

Ministerial Musings

If you've been watching "A.D." (Sundays at 8:00 on NBC), it started with the crucifixion and resurrection: events for which most of us have strong images (a bit cluttered by pastel eggs and bouncing bunnies). But now it's heading into the less familiar territory of Acts 1-10 where the disciples try to figure out what it means to be "church."

That got me thinking about how I would answer that question. I fairly often meet people who don't know the history of *The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*. Sometimes I'll start by telling them what we're not. We take communion every week, so we're not Presbyterian or Methodist. We don't baptize infants, so we're not United Church of Christ. We ordain women, so we're not Catholic or Southern Baptist.

One problem with that approach: it focuses on what separates us from other Christians. That's odd, since our founders on the American frontier focused on what Christians have in common. These days, I increasingly like the "Identity Statement" (box, below) crafted by the *21st Century Vision Team* our denomination commissioned in 2006. You may recognize the second sentence, it's in our bulletin each week. (If you even have it memorized, please reward yourself by taking TWO pieces of bread at communion next Sunday).

*We are **Disciples of Christ**,
a movement for wholeness
in a fragmented world. As
part of the one Body of
Christ, we welcome all to
the Lord's Table as God has
welcomed us.*

Of course, we are an independence-minded denomination. We ask each individual to study scripture and hammer out their own answers; we practice the "priesthood of all believers," so our elders interpret communion with at least as much authority as ordained clergy; and we have no Pope or Bishop to say, "Here's God's Will, do it because I said so." I love that about us! Yes, it makes it hard to say exactly where Disciples stand on some issues, but it honors our passion for unity amid diversity.

I also like calling ourselves "a movement." God told Abraham, "Go!" Abraham said, "Where?" God said, "Trust me, it will be nice." God told Moses, "Go!" Moses said, "Where?" God said, "I'll tell you, but you're not going to like it."

Jesus tells his followers, "Go!" We're tempted to say, "But we don't want to make disciples of all nations; we don't want to love our neighbors, much less our enemies." He reminds us, "You're not 'Onlookers of Christ,' nor 'Standers-Still of Christ.' You're disciples. So get moving! Be my hands and feet, and help bring God's Kingdom to earth."

Dave



A.D. THE BIBLE CONTINUES
SUNDAYS 9/8c

GET TO KNOW THE CHARACTERS OF A.D.

From Apostles to Romans to Zealots, Galileans and the Jewish Sanhedrin - here's your key to the characters of A.D. The Bible Continues!

→ MEET THE CHARACTERS
→ CHARACTER PROFILE VIDEOS

The banner features a large portrait of Jesus on the left and a vertical strip of four smaller portraits on the right, showing various characters from the series.