

In search of...



Truth & Right

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Building by Unity

There are many endeavors in life. We may go to work, school, the voting booth, a baseball game, movie, concert, or some other event. Each of these activities requires a certain amount of involvement, and when we involve ourselves in them, we commit to a certain level of participation. Some of these activities may be summarily dismissed because our involvement in them is minimal. Others require more involvement and participation. The more effort we put into the activity, the more

we will get out of it in the long run. The greatest endeavor in which one may be involved is the Lord's Church.

There are many, however, who look at the church as simply another opportunity like work, school, or a game. This, however, is not the Lord's view of the church. The church is the body of believers for which Christ died and shed His blood (Acts 20:28). He committed fully to her establishment, and he commits fully to her success. We must have

the same level of commitment to the church if she is going to be successful. Lack of commitment to the church is one of the greatest threats to church unity.

Many years ago, a brother in Christ asked my opinion about where he ought to place his membership. He said that there was one congregation he was looking at that was small and didn't have a lot of resources. There was another congregation that was large and had many resources. My question to him was, "Where can you better serve the Lord?" In our day and time, religion is looked on as a cafeteria experience. Many have the attitude that they may shop around until they find a congregation that they like and are comfortable. This is not how we ought to think about our relationship to the body of Christ. Rather, our desire ought to be, "How may I best serve the Lord?"

Being a member of the body is not about comfort, ease, and safety. This notion would likely insult many early members of the Lord's church who endured severe persecution, suffered greatly, and even died for the Lord's cause. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). Having Christian unity demands

that we do just this. Such unity is not superficial, but truly profound, where Christians may have deep abiding personal relationships based upon true knowledge of one another—not just upon the niceties of making acquaintance.

What does it take to have Christian unity? The apostle Paul wrote about it in Ephesians 4:1-16. He commented upon four areas of focus that are absolutely necessary for Christian unity: attitude, doctrine, organization, and working relationship.

We must have the right attitude to have Christian unity. Paul wrote, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The world may elevate, lift itself up in pride, cut others short, and run amuck of one another, but God calls all Christians to refuse the passions of the flesh, and bring themselves under control of the spirit. Unity is an endeavor, both personally and collectively.

We must have the right doctrine to have unity. Paul wrote, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Here are listed seven essentials on which we must not compromise. Certainly there are other areas of concern. However, if within these seven "ones," we find disagreement with others, we must work to unite upon God's truth.

We must have the right organization. Paul lists the following "offices" for church work: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Again, this is not an exhaustive list, but all of these offices are provided for today's church. Some, however, are no longer filled because of their temporary nature. The church continues to benefit from the work of the apostles and prophets in the first century. Evangelists, shepherds, and teachers work with the church today to lead, guide, and teach others. The church must be organized correctly in order to be united.

We must have the right working spirit. Paul wrote, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted

by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." In all things we are to have love one toward another. This, however, does not mean that everyone does the same work. In Romans 12 and in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul discusses how each member has different abilities. Different parts of the physical body work differently. The eye cannot do the hearing, etc. So also in the church everyone has their role to perform. We need to make an effort to determine what those roles are and try to fill them to the best of our ability; otherwise, we will have disunity.

Unity is hard; it is an endeavor. Trying to find easy solutions to difficult problems never works out in the long run; this kind of attitude leads to the cafeteria mentality for churches. Strong and lasting relationships depend on our working out our differences according to God's pattern. May God help us to so do.

Kevin Cauley

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The Resurrection

I Z M C G E Y C Q P M Z P R B Q A Z S W
U X T T W R O L L E D Z A R U S U Z J P
Q K B A Q E N R Y X T G Y H X J E X P F
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A M M R R C D D Y F K B P U D S I T P J
U D F A S E E M E D S P X A A E D F H H
Y T C A P H R X A K K G W G Z N B H Z X
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N U T Z C A U C R W W N X G L O C O P G
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T L J L S I N F U L R A V O N E N M D T
P R F T J Q W P L O O K I N G D T M I S

- At dawn they went to the tomb taking spices (Luke 24:1)
- They found the stone rolled away from the tomb (vs. 2)
- But they did not find the body of Jesus (vs. 3)
- Two men stood by them in dazzling apparel (vs. 4)
- They were frightened, and bowed to the ground (vs. 5)
- "He is not here, but has risen." (vs. 6)
- The Son of Man, delivered into the hands of sinful men (vs. 7)
- And they remembered His words (vs. 8)
- They told all these things to the eleven and the rest (vs. 9)
- It was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary (vs. 10)
- The words seemed like an idle tale (vs. 11)
- Peter, looking in, saw the linen cloths by themselves (vs. 12)