A stylized, textured illustration of a church interior. In the foreground, a large crowd of people is seen from behind, looking towards a stage. On the stage, a band is performing, including a guitarist, a bassist, a drummer, and a singer. The church has a high ceiling with a large, glowing lantern hanging from it. There are arched windows and doorways in the background. The overall style is reminiscent of a watercolor or a textured digital painting.

**If hope were a movie,
it would be...**

We are a little messy, and maybe we look a little different from the outside, but there is definitely a whole lot of genuine people committed to one another trying to show each other love.



THE SANDLOT



We are a bunch of average people who get together regularly because of a common love (instead of baseball, it's Jesus). We try to be inclusive (like Benny is to Smalls) and even when we're having a bad day or make mistakes, we're supported by each other. When we screw up (throw the Babe Ruth ball over the fence), our church family comes together to help us.

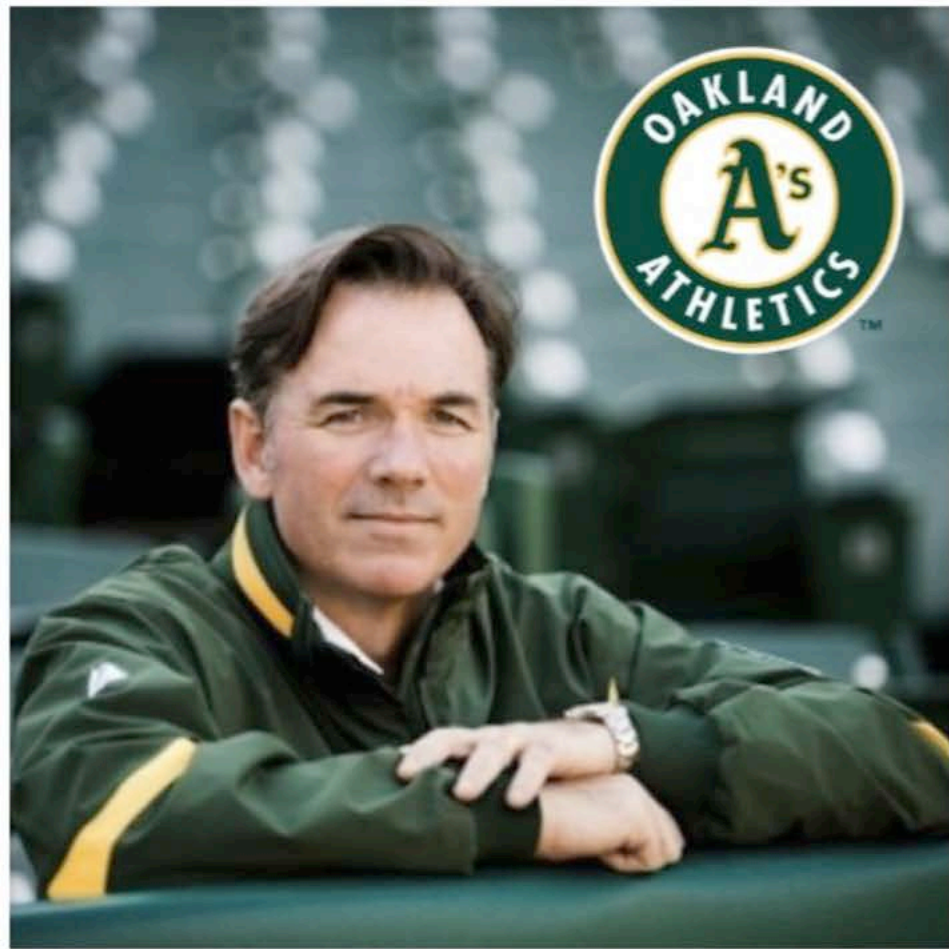
HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH:
Where KIDS bring
their parents to church

Meet the
Parents





Pantoni's Open Mic



What's the problem?

I'm not sure what my theological basis for this is, but I feel much more confident donating to productive organizations than my church.

Church is such a crazy business model if you think about it!

They demand 2-10 hours of your week, 10% of your wages, and in exchange they stunt your emotional growth and tell you how awful you are.



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I'd like to find a community who believes in benevolent God & teachings of Christ that are about love, service & inclusion.

So far it's been impossible to find-can you help?



That their omnipotent being is somehow wholly confined to

1. A single book
2. Being worshipped in a building
3. Can only be understood by white cis males



1



20



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1



20



I think it's one issue. Love. I think they're confused about what it means and that informs all the other things they get wrong.



5



Ephesians 3:1-13

¹ For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles — ² Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, ³ that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. ⁴ In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵ which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.

Ephesians 3:1-13

⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. ⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

Ephesians 3:1-13

¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³ I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

Paul's Situation

Ephesians 3:1

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God's Revelation

Ephesians 3:2-5

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What's the mystery?

Ephesians 1:9

9 he made known to us the **mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ...**

Ephesians 3:4

4 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the **mystery of Christ...**

Ephesians 6:19

19 Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the **mystery of the gospel...**

One word that comes up the most in this whole passage is the word mystery. Paul says it's his job to proclaim a mystery. What does the word mystery mean? When you and I hear the English word mystery, it actually conveys something that is almost the opposite of what Paul means by it, so we have a little bit of a translation problem. When you and I think of a mystery, you think of ... what? Something hidden from you that it's your job to discover...



~ Keller, T. J. (2013). The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive.
New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church.

The Greek word, especially as Paul uses it, means exactly the opposite. It means, not something hidden that you have to discover. It means something revealed by God because you would never discover it, because it's so counterintuitive, because you would never come to the conclusion of it by a process of reasoning. In other words, a mystery is an astonishing, counterintuitive revelation, something revealed to you that's astounding, that goes completely against anything you would've guessed. What is this mystery? Whenever Paul uses it, it has something to do with the gospel.

~ Keller, T. J. (2013). The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive.
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The Mystery of the Gospel

Ephesians 2:4-5, 8-9

⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,
⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved...⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God –⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

Gentiles' Incorporation

Ephesians 3:6

⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. ⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

Paul's Occupation

Ephesians 3:7-9

⁶ This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. ⁷ I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. ⁸ Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, ⁹ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

(What's the problem?) God's Solution

Ephesians 3:10-11

¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³ I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.



He loves you more than you love Him,
and He loved you before you loved Him.

BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX



Our Reaction

Ephesians 3:12-13

¹⁰ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, ¹¹ according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹² In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³ I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

The church is called many things: imperfect, hypocritical, self-centered, proud, out-of-touch, critical, gossipy, opinionated, political, and the like. The thing is, in some ways, those criticisms are true.

So, what was God thinking?

Ephesians 3:14–21

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Message Notes

I still love the church

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PASTOR'S OPEN MIC

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My prayer for us this New Year

Scripture Passages

(taken from the New International Version)

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