



Dear

*Contemporary Comments*

Subscriber:



Thirty years ago, we started the Center for Creative Ministry. We called it Adventist Baby Boomer Awareness then because the majority of my generation was like me; we were young adults. Of course, we didn't have a website then because the internet was in its infancy, but we've had one for decades now.

You may have noticed that our Center website is down at the moment. Please accept our apologies. We had been working on it when our service provider took this opportunity to discontinue support to the software version we were using. So we have a splash page up at [www.creativeministry.org](http://www.creativeministry.org), and are providing updates on Facebook regularly. We continue to email Contemporary Comments, and our phone is still available to you: 800.272.4664. Thank you for hanging in there with us. Our new website will be so much easier to view on your mobile phone, and we are simplifying what we offer so you can navigate around it more easily. Thank you for your patience, and come back to our website in the New Year. We think you'll like the improvements!

Merry Christmas,

Paul Richardson  
Executive Director

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## Contemporary Comments

### "Church Organization and Unity"

December 22, 2018

**Texts:** Ephesians 5:23-27; Matthew 20:25-28; Titus 1:9; Matthew 16:19; Galatians 6:1, 2; Matthew 28:18-20

This Christmas season, there's a story from journalist Lia Diskin currently making the social media rounds. An anthropologist was studying the habits and customs of an African tribe. One day, he filled a basket with sweet treats and attached a beautiful ribbon on top. He placed it under a tree, and then called the kids together. He drew a line on the ground and told them to stand behind the line. When he gave the signal they were to run to the basket, and the first to reach

the basket would win all the candies. When he yelled, "Go!" however, they all unexpectedly held hands and ran off towards the tree as a group. Once there, they shared the candy with each other and happily ate it all together.

The anthropologist asked, "Why did you all go together, since the first one to arrive at the tree could have won everything in the basket-all the sweets?" A young girl simply replied, "How can one of us be happy if all the others are sad?" The anthropologist was dumbfounded. For months he'd been studying the tribe, yet it was only now that he really understood their true essence.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu said, "Africans have a thing called Ubuntu. It's about the essence of being human. It embraces hospitality and caring about others. We believe that a person is a person through other persons; that my humanity is caught up with yours. The solitary human being is a contradiction in terms. Therefore, you seek to work for the common good because your humanity comes into its own in community, in belonging."<sup>1</sup>

This week's lesson looks at how church organization can promote unity. That unity is the essence of any effective organization: people coming together-organizing-for the common good of all. We often equate organizations with buildings, or committees, or policy-driven hierarchical structures. Many successful commercial companies are identified as organizations. The organized church, however, is people, gathered together around a common bond and a common mission: *to share the love of Jesus with as many people as possible.*

Every organization needs a leader, and our leader is Jesus. Paul uses the illustration of the relationship between a husband and wife to describe Christ's role as the Head of the church. That illustration is simply that-an illustration. It is not a mandate for men to rule over women. Taken literally, though, the illustration mandates a leadership of service since Christ is the ultimate Servant of all. A more proper understanding of how we are to behave organizationally could be described as Ubuntu; our Christianity is bound up in our relationships with each other. We congregate because we need each other.

Jesus set the example of servant leadership. When we follow His leading, we truly become the unified organization this world needs us to be.

~ cb

1. [jackyyenga.com](http://jackyyenga.com)

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### ~ For Reflection

**Connecting:** On a piece of paper, write, "Church Organization" across the top. Then make two columns, one titled "Strengths" and the other

titled "Weaknesses." Think of ways church organization can be a blessing or a curse and write them down.

**Sharing:** Study Matthew 20:25-28. In this passage, what was Jesus trying to teach the disciples about leadership?

1. Jesus trying to teach the disciples about leadership?

If you want to be "great" in the eyes of the world, exercise authority over people.

2. If you want to be "great" in the eyes of heaven, don't exercise authority over people.

3. True leadership is motivated by a desire to serve others unselfishly.

4. Doesn't the slave mindset suggest that other people can "use" you?

5. It's interesting that Jesus references people who want to be "first." Shouldn't we want to be last?

6. Other...

**Applying:** At a family gathering, a cousin says, "I don't believe in organized religion. It's just a bunch of politics." How would you respond?

**Valuing:** Some members have leadership gifts that guide and train people, while other members have gifts that are more service-oriented. Prayerfully consider the basic trend of your gift(s).

## About Us

Since 1988, the Center for Creative Ministry has been serving local church leaders and individuals around the world. Formerly known as the publishers of ABBA Newsletter and the Baby Boomer Ministries Resource Center, we have now broadened our generational/ministry focus to include our children. The Center for Creative Ministry took on its new name on June 1, 1996.

The Center for Creative Ministry, formerly Baby Boomer Ministries, is a privately funded and managed para-church ministry fully recognized by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. We are dedicated to supporting the local church in outreach and nurture ministries by providing resources, information, training, and consulting.