

Why Unity in the Body of Christ Is Not Conformity

What is unity in the body of Christ?

We must look to the Bible to explain what unity in the house of God looks like and what it does not look like. Unity involves moving with the same heart, agenda and direction, but it does not dictate how we move.

One of the best pictures of unity can be found in the 12 tribes of Israel, collectively known as the children of Israel. Each tribe is unique in its lineage and function but not in its mission as a collective. The tribe of Levi became the biblical basis of the priesthood for the children of Israel. Judah was known for its praise and lineage of kings. Each tribe contained a function but shared a similar calling as the children of Israel.

Likewise, in Christ, we each have a different function but the same upward calling to be conformed into the image of Christ. We also share a common mission given by Jesus to go into the world, preach the gospel, heal the sick and cast out demons.

In Mark 16, Jesus sends out the 12 disciples on assignment to the lost sheep of Israel. We see the government of God now represented in the 12 disciples to the 12 tribes of Israel. They are tasked with one mission: to declare the kingdom of God is at hand. Each has a unique function, giftset and personality, but all have one common mission: to love and point the way to Jesus as the Messiah. Then again, after the resurrection in what is now known as the Great Commission, Jesus sends His disciples into the entire world.

The new covenant of grace is based on the work of Jesus alone; therefore, freely we have received, and freely we should give. We are not called to unite only with groups of people who

share our traditions, race and cultural backgrounds. We are called to go into all the world proclaiming the gospel to every creature. We are not called into buildings but rather all over the world. If we believe that the church's sole purpose is to make disciples in order to fill buildings, then we have missed the point.

In case you haven't noticed, the world does not inhabit your church pews; only you do. Furthermore, if they don't conform to your theology and mindset, they are cast out as a hopeless sinner when they do come. The world is full of disciples whom the Holy Spirit of God has wooed without a home. The Holy Spirit today is still wooing hearts to the beauty of Jesus while His body sends them away! There is something wrong with this picture; none of this displays the image of Jesus!

Today Christians can function differently in gifts given by the Holy Spirit, but we are all working toward one mission. Although a person possesses the prophet's office or gift, ultimately, that person should look like and sound like Jesus, leading others to the Messiah Himself. Similarly, a person gifted with an apostle's office should also operate in a manner that displays the image of Jesus with a different function and ultimately leads people to Jesus. We all have different functions and giftings, but we all bear the image of Jesus and share the common mission to point to the one.

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With one mission we reach a lost, hurting and dying world!
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