

The Biggest Lie Employers Tell Employees

LinkedIn calls itself “the world’s largest professional network,” with more than 300 million members. Co-founder and executive chairman Reid Hoffman presumably knows something about vocational relationships. In his new book *The Alliance*, he identifies the biggest lie employers tell employees: “The employment relationship is like family.” Some employers tell this lie, according to Hoffman, because they have deluded themselves into believing it. Others tell it because they want the employee to believe it. But Hoffman says it isn’t true: “You don’t fire your kid because of bad grades.”

Here’s where the body of Christ is different from any other organization: It truly is a family. We are all children of one Father, sisters and brothers of one family. The church is intended to be a community of grace, not grades. And our community is perhaps our strongest appeal to a culture driven by performance, evaluation and competition.

However, we’re not always the family our Father wants us to be.

I became a Christian in 1973 after a Baptist church in Houston, Texas, invited my brother and me to ride their bus to church services. Our church cooperated with other Baptist churches to do missions, youth camps and other programs. But I don’t remember a single time when we worked on a ministry initiative with a non-Baptist church.

We Baptists weren’t alone in our denominational exclusivity. Prior to Vatican Council II (1962-65), many Catholics believed that non-Catholics could not enter heaven. Many in the Church of Christ have believed that only those baptized into their church could be “saved.” Other traditions have their forms of

doctrinal insistence.

By contrast, Jesus prayed for His followers across time “that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:21). Our Lord knew that divisions in his body would hinder our ministry and witness. When the world sees Christians fighting with each other, why would they want to join us? Jesus also knew that unity is a great enticement to the faith. When the world sees Christians working together, they are more likely to want the love and community they see in us.

Clearly, there are doctrinal commitments that supersede denominational cooperation. Jesus’ virgin birth, atoning death, physical resurrection and promised return are non-negotiable. But believers can differ on significant but less-essential issues—mode of baptism, method of church organization and eschatological positions, for instance—while cooperating to do evangelism and ministry together.

I have lived in Dallas, Texas for 17 years. In recent years I have seen pastors praying for and with each other on a level of intensity I’ve never witnessed before. I’ve seen millennials gathering for worship and ministry, and churches cooperating across ethnic and denominational divisions. Movement Day Greater Dallas is one example of a collaborative initiative in our city. There are many such examples of gospel movements in other cities across the land. Clearly, the Spirit is unifying the people of God to advance the kingdom of God for the glory of God.

“In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, and in all things charity.” How is God calling you to answer Jesus’ prayer for unity today?

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