

FOLLOWING JESUS @ VCC

**INTIMACY CONFERENCE**

***Intimacy***  
***With God and Others***

Presented by

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# INTIMACY—WITH GOD AND OTHERS

(Notes by Alexander Venter, February 2014)

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*'How can you say, "I am intimate with God" whom you do not see,  
when you are not intimate with your brother or sister whom you do see'  
(Adapted 1 John 4:20)*

*'God, whom you do not see, will not be intimate with you,  
when you are not intimate with your spouse whom you do see'  
(EvenMoreAdapted 1 Peter 3:7)*

## 1. WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE AND EXPECTATIONS?

- 1.1. Purpose of the seminar and the need for intimacy today:
- 1.2. Context of the seminar - 'Being God's Be-Loved' teaching series
- 1.3. Expectations: *What are your expectations?*

*Mine are:*

- 1.4. Format of the notes and the seminar itself:
  - 1.4.1. *In the form of questions:*
  - 1.4.2. *From Theology to Praxis:*
  - 1.4.3. *Both teaching and training: 2Tim 3:16-17 cf. John 8:31-32*
  - 1.4.4. *Including ministry and healing:*
  - 1.4.5. *Ongoing apprenticeship to Jesus = growing intimacy with him*

## 2. WHY THE 'ADAPTED TEXTS'? WHY THE HUMAN-GOD = HUMAN-HUMAN TEST?

- 2.1. The human-God *reality*:
- 2.2. The human-human test: Dt 6:5; Lev 19:18 cf. Mt 22:34f, Gal 5:14
- 2.3. The human-self *basis* - with the 'Jesus upgrade': Jn 13:34-35

## 3. WHAT IS OUR DEFINITION OF *INTIMACY*?

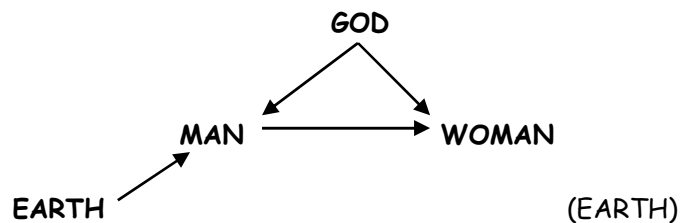
- 3.1. The popular meaning:
- 3.2. Martin Luther's view on the flow of Divine revelation:
- 3.3. **The English:** Being in close (affective) relational knowledge of a person or place (from 1620s, and from 1640s used as a euphemism for sexual intercourse)
- 3.4. **The Latin origin:** *intimare*, made of two words:  
*intimus* — to be inside of, inner most... and...  
*intimidare* — to fear, be in awe of (intimidated as in overwhelmed)
- 3.5. **The Biblical concept (Hebrew & Greek): Oneness**, Jn 10:30 cf. 17:20-26.  
Biblical oneness is not assimilation/absorption with loss of identity/personhood.  
"What makes Christianity a unique religion over all others is its accent on love that, as Teilhard de Chardin writes, differentiates as it unites" (George Maloney)
- 3.6. **Therefore, our definition:** *Intimacy is the experience of oneness ('into-me-you-see')* - mutual self-disclosure/surrender in communion ('union with') with God and others at all levels of personhood and created reality - spiritual, political

(will) mental, emotional, physical, social, economic, ecological, etc (body-genital intimacy is for the marriage covenant due to its power to create immortal life)

*"Intimacy is loving behaviour that is manifested through self-disclosure — which leads to oneness and wholeness through being known and coming to know at ever deeper levels"* (Ferder & Heagle)

#### 4. WHAT IS A HEBREW O.T. UNDERSTANDING OF INTIMACY?

- 4.1. *Yadah*: 'to know', Gen 4:1,17 cf. Jer 31:33-34; Hos 6:3
- 4.2. Created limitation (will) - for trust (relationship): Gen 2:15-17
- 4.3. Created longing (desire) - for completion (oneness): Gen 2:18-24



