

The Dynamic Body of Christ



April 16, 2025

1

dy·nam·ic

/dī'namik/

Adjective

(of a process or system) capable of being adaptive; enabling constant change, activity, or progress

Noun

a force that stimulates change or progress within a system or process

Opposite

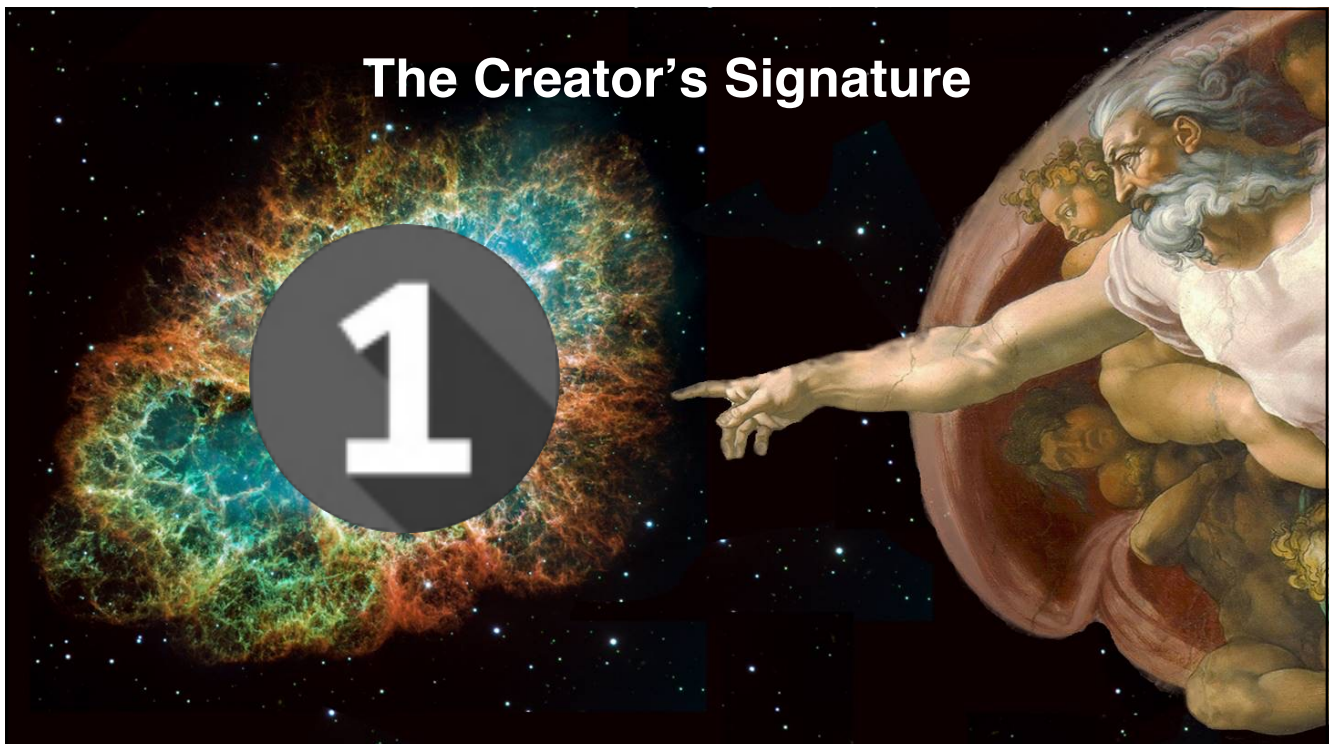
Static—means “stationary” or “fixed”

