

Celebrate Recovery Vs. Scripture

Chapter 8 Excerpt from
[Who's Driving the Purpose Driven Church?](#)
by James Sundquist

Sinners Anonymous - Is This a Biblical Model?

This morning I was curious why the word “anonymous” is in Alcoholics Anonymous, particularly since Anonymous groups are pillars in the PDC/CGM Theology through such programs as Celebrate Recovery. So I went to the AA website and found out. Something seemed rotten in the State of Denmark, but I could not quite put my finger on it. I knew the CGM/PDC has a host of Anonymous Programs in its churches and curriculum, including a sexaholics anonymous type of program. There are several problems I have with the program in general, Biblically speaking, such as we are “powerless.” Would a sex offender say he is powerless to obey God? Or if he has a victim mentality, would he say, “I just can’t help myself from molesting children”?

These issues, including the concerns over “a higher power” are well known and addressed already. But the “anonymous” issue stuck in my craw. This was not as easy to discern, as there are issues of sin in our lives which could remain anonymous, or at least known to only those involved in the offense (both the perpetrator and the victim(s) and to one or more who are spiritual to help lead them to repentance.) But here is the major breakdown with “anonymous” regarding what the Bible says about it. First, I can not find anywhere in the Bible where it recommends putting all of the people with the same problem in a targeted group where they can commiserate and help each other “recover”. If you have seven pedophiles in the church, do you create a class and put them all together? Doesn’t I Corinthians 15:33 read “Do not be deceived: “bad company corrupts good morals.” Does it say put them in the same group? Or do you mark each and every one of them to identify them and then separate them out from the flock (and each other)?

The Bible teaches that you would surround each one with good examples and the spiritually mature. Another glaring problem I see is that the Anonymous charter gives a type of diplomatic immunity, whereby the individual NEVER has to be exposed publicly, or before the congregation according to Matthew 18 or Ephesians Chapter Five, unless, the individual chooses to do so. And this anonymity is supported and defended by the “anonymous” charter. So, for example, if a brother in the Church (whether a member or not) were confronted for sexual adultery or fornication, was confronted by one or more other brothers or sisters (still note no group of other like offenders), then the Elders if he or she still has not repented (still no group), then before the entire congregation (still no group of like offenders), the Biblical procedure of Church Discipline is preserved. Finally, should the brother or sister not repent, removal from that local Body of Christ should be Biblically exercised and mandated. But even then, after this sinner is turned over to the other “higher power”, Satan himself, there is still a pathway of restoration left open for this fallen brother or sister to return to the church.

But this person must still repent and once restored demonstrate the fruit of his or her repentance. But with the “anonymous” model or charter, such as a Sexaholics Anonymous type group that is promoted by a host of PDC/CGM programs, the person committing these ongoing acts could cling to the pre-agreed arrangement and charter position of remaining “anonymous.” Who could then pierce this veil of unbiblical protection? This person could remain sexually anonymous...and active, and repent publicly only at his or her own behest, and remain so forever. If someone were to confront him or her, this person could say “but you told me I could remain anonymous, and besides the charter permits me to remain anonymous....and you can’t violate my anonymity and confidentiality!”

Should any who is wise among them decide to act Biblically, they would violate the “anonymous” charter, and the person in this group would easily be able to challenge any person who broke this confidence. Of course, were a brother to decide to act Biblically in this example, he would be branded intolerant, unforgiving, and insensitive to Harry or Mary’s felt needs! So sin in the body, or such leaven could continue to work until the entire lump is leavened with impunity.

So let us examine more thoroughly if, in fact, the Bible really does support the idea of “anonymous” groups within the ongoing body life of the church as well as it pertains to the procedure for Church Discipline.

Does “anonymous” sound like what Jesus meant in Matthew 18:7: “And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell [it] unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”?

Is “anonymous” what Paul meant in Ephesians 5:11 when he writes: “Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.”

Is “anonymous” what Paul meant in 1Timothy 5:20 when he writes: “Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.”

