty in Business, Trade & Economy
4. Simplicity vs. Coveting & Consumerism

Issues:
Taxes, Wages, Employee and Employer, Saving, Investing, Charit
Business Ethics, Endowment, Debt, Lending, Tithing, Gambling

The Devoted Life

Following Jesus and making Lord and Savior is not merely a cognitive decision.
There are four primary daily realities to the Christian Life. [Recommended Reading: Richard Foster, *The Challenge of the D*
1. Communing with God daily through Prayer
2. Reading the Bible regularly and consistently and studying it to understand it.
3. Living in Community through a local church.
4. Sharing the message of God's Kingdom with everyone around you and inviting them into that kingdom.

Christian Morality & Ethics

These are standards not to judge unbelievers but for those who follow Jesus.
Those who truly follow Jesus undergo a change of values and perspective.
We understand this as a matter of pilgrimage and process.
It is also a matter of obedience to Christ - He is either Lord of all or not at all.
It is in protracted disobedience that one loses their way.
All ethics are to be derived from the Scriptures as best as we can understand.
They function with a Biblical understanding of "Righteousness" which is based on good relationships and the way we treat people.
The Ten Commandments are the backbone of the OT. (Exodus 20)
The Sermon on the Mount is the Moral Expression of Jesus' Teaching

3. Marriage - A lifelong companion of the opposite sex

Practices:
1. Honoring the Opposite Sex
2. Comfortable & Conversant regarding Sexuality
3. Chastity before Marriage
4. Faithfulness in Marriage

Issues:
Singleness, Family, Sexual Education, Homosexuality, Transexuality, Promiscuity, Cohabitation, Divorce & Remarriage, Pornography, Prostitution, Abortion

3. We are to value every person the way God values them
4. Mercy & Justice

Practices:
1. Friendship
2. Hospitality
3. Protecting the Weak & Powerless
4. Service

Issues:
Euthanasia, Suicide, Capital Punishment, Politics, Partiality, Fair Governance, Hierarchy, War, Pacifism, Forgiveness & Reconcilia Complacency, Activism, Social Disobedience, Citizenship, Addict

Who is the Spirit?
The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity.
The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force.
The Holy Spirit is a Person.

Listening to God
There are many ways God speaks to us.
It is basically about paying attention/attentiveness.