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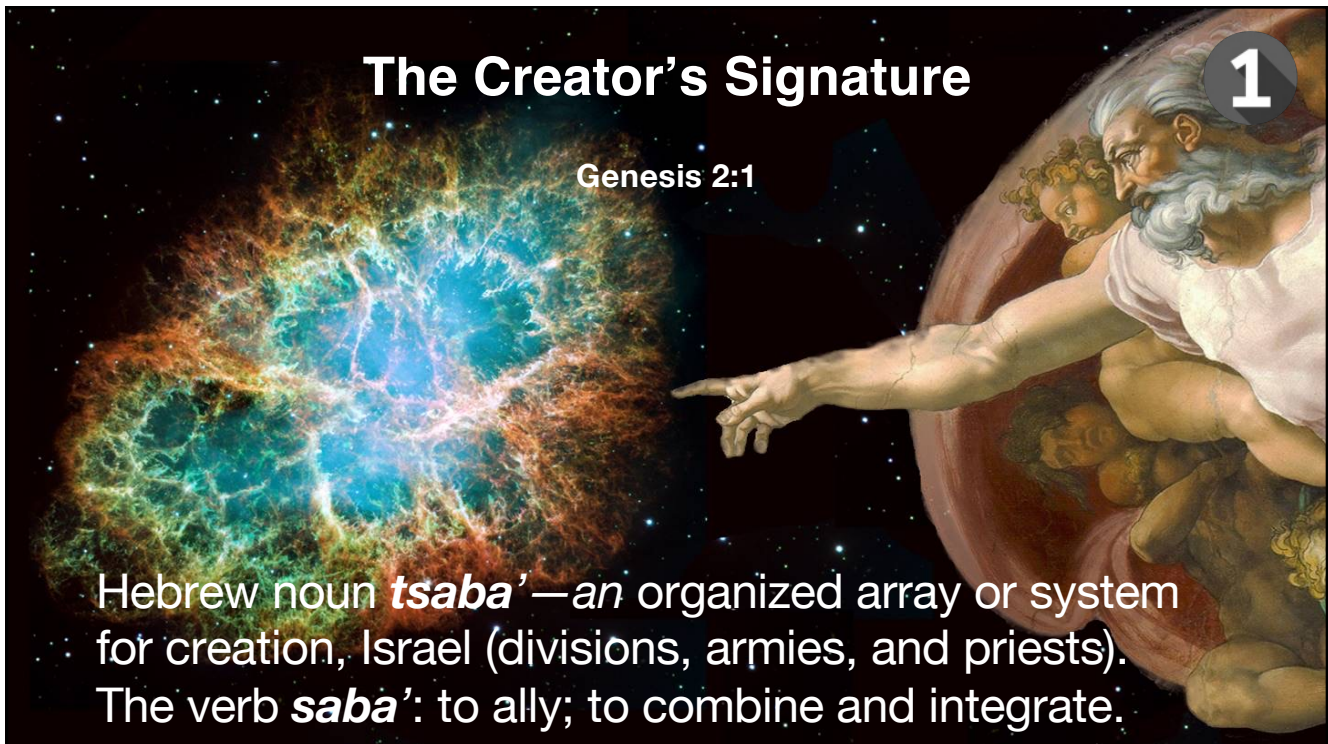
The Dynamic Body of Christ

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- 3 Problem Solving in Dynamic Communities
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- 5 The Application of Dynamic Principles

