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UNITY FOR HARVEST

NOTE: This article is a continuation of the article "Unity, Not Necessarily Unanimity". The words "UNITY, NOT NECESSARILY UNANIMITY" is not an endorsement for the Unity Church, Interfaith Organization, nor the Unitarian-Universalist Church.

In my article entitled "Unity, Not Necessarily Unanimity", I emphasized some key issues in reference to unity within the body. (1): The actual Greek word for unity (homouthumos) means "together with passion". (2): I discussed how this word did not mean that everyone had to agree on everything in order to be classified as being in unity. (3): I also explained how the church has improperly defined unity as actually being unanimity. I also explained the different meanings of the words unity and unanimity. (4): I also detailed how the church used their definition of unity (actually unanimity) to keep the body of Christ from obtaining true unity.

In the vision the Lord gave me, I saw two people from two vastly different cultures walking together in a park. It was there that these two people became friends and established a friendship. It was through this friendship that the Christian lifestyle was shown to the unsaved person which ultimately led to salvation. Through this experience, the two friends stayed close, but attended different churches. The two friends continued to practice friendship evangelism with new friends along with coming together for city-wide outreaches and marches for Jesus. It was here that I noticed that all of God's people of the city came together for the common purpose. I then asked "God, how did you do this in this city. There have been Godly people in my city that have tried to bring unity to the Body of believers here in Wilmington, NC for years. I clearly see that the problem has been the fact that the people here have mistaken unity for unanimity and the body of Christ has been divided in this city. What else is in the way of pure unity, not unanimity, in our city, and in other cities?"

The Lord replied: "There are obstacles that have been placed there by man made rules, regulations, and traditions. Instead of following the commands of my Word, the church has used these "benchmarks" as criteria of measuring and judging whether my children are true believers or not. For true unity to be established, these paradigms must be eliminated. These obstacles being:"

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Spiritual Gerrymandering (i.e. "turf wars"): Gerrymandering is a political term describing the concept of dividing and re-districting of a city to where the voting districts are made to be advantageous to one political party while at the same time, disadvantageous to the opposing political party, ethnic groups, etc. In most cities throughout America, this is what the pastors have done. They have taken their physical city and spiritually divided it among themselves. The division is usually done in the same fashion as the concept of political precincts. We have used socio-economics to map out our cities and determine which economic class of people is outreached by a particular church. One "low level" pastor may get the housing projects. Another "high level" pastor may get the planned subdivision with the security guard at the entry gate. One up-and-coming pastor may get the hard working middle class people that the big churches do not want, etc. The idea of unity here is disunity, segregation and the concept of "we agree to disagree". One pastor says to another mentally "You have your assigned territory, be content with the blessings that God has given you".

Instead of coming together to God in unity to receive His strategies for evangelizing their city, the pastors instead rush off to these "church growth" seminars for the latest "buzz words", "catch phrases", and "techniques" in order to backstab the other pastors for control of their city. The same pastors who agreed to divide their city into segments are now secretly developing plans to multiply their congregations, prestige, and their pocketbooks through their theories of unity (unanimity) to completely control the spiritual teachings and opinions dictated in their city by trying to emphasize a ill-fated concept of "We are the only anointed church in our city". If one pastor decided to pursue true Biblical unity by planning joint city wide outreaches with another pastor, those pastors actually risk the betrayal of and/or the friendships (and future friendships) of other pastors. Most of the time, a joint effort of outreach involving two churches cannot see the light of day when the churches argue over which church does the worship, which pastor gets to preach the altar call, and even worse, which church gets the new converts for an increase in attendance and tithes. Sometimes the pastors that betray pastors seeking true Biblical unity are the spiritual "power brokers" that desire spiritual control over the ideas of Christianity that is preached in their cities.

After spiritual gerrymandering and "church growth" seminars have been implemented, the church is already weakened. The spirit of competition has been set in place. Churches compete for the "best anointed converts". Christians will go to a church not because God told them to become submitted to a particular fellowship, but go because they have compared the "perks", the "value of entertainment", and the "what's in it for me" beliefs to make their choice. Finding a church becomes more like finding a good paying job with good benefits. Christians will choose a church because of being offered a leadership role or a prestigious position as a musician in front of hundreds of people on Sunday

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morning over God's voice telling them to submit to a particular leader. Pastors cannot confess their sins to their congregations or to other pastors in their "monthly get together" for fear of losing their congregations to a rival pastor that will rub it in the ground and "eliminate his competition". Question: "If these people come together to bind a 'territorial spirit' out of their city and fail miserably, then what if the "territorial spirit" is actually the 'territorial church leaders' who have divided their city up into gerrymandered segments?" God help the called minister that comes from out of town because God called him to establish a new church. Especially when well-established local church leaders make this man of God appear to be a "wolf in sheep's clothing" in fear of this minister offering "better perks" or new "leadership opportunities" to those not in leadership who desire to be in leadership or in fear of overthrow or losing their slice of the gerrymandered pie.

