

DON'T BE GROSS

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Andy Stanley

Scripture: *Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 12:15–16, 27*

Idea: In order to maximize our potential and fulfill our mission as a church, we need every member and regular attendee involved in strategic service.

Introduction

[One of...]

History's Great **Mysteries**

[Perhaps history's greatest mystery is...]

How did a first-century **cult** birthed in the armpit of the Roman Empire...

whose leader was **rejected** by his own people and **crucified**...

survive and **thrive** in the face of **vigilant**, organized, state-funded resistance?

How did it come about that a **Nazi** **project** would eventually be **embraced** by the very empire that for **300** years sought to **annihilate** it?

[How is it that a cross commemorating the crucifixion of Jesus hangs over the emperor's entrance to the Roman Colosseum? Historians have pondered this mystery for generations. They all arrive at much the same conclusion.]

[British historian Karen Armstrong summed it up this way:]

Against **all odds**, by the third century, **Christianity** had become a force to be reckoned with.

We still do not really understand **how** this came about.

—Karen Armstrong, *Fields of Blood*

[Nobody can deny that it happened. How in the world this happened is one of history's greatest mysteries. We don't know how it came about unless we pay attention to and take seriously the eye-witness testimonies of the men and women who were there and documented