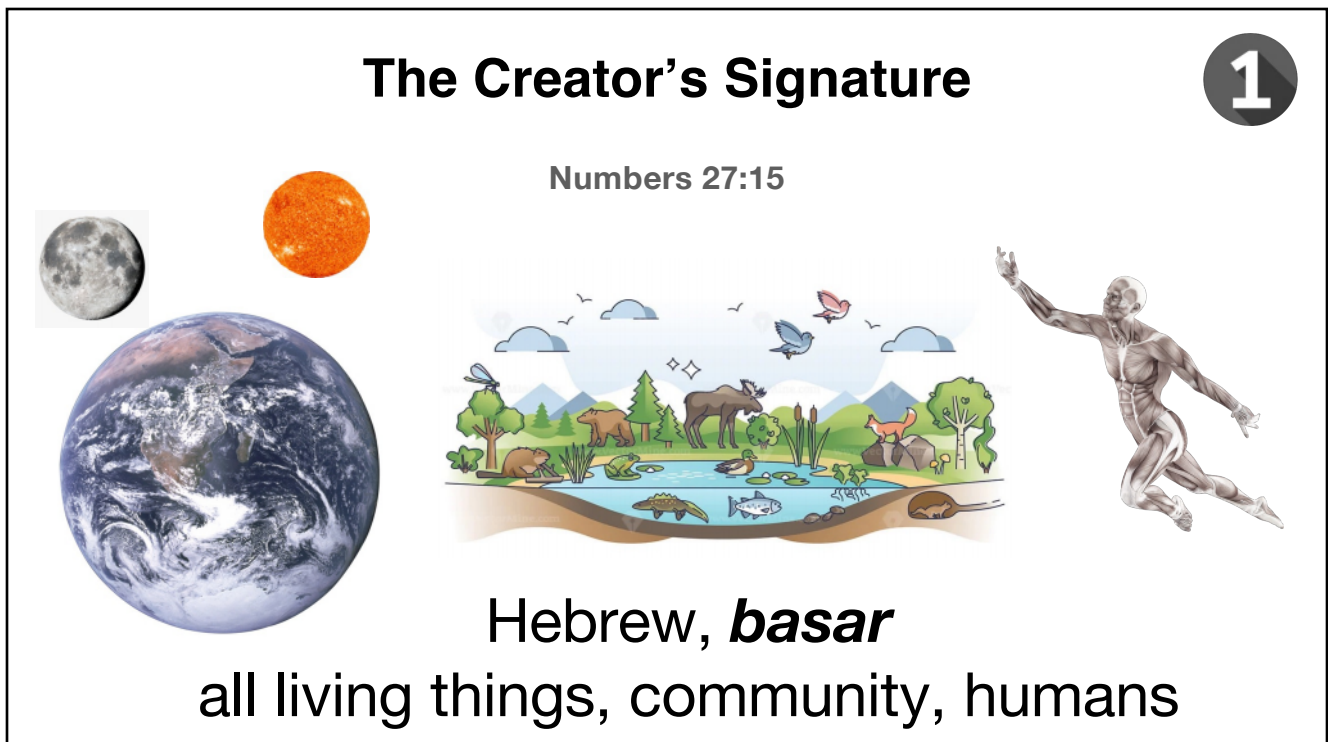
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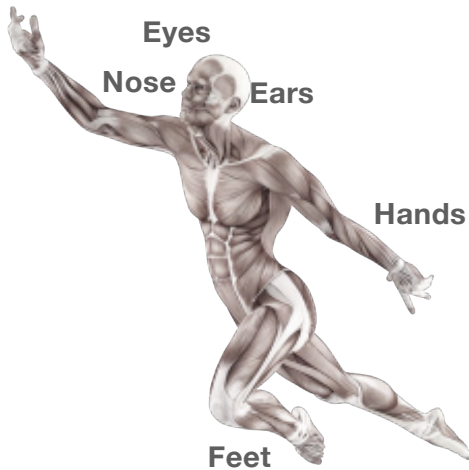
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The Creator's Signature

1



Greek **sōma**, **sōmatos**, noun.
Body, an organized whole made
 up of parts and members.
 Humans, plants, celestial and
 terrestrial; the sun, moon, stars,
 the universe, and the church

—the Apostle Paul
 (1 Cor. 12:12-31, 15:37- 40)

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The Creator's Signature

1

“Now, if entering a house you found
 everything well arranged and adorned, you
 would surely believe that a master governed
 the house. You would also recognize that the
 master was greater than all the things in the
 house. Therefore, when you look upon the
 house of the universe—the heavens and the
 earth, its laws and its order—believe that there
is a Lord and Parent of the universe far more
glorious than the stars themselves and the
other parts of the universe.”

—Octavius



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The Creator's Signature

1

“For what can be more obvious when you lift up your eyes to the sky, and look around at the things here on earth, than that there is some Deity of supreme intelligence who governs and nourishes the universe, infusing it with life? ... Take the heavens, for example. Notice how far they reach and how rapidly the heavens move around. See how the sun illuminates it during the day. Surely the marvelous and divine balance of the Supreme Governor is at work here.”