Spiritual Demographics (i.e. "niche-marketing Christianity"): After gerrymandering has been successfully implemented, then the church within their specified segment becomes "specialized" as to their outreach and ministry. To determine their outreach, most churches use the concept of demographics to determine their style of ministry. Demographics is defined as the concept of using the characteristics of a population (age, sex, income, political affiliation, etc) for market research, sociological analysis, etc. For example, one church may decide that their centralized ministry will be an evangelism-focused ministry. Another church decides that their centralized ministry will be a spiritual warfare-focused ministry. There is nothing wrong with a church that becomes enriched with more knowledge in a particular spiritual area of thought than another church. The problem with centralized ministry becomes manifested when two things happen.

The first thing that usually happens is that instead of sharing the God-given revelations with other believers in other churches, the church with the enriched revelations tries to hoard the revelations within their congregation. Some churches go even farther than this by hoarding the God-given revelations in their congregations to only the leadership or a specific clique within that congregation. When a church finally decides to not "hoard" the enrichment anymore, then they try to use it in the name of high-priced seminars and in the name of increasing their memberships. Whereas true Biblical based unity would follow the words of Jesus "Freely Receive, Freely Give."

The second thing that usually happens in a centralized ministry is that the enriched knowledge becomes the only thing preached in the church. All teachings, praise and worship songs, and sermons become heavily weighed towards that revelation. What happens next is that the congregation becomes spiritually malnourished and lacks proper Biblical balance. For example, a church that has a centralized ministry of spiritual warfare would probably teach the scriptures that had only to do with warfare. Their music primarily consists of choruses that deal only with the Blood of Jesus and slaying the enemy (Satan). A sermon about the prodigal son or the great commission, if preached, would not

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be presented in proper context, but with a slant towards spiritual warfare. The same thing happens in other churches that overemphasize on particular scripture other the rest of the Bible. The focus shifts from to worshipping Jesus Christ and the things He has done to worshipping the enriched God-given revelation. The teaching becomes the God instead of God being God. William Shakespeare once said "All the world's a Stage". Unfortunately, in this type of environment, "THE STAGE BECAME THE WORLD". The focus of studying the word becomes so focused on that one teaching that the other teachings and words of Jesus almost becomes non-existent or re-interpreted to enhance and promote their focused teaching. The guest speakers that speak or hold revival services usually speak on the same topics that the church has now made a doctrine, or denomination from. Other churches that do not have the same enthusiasm with the teachings of their church are viewed as "weak" and "inferior" in their eyes.

Keeping Up With The "Joneses" Christianity (i.e.: "conform or be cast out", "Kissbutt Kingdoms", and "Christian Cliques"): In some churches today, there are many Christians who feel like that they have to be a part of the "elite inner circle" in order to be considered as anointed or ready to do service for God. In fellowships of this nature, there are two standards that have to be upheld as moral absolutes. The first standard (and should be the only standard first and foremost) is the Bible. The second standard that has to be upheld is the man-made rules, traditions, and criteria's that are established. The people who enforce the man-made rules legalistically claim that their man-made standards and criteria are Biblically based. Unfortunately, some churches end up following and worshipping the man made rules more than the Bible.

The church, in this environment, turns from being a Biblical based hospital for the wounded and a center of evangelism to an over-glorified Boy Scout meeting. Fulfillment of the man-made criteria determines the number of spiritual "merit badges" one has. The more "merit badges" one has, the more anointed that person is considered to be. For example, the man who attends the local Promise Keepers meetings every week is considered to be far more anointed than the man who doesn't. The woman who dances in front of everyone is considered to be more anointed than the woman who is on her knees praying. The family who places more tithe money in the offering plate is considered to have more anointing than the other families in the church. In churches where "niche-marketing Christianity" is emphasized, the one who has a certain spiritual gift is considered more anointed than a fellow brother and sister in Christ that has another God-given gift. The American church has used such criteria as: Promise Keepers, Focus on The Family, American Family Association, Home-schooling, health, wealth, and prosperity, picketing abortion clinics, political affiliations, denominations, etc. to determine anointings and in some cases, ones eternal destiny.

