

Pursuing the Unity of the Church: Part II

Ephesians 4:1-6
November 4, 2007

The Basis for Unity:

1. The unity of the church is the unity of the spirit—“Be eager to maintain the unity *of the spirit...*” (v. 3)
2. What makes the unity of the church possible is the peace Christ purchased on the cross—“Be eager to maintain the unity of the spirit *in the bond of peace.*” (v. 3)

The Basis of Unity:

3. Our pursuit of unity is a small part of a massive movement of God to unite all things in Christ (Ephesians 1:7-10).
4. Our pursuit of unity is based on the fact that, as Christians, we have all things in common (vv. 4-6).
5. Our pursuit of unity is based on the value God places on every Christian person.

A Key Question:

Why should we care about the unity of the broader church?

The Main Answer: Christ is one and therefore his body is one; Christ is not divided and therefore his body is not divided

Ephesians 4:4-6

“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

“But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? For when one says, ‘I follow Paul,’ and another, ‘I follow Apollos,’ are you not being merely human? What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.”

In the pursuit of unity we
sometimes must divide:

- Matthew 10:34-36
- 1 Corinthians 5:9-13
- 1 Corinthians 11:18-19

A Key Thought:

Our commitment to biblical truth must trump our commitment to relationships:

Tony Jones states the opposite: “We firmly hold that living in reconciled friendship trumps traditional orthodoxies—indeed, orthodoxy requires reconciliation as a prerequisite.” (www.emergentvillage.com)

A Key Thought:

Our commitment to biblical truth must trump our commitment to relationships:

- *All true friendship is built on truth*
- *Truth is the basis of all true friendship*

Another Key Question:

How do we know when it's time to divide?

*“In the essentials unity, in the non-essentials
liberty, and in all things charity (love)”*

In the Essentials Unity:

What are the essentials of the Christian faith?

*This is a difficult question to answer but we
have tried to do so in our Membership
Affirmation of Faith.*

www.monergism.com

www.equip.org

In the Non-Essentials Liberty:

“Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself” (Romans 14:4-7).

In all Things Charity (love):

“And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.”

(2 Timothy 2:24-25)