—Octavius



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The Creator's Signature

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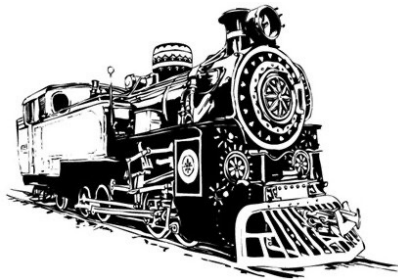
For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, *being understood from what has been made.*

—Romans 1:20

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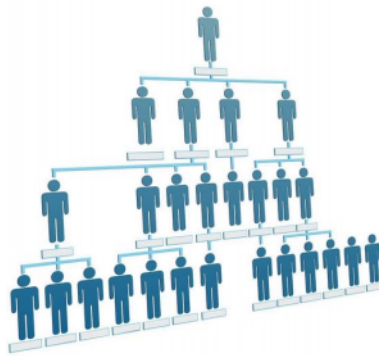
The Creator's Signature

1



Fixed

Richard Trevithick (1804)



Hybrid

Ancient Civilizations



Dynamic

At Creation

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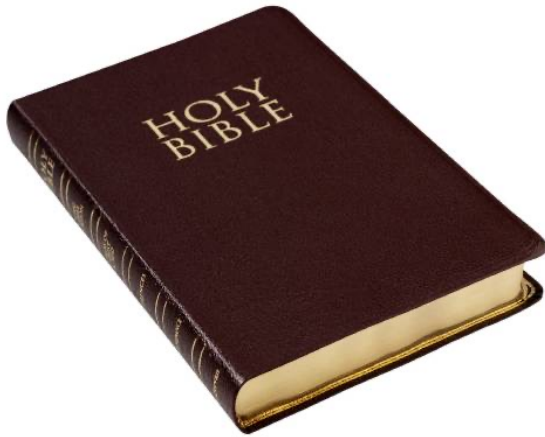
The Creator's Signature

1

- **There is purpose**
- **Creations possess intra-dependence (within) and inter-dependence (in the environment)**
- **All elements serve a function and are in place for optimal fulfillment of purpose**
- **Relationships have the appearance of networks**
- **There are more influential roles that are more significant for overall function and purpose**
- **God's lifeforms are adaptive**

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Scriptures on the Body of Christ



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Scriptures on the Body of Christ

2

Very Diverse Settings

	External Factors	Structure	Referenced Roles/Gifts
EPHESUS	Capital of Asia, second in influence after Rome	Community of small groups, roles serve in a partnership	Evangelist (Timothy), elders, teachers and deacons (<i>Acts, Ephesians, 1-2 Timothy</i>)
CORINTH	Town meeting, rule by the people	A loosely structured collection of home meetings	Prophets, teachers, laborers, administrators, healers, and other gifts (<i>1-2 Corinthians</i>)
ROME	Only authorized religions can organize	Constellation of churches in homes, very decentralized	Multiple small groups enhanced by prophecy, serving, teaching, encouraging, giving, leading, and showing mercy (<i>Romans</i>)
COLOSSAE	Recent decimation by an earthquake	Not much known	Servants, deacons, and hard workers: Epaphras & Archippus (<i>Colossians</i>)
LAODICEA	Recent decimation by an earthquake	Churches in homes (Not much known)	Hard workers: Epaphras was a cross-congregational influencer (<i>Colossians</i>)

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Scriptures on the Body of Christ

2

Romans 12:4-8

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, **so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.** We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

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Scriptures on the Body of Christ

2

1 Corinthians 12:18-27



God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, **those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable**, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor.

