

“Measuring Maturity”, part 2

Ephesians 4:15-16

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In Ephesians 4:1-16 Paul delineates how the Church grows. True church growth results when every Christian uses his or her spiritual gift, given to them by Christ, in service to others, with dependence on God, in the spirit of unity, with an attitude of love. Some signs of true growth include the following:

1. Healthy church growth results from being truthful
“but rather being truthful” (15a)
2. Healthy church growth results from being Christo-centric
“we are to grow up in all aspects into...Christ” (15b)
3. Healthy church growth results from considering every member as vital
“the whole body...every joint...each individual” (16)
4. Healthy church growth results when every believer serves to potential
“the proper working...causes the growth” (16)
5. Healthy church growth thrives in an environment of love
“in love...in love” (15a-16c)

Study Notes on Ephesians 4:15-16

4:15—“being truthful” [ζ802γβ≡<9,λ--*aletheuontes*]—present active participle; literally should be translated as “being truthful”; the verb “speak” is not in this verse even though the KJV says “speaking the truth”—and the NIV, NKJ, and NAS all follow suit. The verb used actually emphasizes conduct and not just speech, so the emphasis is on living out the truth in speech and conduct...the actual verb is holistic and more inclusive than the English versions imply. This verb appears in the LXX “five times...and translates four different Hebrew words. It is an ethical term used of proving or being true and never with the idea of speaking the truth...the concept of ‘being truthful’ is the best sense of the word” (Hoehner); verbs “ending in this suffix express the doing of an action signified by the corresponding noun (Abbot).”

4:15—“might grow” [∇β>ZΦT:,<—*auxesomen*]—aorist subjunctive [KJ = may grow; NKJ/NAS = to grow; NIV = will...grow] NIV makes it sound like an indicative.

4:15—“all things”; accusative of general reference and can be rendered ‘with reference to all things’ and conveys the idea that we are to grow in all areas of spiritual life—just like a child is supposed to develop in all areas of life.

4:15—“the Christ”—Jesus is the model, source and goal of true church growth, on an individual and corporate level; when we lose sight of Christ, growth is stifled or skewed.

4:16—“being fitted together” [ΦL<∇Δ: @8≡(≡β:γ<≡<—*sunarmologoumenon*]; carefully placing precision-finished stones together in the construction of a stone building; present tense = ongoing action; passive voice = God is the Doer of the action; external unity.

4:16—“being held together” [ΦL:\$4\$. ∴;<@<—*sumbibazomenon*]—intimately joined together; to unite or knit together; internal unity; present tense=ongoing, continual action; passive voice=God is the Doer.

4:16—“supporting connection” [ζN0λ—*haphes*]; KJ/NKJ/NAS = joint; NIV = ligament; “ligament” is a very poor translation here; the best translation of this word, as commonly used in the OT is “contact,” “connection” or “touch” and denotes a connection between two objects, just as cells in a body touch one another. The interaction or contact between members, as the gifts are exercised, promotes both individual and corporate growth; believers in the local church need to live regularly in close proximity to one another, rubbing shoulders constantly, not at arms’ length from one another.