- 4.4. Created covenant (cleaving) - for ecstatic protection of life: Gen 2:24
- 4.5. Living incarnation of *God's desire* for us, for passionate intimate friendship in covenant relationship, and our corresponding deepest desire for ultimate love
- 4.6. Naked intimacy - transparency & oneness - or guilt & shame? Gen 2:25
- 4.7. **The Fall**: reversed the above reality, turning it inward into the selfish pursuit of 'self-fulfilment' as (G)od - in fear of loving self-disclosure, the gift of self
- 4.8. **Redeemed... for God and others**: Gen 3:21, Jn 1:29, 2Cor 5:21, Jn 8:31-32  
*Hebraic intimacy is being fully present, surrendered and known to God and one another, in a union of mutuality and integrity of relationship, with complete joy*

#### 5. WHAT IS A GREEK N.T. UNDERSTANDING OF INTIMACY?

- 5.1. *Ginosko*: Matt 1:25 cf Jn 17:3
- 5.2. *Meno* — abide, remain, dwell, home: Jn 14:10, 14:17-20, 15:4f cf. Is 40:31
- 5.3. *Koinonia*: 2Cor 13:14, Phil 2:1f, 1Jn 1:3-7, Jn 17:20-26
- 5.4. *Philos* — (affectionate) friendship (more later): Don't use the Greek 'Four Loves' separately from each other. Jesus' followers integrated them into *agape*.

**6. TO SUMMARIZE (WITH THE HELP OF THE EASTERN GREEK FATHERS):  
WHAT ARE THE ORIGIN, MEANS AND GOAL OF INTIMACY?**

- 6.1. **God is 'The Eternal Community':** The Beginning (origin) & End (goal) of creation
- 6.2. **Trinitarian *Perichoeresis*:** "interpenetration" or "co-inherence", then later the image of the Dance of Love (*perichoresis* to 'dance around') - Jn 14:10, 20-21, 23
- 6.3. **From Essence (Immanence) to Economy (Self-Revelation):**
- 6.4. **From Economy to *Ekstasis*:** and 'cosmic allurements'
- 6.5. **To *Energia*:** God's uncreated Energies of Love energising all things
- 6.6. **To *Entheos*:** Filled with all the fullness of God (Enthusiastic)
- 6.7. **To *Enstasis*:** To stand fully IN your true self - God in us and we in God
- 6.8. **To *Eros*:** God's fire of desire for passionate *agape* love/oneness
- 6.9. **Sexual 'fire' and 'fountains':** Song of Sol 8:6, 1Cor 7:9, Prov 4:23, 5:15-20
- 6.10. **Love fulfilled and perfected:** Lk 20:27, The Resurrection Dance of Love
- 6.11. **Wholeness and holiness:** Lev 11:44-45, 19:2f cf. 2 Pet 1:15-16

**7. MUST WE DISTINGUISH BETWEEN GENITAL AND 'OTHER' INTIMACY? WHY?**

- 7.1. **Understanding sexuality** as relational fire/fountains of love - or lust
- 7.2. **Genital intimacy:** Prov 30:19 (for marriage covenant)
- 7.3. **Psycho-emotional-social intimacy:** called 'social-sexuality'
- 7.4. **Spiritual intimacy:** As in Psalms... and possibly the Song of Songs ?
- 7.5. **NB: The unity of personhood and the discipline of chastity:**

**8. HOW DO WE DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN AUTHENTIC INTIMACY?**

- 8.1. **The Key: *self-disclosure*** in loving friendship, Jn 15:13-15; *hetairos* and *philos*
- 8.2. **The three types of language** (Eugene Peterson):

8.2.1. *The first language of relationship:*

8.2.2. *The second language of information:*

8.2.3. *The third language of motivation:*

**8.3. The five levels of communication**

(John Powell, "the gift of love is gift of who we are through self-disclosure"):