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Scriptures on the Body of Christ

2

1 Corinthians 12:18-27



And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. **But God has put the body together**, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that **its parts should have equal concern for each other**. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now **you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.**

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Scriptures on the Body of Christ

2

Colossians 1:15-18

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and **in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church**; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

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Scriptures on the Body of Christ

2

Colossians 2:18-19

Do not let **anyone who delights in false humility** and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. They have **lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews**, grows as God causes it to grow.

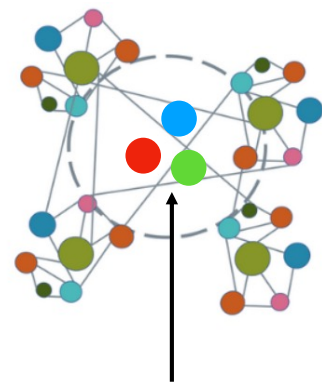
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Scriptures on the Body of Christ

2

Ephesians 4:11-13

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip (*katartizo*) his people for works of service, **so that the body of Christ may be built up** until we all reach **unity in the faith** and in the knowledge of the Son of God and **become mature**, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.



Katartizo - put in order, arrange, set up, and prepare

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Scriptures on the Body of Christ

2

Ephesians 4:11-16

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow **to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.**

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Problem-Solving in Dynamic Communities

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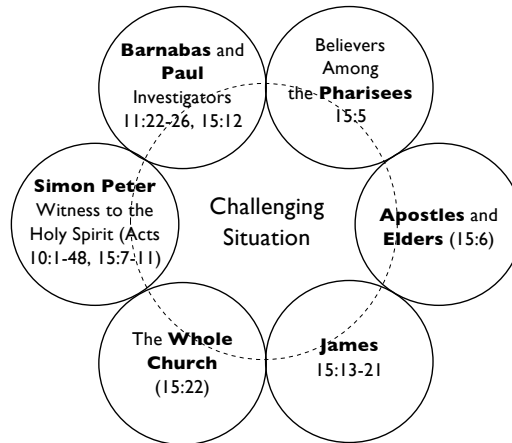


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Problem-Solving in Dynamic Communities

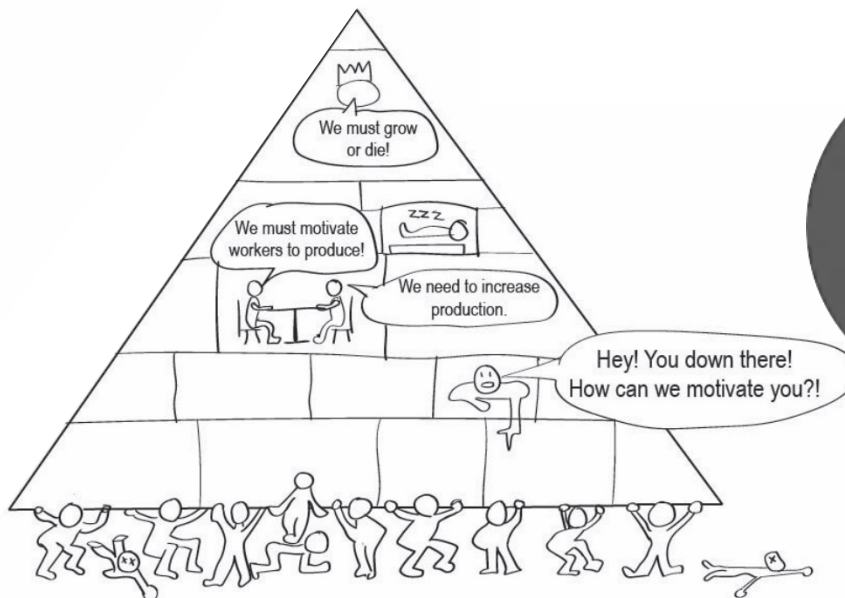
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The Jerusalem Council The First Major Controversy (Acts 10-15)



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Problem Accumulation in Stuck Communities



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Problem Accumulation in Stuck Communities 4

“Let us look at those who serve as soldiers under our military leaders, how ordered, compliant, and obedient they are as they carry out their orders. Not all are prefects, over 1000, over 100, or over 50, **but each one carries out the command of the kings and the military leaders according to his rank.**”