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When churches that operate in this mentality experience hard times, the weaker sheep are usually sacrificed for "survival of the most anointed" or "spiritual selection". The Christians within a particular clique consider themselves to be the most anointed within a church body. When these people get sick, then the focus is "every demon in hell is attacking me". When someone that they considered to be less anointed is sick, then the focus is "confess that hidden sin". If someone within the clique is in need, then Christianity must stop for their needs. If someone outside the clique is in need, then those outside the clique are condemned for lacking faith and made to feel inferior, made to feel like a liability instead of an asset to the congregation, and a burden to the other church members. People deemed "less anointed" become the sacrificial lambs for the clique. This especially happens in evangelical settings. A humble servant of God who tries to start a ministry in a church is discarded for the newest convert with the goriest testimony ever heard. The church, instead of getting the new convert studying basic Biblical foundations, will use the new convert with the gory testimony to bring in more converts and more money. This new convert is used until he leads a person to Christ with a gorier testimony than theirs that can be used to bring in more numbers and money. Then that person is discarded, damage control is implemented especially if the new Christian relapses back to their old lifestyle, and a un-disciplined Christian is thrown out in the cold all "used up" while the cyclic pattern is re-implemented. Instead of rendering their hearts, and not their garments, the garments have been rendered and the hearts have not. Instead of seeking first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, we have sought after the "things" and expected the kingdom of God and its righteousness to be added unto us.

In summary, the concept of subdivision is evident in the church today. Pastors subdivide their cities. A church subdivides the Bible and teaches only segments of the Word. Church members subdivide their congregations. Spiritually, it appears to be a form of middle age feudalism re-enacted. People become slaves to a system where the warlords use the slaves for their social, economical, political, and mental gain via the use of harvest and warfare. Most of the time, the gain is done more for the benefit of the warlord, and not necessarily the cause of the Kingdom of God. The church becomes further defeated. Our society becomes more violent. Then we wonder "Why can't we reach our world with the Gospel"? Where Christianity was once the forerunners in the arts, sciences, knowledge, etc, now we have let the enemy in and we now flee to re-create another kingdom instead of taking back the cities God once gave us. When we do decide to fight, do we choke on gnats and swallow elephants? Obtaining true unity will not happen overnight. It will happen when people decide to lay down their petty doctrines, quit playing the game of spiritual monopoly in order to win free parking and purchase boardwalk and park place with houses, hotels, and condos, and say "The kingdom and the harvest is more important than my petty ideologies". We cannot take our cities alone. There is strength in

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numbers. One can put a thousand to flight while two can put ten-thousand to flight.

Lord, right now in the name of Jesus, we come to you in repentance for the walls we have built up in the name of elitism, for the attitudes created in the name of superiority, and for the concepts we created in the name of uniqueness. We ask for godly repentance in our hearts right now. We repent for subdividing our cities, our congregations, and Your Word. We ask that you will show us the needed God-given strategies to unite and win our cities back to Christ. Let true Biblical unity (not unanimity) be birthed in our hearts today. In Jesus name we pray, AMEN!

I have a question I would like to present to the readers of this article. "Are the paradigms of Christianity unity (actually unanimity) only happening in my hometown of Wilmington, NC?" I have been in numerous chat rooms, received e-mails, and subscribed to newsgroups dealing with the subject. I have heard many people say that the concept of true unity within the body of Christ is alive and happening in their cities today. If you live in a city where true Biblical unity among the body exists or is non-existent, please e-mail me. To the ones who experience true Biblical unity within the local church, I would like to know how unity was obtained and what battles were faced and defeated to come to the point of unity that is existent within your city. I would like to know if the paradigms listed above were correct and had to be dealt with before unity existed. To those who experience division within the body, I would like to know if the word I received from God was a confirmation of what someone had heard previously from God. I would also like to know if there are barriers other than the ones mentioned above that are keeping true Biblical unity from being existent in your city. I am very curious as to how unity (not unanimity) can exist and succeed in one city while at the same time cannot materialize in another city? Please feel free to e-mail me your comments by clicking on the gold word "e-mail" in the black column.

In Simplicity: **Local Unity (not unanimity) Produces Global Harvest**