8.3.1. *Superficial/Cliché:*

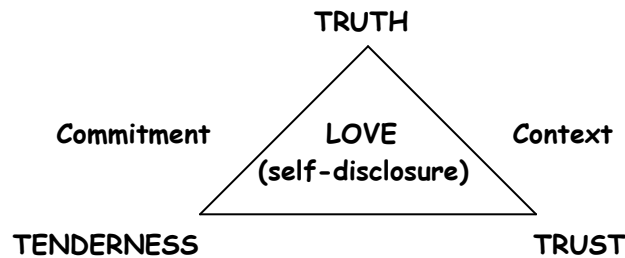
8.3.2. *Events/Factual:*

8.3.3. *Opinion/beliefs:*

8.3.4. *Feelings/self-disclosure:*

8.3.5. *Peak/kinship:*

**8.4. A 'values-model' of intimacy (*philos* friends):**



*Marcel Gabriel's three: Mutuality, Availability, Sacrifice*

**8.5. The importance of context and temperament:**

**8.6. Some Biblical models of intimate friendship:**

*God and humans?*

*Humans and humans?*

**8.7. Johari's window:**

	What I see/know	I don't see/know
What others see/know	My <i>known</i> self (revealed)	My <i>blind</i> self (unintegrated)
What others don't see and know	My <i>hidden</i> self (unrevealed)	My <i>unknown</i> self (unexplored)

## **9. WHAT ARE THE BLOCKAGES TO REAL INTIMACY?**

- 9.1. Fear of many different kinds: 1Jn 4:18 (including homophobia)**
- 9.2. Guilt and Shame:**
- 9.3. Past hurts — especially sexual and relational:**
- 9.4. Self-image issues — including rejection of our body-selves:**
- 9.5. Broken or no boundaries - not knowing what's appropriate**
- 9.6. Insecurity — leading to control and manipulation:**
- 9.7. Narcissism:**
- 9.8. Lack of mutuality, availability or sacrifice: Power-relationships or one sided 'intimacy' is no intimacy at all - it's dependence and/or dominance**
- 9.9. Inappropriate erotic/genital sexual intrusion (lust):**
- 9.10. False and/or substitute 'intimacies' and addictions:**

## **10. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS AND FRUIT OF A MATURE INTIMACY?**

- 10.1. Accurate self-knowledge:**
- 10.2. At home in our psycho-sexual body-selves:**
- 10.3. Interpersonal sensitivity - emotional and relational intelligence:**
- 10.4. True empathy and understanding:**
- 10.5. Trust and security:**
- 10.6. Honesty and self-disclosure - knowing how to give of yourself:**
- 10.7. A 'wise intimacy' with healthy boundaries**
- 10.8. Mutuality and equality - imparting dignity and value:**
- 10.9. Spontaneity and freedom - warmth, affection, tenderness:**
- 10.10. The fulfilment of love — *joy, generosity and generativity:***

**11. HOW CAN WE FOSTER AND MAINTAIN INTIMACY WITH GOD?  
(TEN SURE STEPS TO GROWING MATURE INTIMACY WITH GOD)**

- 11.1. Have a whole-life and life-long VIM: *Vision, Intention, Method*
- 11.2. Apply all the above to your relationship with God:
- 11.3. Learn to receive the Father's love — the heart of intimacy: Matt 3:17, 17:5
- 11.4. Use the key of self-disclosure by prayer/worship (*Praying the Psalms*):
- 11.5. Deal with the blockages to intimacy with God: Heb 12:1-2, 1Cor 9:24-27
- 11.6. Cultivate companionship and hearing from God: 1Tim 4:7,8, Mk 1:35, Lk 5:15-16  
cf Jn 5:17-20
- 11.7. Learn obedience — don't grieve the Spirit — keep short accounts: Eph 4:30,  
1Thess 5:19, Jn 14:15-18, 1Jn 1:5-9
- 11.8. Grow in confidence by taking risks, walk on water... while maintaining basic  
disciplines: 1Thess 5:17, Jn 5:17-20
- 11.9. Live & minister from intimacy - doing 'whatever you want': Jn 15:7, Ps 37:4
- 11.10. And maintain accountability and protection:

