

Christian Unity

“Behold, how good and how pleasant [it is] for brethren to dwell together in unity! [It is] like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, [even] Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, [and as the dew] that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, [even] life for evermore” (Psalm 133). “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me” (John 17:20-23).

What an indescribably precious thing love and unity among believers is! It is a unity based on our unity with Christ. God is our father, and we are brothers (including believing women). It is a unity based on a common walk in the light: *“but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7)*. It is a unity based on a common belief of and defense of the truth of the gospel: *“... that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27b)*. It is a unity based on common adversaries and common suffering: *“and in nothing be terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Philippians 1:28-29)*.

We love the same things. We hate the same things. We are closer than any natural blood relations. We love our Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel of salvation conditioned on the atoning blood and imputed righteousness of Christ alone. We hate all false gospels that condition salvation in any way, to any degree, on the sinner. We speak peace to each other based on our common salvation. We do not speak peace to our brothers’ enemies. We desire to fellowship with each other. We rejoice together in Christ and defend each other against the attacks of our enemies. We help each other in times of need. These are the ways in which we show our love for each other.

God said, *“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes” (1 John 2:9-11)*. Loving the brothers is not an option. Those who do not love believers show themselves to be unregenerate. For example, if a professing believer says that some who believe in universal atonement are his brothers in Christ, then he is speaking peace to the enemies of the people of God, showing that he actually hates the people of God. His is not in unity with the people of God. He is one of those *“which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned” (Romans 16:17)*. We are to point out and avoid such people. But when we find those who believe the truth and thus judge by the truth, we are to embrace them as our brothers in Christ. We may have differences, but they are not gospel differences. We are to bear with the weaknesses of one another in love.

God’s people are all over the world, of different races, tongues, and circumstances. Let us who are believers seek them out and love them.

by Marc D. Carpenter
www.outsidethecamp.org