Is “anonymous” what Paul meant in 1Corinthians 5:1-11: “It is reported commonly [that there is] fornication among you.... when ye are gathered together (i.e, in the church).... To deliver such an one unto Satan (in other words REMOVE him from the church) for the destruction of the flesh.... Your glorying [is] not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? But now I have written unto you not to keep company (or does it say form a fornicators anonymous group and keep them in the church?), if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.” Is “anonymous” what Paul meant in: 2 Corinthians 13:1 “This will be my third visit to you. “Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” 13:1 Deut. 19:15

Does “anonymous” sound like what Ezekiel meant in: Ezekiel 33:6 “But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take [any] person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand.”

No, Sinners-anonymous groups have no place in church life because there is simply no foundation for it Biblically. (Plug any word you want in front of the word anonymous...see “anonymics anonymous” below.) In terms of conversation and story-telling in anonymous or Celebrate Recover Groups, Scripture actually gives the opposite counsel about what not to speak about what these people do in private. The inverse of this is what we are to speak...

Eph 5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Jam 5:13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

Phl 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things [are] honest, whatsoever things [are] just, whatsoever things [are] pure, whatsoever things [are] lovely, whatsoever things [are] of good report; if [there be] any virtue, and if [there be] any praise, think on these things.

Finally, the Bible does not speak of rounding up a group of like, or targeted sinners that I can recall, except to destroy them, e.g., the earth swallowing up the murmurers and God slaughtered of the company of false prophets. It is he or she who is more spiritual, one who first goes to the fallen brother to gently restore him or her. The only time a group appears is when the many who are spiritual go to the ONE brother or sister to confront...the next group is the congregation. But it is always a process of putting the sinner in good company, not bad company with more bad company to corrupt their morals even further. There is absolutely NO model in Scripture for this “group think.” The only example I can possibly think of is a hospital...and you could argue that the church is a hospital of sinners. But carefully note that no one goes to the hospital to hang around and get well from someone else with the exact same disease...it is the doctors and nurses and equipment they surround themselves with...but these are all WELL PEOPLE, and medically trained staff, all of whom would be disqualified in an Anonymous or Celebrate Recovery Group, RIGHT?

If the church uses AA or any one of its many 12 Step hybrids, why don't they call alcoholism what the Bible calls it: “drunkards.” It never ONCE calls it a disease! IT never once calls a drunkard a victim, though there certainly are victims of drunkards, such as car accident victims and battered wives. And even if the higher power is Jesus (as though Jesus could be a force vs. a person, or a Tarot Card, or a Ouija Board, or a Crystal Ball...as though Jesus can be summoned up...that is pure sorcery), it is of no value, because the prayer is asking the higher power for something Jesus would never ask us to pray.

He never told us to pray that we recover from being a nonexistent victim. He never told us to pray that we recover from having a nonexistent disease. He never told us to pray that we recover from being born a drunk. He would never ask us to pray a prayer that we are powerless to obey, when he already told us that obedience is ALWAYS an option over disobedience (Romans 1:21 says that NONE are with excuse). He never told us to pray that we will always be in a perpetual state of being a “recovering alcoholic”, so Lord, help me stay in a state of recovery, but never be

FREE or delivered. He never told us to pray that we recover when he already told us to repent. I did a search for the word recovery throughout the entire Bible. It always meant either property or land being recovered, or recovering from a physical disease, so that recovery meant being restored to a previous state of being healthy physically. Never once did it refer to behavior or recovering from what comes out of the heart of man. Never!!

Phl 4:6 Be careful (anxious) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Phl 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

If we do this how does this leave any room or any need for AA, THRIVE, PDC, CGM, SHAPE, Temperament Tests (based on theories of Occultist and atheist Carl Jung), or Celebrate Recovery? Note further that the peace of God exceeds understanding, or leaning unto your own understanding. So at best, even with hidden knowledge of ourselves revealed to our understanding, we are still left with only our understanding which can NOT release the peace of God. So our hope of peace is crippled on both counts and can never walk if gleaned from any form of Psychology or Anonymous Group.

For a complete Report and the Entire Chapter 8 Expose of Celebrate Recovery See:

[Who's Driving the Purpose Driven Church Chapters 8-11](#)