Pedro Arrupe SJ (Superior General of the Jesuits, 1965-1983) said:

*"Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is,  
than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way.  
What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything.  
It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning,  
what you will do with your evenings,  
how you will spend your weekends, what you read,  
who you know, what breaks your heart,  
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.  
Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything"*

**In closing, let us pray Jesus' RAP prayer for us:**

*"Father, I pray that they may be one as we are one,  
you in me and I in you, we in them and they in us and in one another,  
that the love with which you have loved me may be in them,  
that they may be brought to completion - mature in love -  
so that the world may know and believe you have sent me  
as they live a life of love in intimacy with us and each other"*



## 12. RECOMMENDED READING (especially the underlined)

- Craig Barnes, *Yearning — living between how it is and how it ought to be* (IVP, 1991)
- William Barry SJ, *God's Passionate Desire and Our Response* (St Paul's, 1993)  
*God and You: Prayer as Personal Relationship* (Pauline Pub, 1995)  
*With an Everlasting Love: Developing an Intimate Relationship with God* (Paulist Press, 1999)  
*A Friendship Like No Other: Experiencing God's Amazing Embrace* (Loyola Press, 2008)
- David Benner, *Surrender to Love: Discovering the Heart of Christian Spirituality* (St Paul's, 2003)
- Mike Bickle, *Passion for Jesus* (Kingsway, 1993)
- Gilbert Bilezikian, *Community 101 — reclaiming the local Church as the Community of Oneness* (Zondervan, 1997)
- John Bradshaw, *Healing the Shame that binds you* (Health Communications, 1988)
- Marva Dawn, *Sexual character — beyond technique to intimacy* (Eerdmans, 1993)
- Fran Ferder & John Heagle, *Your Sexual Self — Pathway to authentic intimacy* (Ave Maria Press, 1992)
- James Houston, *The transforming friendship — a guide to prayer* (Lion Books, 1989)  
*The heart's desire — a guide to personal fulfilment* (Lion Books, 1992)
- Thomas Keating, *Intimacy with God — on contemplation and centering prayer* (Crossroads, 1994)
- George Maloney SJ, *Called to Intimacy — Living in the Indwelling Presence* (Alba House, 1983)  
*Invaded by God: Mysticism and the Indwelling Trinity* (I.J.A. Pub, 1979)  
*Why not become totally fire? — power of fiery prayer* (Paulist, 1989)  
*Be filled with the fullness of God — the indwelling Trinity* (St Paul's, 1993)  
*Discovering the Hidden Reality: A Journey into Christian Mystical Prayer* (St Paul's, 2004)
- Henri Nouwen, *The Life of the Beloved: Spiritual Living in a Secular World* (Crossroads, 1992)  
*Lifesigns: Intimacy, Fecundity, and Ecstasy in Christian Perspective* (Doubleday, 1986)
- Martyn Percy (ed), *Intimate Affairs: Sexuality & Spirituality in Perspective* (Darton, Longman & Todd, 1997)
- Eugene Peterson, *Answering God — the Psalms as tools for prayer* (HarperCollins, 1989)
- John Powell SJ, *Why am I Afraid to Love?* (Fontana/Collins, 1967)  
*Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?* (Argus Communications, 1969)  
*The Secret of Staying in Love* (Tabor Publishing, 1974)  
*Unconditional Love* (Argus Communications, 1978)
- Harry Schaumburg, *False Intimacy — the struggle of sexual addiction* (NavPress, 1992)
- Marvin Wilson, *Our Father Abraham — Jewish roots of the Christian faith* (Eerdmans, 1989)