

Bible and the Headlines: Glue Man

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It has been a while since people used the expression, "... headed to the glue factory." This saying comes from a time when a convenient way to dispose of old draft animals was to have them rendered into an organic adhesive. "Headed to the glue factory" meant that something was outdated and needed to be replaced. While there is no renaissance for this expression, recent business and sports headlines indicate that these industries are searching for a reliable way to make another kind of "glue."

The collision repair industry website Body Shop Business on September 24th carried, "Milwaukee Tool: Join the Culture Club." While collision repair involves adhesives, the article praised the work environment the toolmaker had established among its employees. The author noted that culture is, "... the glue that holds a company together. It's what makes it fun to go to work." Employers were directed to examine the work environment at their business to see whether it encouraged people to 'stick around.'

The sports news website Heavy.com on October 1st featured the story, "Cardinals' Former Breakout Is 'the Glue' of the Team." The piece looks at the effect the team's center, Hjalte Froholdt, has on its offensive line. His teammates are themselves Cardinal veterans, but "... Froholdt has been at the forefront, making sure his group is as cohesive as possible." The Cardinals hope their offensive line can move from the number 2 spot to the league's yardage leader.

In the October 12th edition of the Wall Street Journal the article "The Underrated Power of 'Glue Employees' Who Hold Everything Together" was an interview with behavioral scientist Jon Levy and his 15 years of research on effective business teams. Levy gives credit for successful teams to the 'glue player' which he describes as, "... the team member who multiplies everyone else's results, helping the team win. They ... know how to move the group forward." To Levy, the glue player is an oxymoron- a person who leads from behind.

The 'glue player' for the early disciples was Barnabas. His real name was Joseph but the Bible tells us, "The apostles called him 'Barnabas' which means 'son of encouragement'" (Acts 4:36). Barnabas had the gift of multiplying peoples efforts for God. In the city of Antioch a spontaneous revival had broken out and church leaders in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to help: "When Barnabas arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man ... and a great number of people were brought to the Lord" (Acts 11:23-24). Barnabas' most famous 'glue player' role was introducing Saul, a former enemy of Christians, to the disciples in Jerusalem (Acts 9:27). Barnabas was able to convince them that Saul (whose name was changed to Paul Acts 13:9) was now a Christian and was already preaching the Gospel fearlessly (Acts 9:27). Barnabas and Paul would go on to start churches across Greece and Turkey (Acts 14:21-27).

America is a Christian nation, but it is divided into over 200 denominations and thousands of small groups. We sure could use a glue-player like Barnabas to bring us back together again so that Jesus' prayer for Christian unity (John 17:21-23) would come true. We need to head for the glue factory.