

The Cry for Unity

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I. Introduction.

A. Text: Ephesians 4:1-6.

B. The church has forgotten its calling determined by the Lord.

C. Many claim the cause of the church's weakness is the lack of unity and that ecumenism is the answer.

II. Paul recognizes that there are differences in the church as suggested by his call for unity.

A. It is unrealistic to pretend that the church does not have differences.

B. The church gathers all kinds of people without exception into one body.

C. Beneath the differences, there is a basic unity.

1. Unity is created by the indwelling Spirit.

2. Ecumenists try to create unity by the flesh--through an organizational unity.

3. The church is bound together in an organism--it cannot find its unity through an organization.

a. There is an internal unity that occasionally manifests external disagreement.

b. There is also an external unity with great internal disagreement.

c. One is imposed direction and the other is shared life.

III. The unity of the body of Christ gathers around the three Persons of the Trinity.

A. There is one body.

1. The body is more than an organization.

2. The mutual sharing of life makes a body different from an organization.

3. There is a fundamental unity that exists despite external divisions.

B. There is one Spirit.

1. This is the power behind the Christian church.

2. The Spirit is the same in every age.

3. The power of the church is not dependent upon many or few.

C. There is one hope. This hope is glory--that the believer might be like Jesus.

D. There is one Lord.

1. Lord means ultimate authority. (Philippians 2)

2. Jesus is Lord of the universe.

E. There is one faith. This means that there is only one set of facts for all people everywhere.

F. There is one baptism.

1. The real baptism is the Baptism of the Spirit, which links the believer to Jesus.

2. We are baptized into Jesus' death being made one with Him. (Romans 6)

G. There is one God and Father. The mark that the believer has found Him is that he relates to Him as Father feeling His father heart. (Romans 8)

H. The unity is not doctrinal but areas of mutual experience. The way to create unity is to bring a person to Christ consequently.

IV. Practical results.

A. Christians cannot be classified by organizations--God's Spirit overleaps all human boundaries. The one who is weak in the faith should be received.

B. True Christians cannot be joined to those who deny those fundamental unities.

C. The effort of Christians is not to create unity but to maintain peace in the body of Christ.

Application questions:

1. How would you respond to someone who says Christians cannot be truly united unless all denominations are ended? Explain.

2. How does the Trinity bring unity to the church?

3. If unity is based upon the organism of the church, what is church disunity of which the believers ought to be watchful? Explain.