Letter from Clement in Rome to Corinth (~110 AD)

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Problem Accumulation in Stuck Communities 4

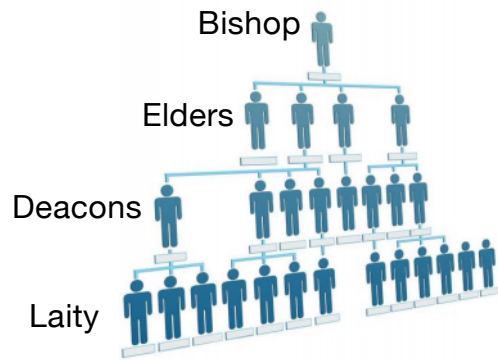
“Be eager to do everything in godly harmony, **the bishop presiding in the place of God** and the elders in the place of the council of the apostles and the deacons, who are most dear to me, having been entrusted with the service of Jesus Christ.”

“Wherever the bishop appear, there let the multitude be; even as wherever Christ Jesus is, there is the catholic Church. **It is not lawful either to baptize, or to hold a love-feast without the consent of the bishop ...**”

Letters from Ignatius to Magnesia and Smyrna (~110 AD)

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Problem Accumulation in Stuck Communities **4**

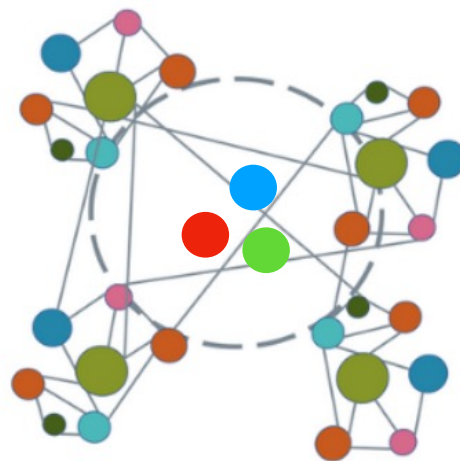


- Rooted in monarchy and military
- Consolidates power and influence
- Lack of tethering of top leader
- Good top figures have greater risks
- Church reflects tastes of the few, becoming homogenous
- The deciders won't have sufficient perspective without significant effort
- Often leads to rankism, siloing, good boys club, inequities, etc.
- Communication easily breaks down
- Personality often trumps principle

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The Application of Dynamic Principles

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The Application of Dynamic Principles

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Secular Illustration

1. Deming took an interest in Japan's citizens
2. Had a vision for the nation
3. Respected their culture
4. Did more than asked as a consultant
5. Was self-deprecating and approachable
6. Was outspoken against "the tyranny" of prevailing management in the US
7. Taught dynamic principles
8. Fostered "flow design" (perspective gathering)
9. Most credited for turning around the economy



W. Edwards Deming

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The Application of Dynamic Principles

5

W. Edwards Deming, *The New Economics*, page 65

A body is not one single organ, but many. Suppose that the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it does belong to the body none the less. Suppose that the ear were to say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it does still belong to the body. If the body were all ear, how could it smell?... there are many different organs, but one body. The eye can not say to the hand, "I do not need you."

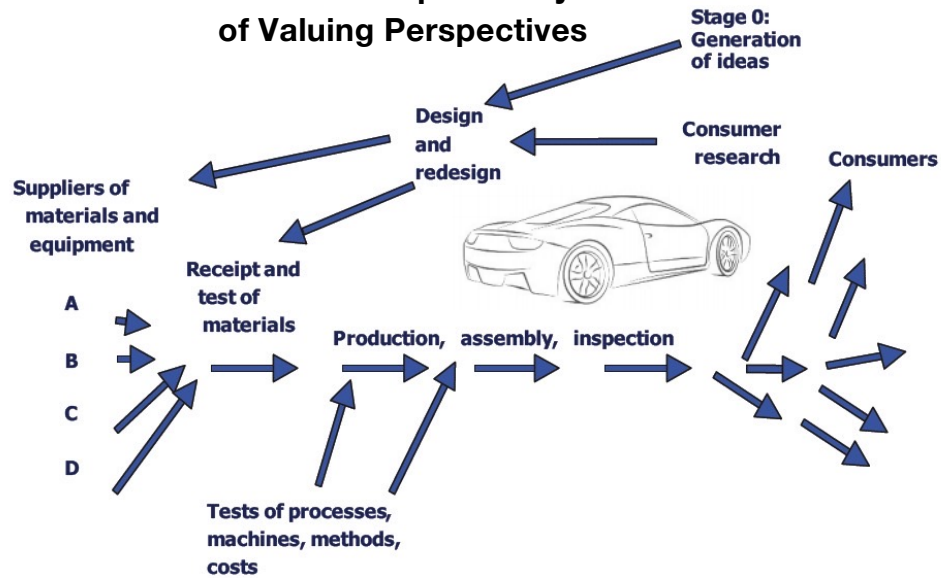
— St. Paul, 1 Corinthians 12:14–21

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The Application of Dynamic Principles

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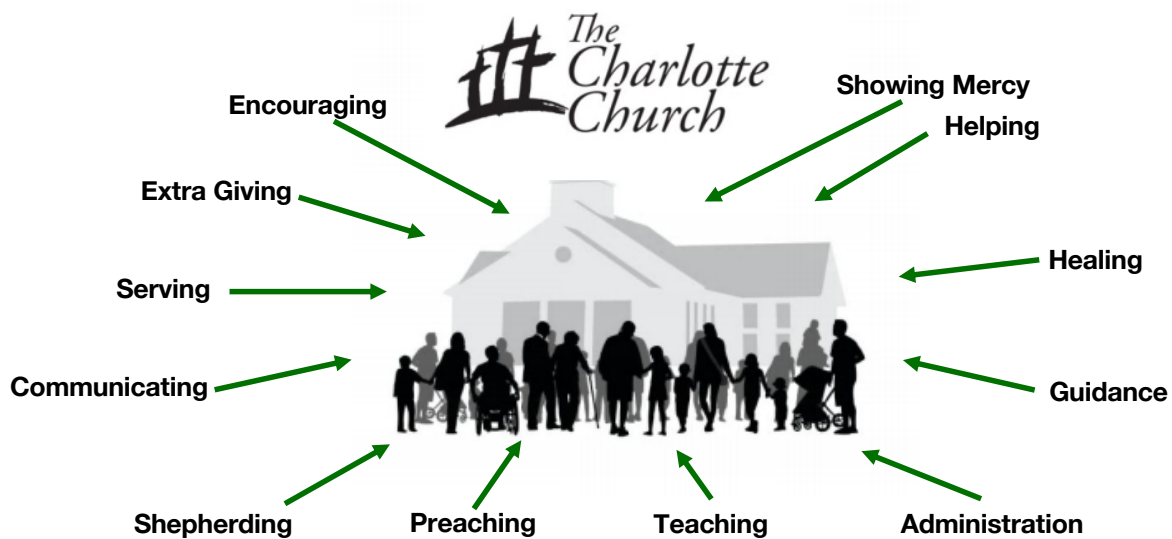
A Real Example at Toyota of Valuing Perspectives



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The Application of Dynamic Principles

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The Application of Dynamic Principles

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Where Deming and Scriptures Overlap

- Members/employees to be engaged with their unique capabilities
- ... valued and encouraged for their contribution
- ... are “joined and held together” in support
- ... are encouraged to grasp their importance
- ... to rely on the others
- ... share the same purpose
- ... experience common joy
- ... experience honor and gratefulness from their leaders/managers
- ... their worth is not connected to results or effectiveness

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CONCLUSION

In a **dynamic** church body

... each member matters
 ... everyone is called to be alert and engaged to the needs
 ... deference is related to our gifts, spirituality, knowledge,
 and competencies in a specific context

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