

Divergent Unity

Long Beach Alliance Church • November 2, 2014 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**One Lord, One faith, One baptism,
One God and Father of all...
~Ephesians 4:5-6 (ESV)**

1) Passionately Maintaining the Purposes of Unity

- A) Eagerly maintaining unity in the Spirit (Ephesians 4:3) was a core prayer of Jesus Christ for **US** the night He was betrayed (John 17:20-23). Unity with God through a relationship with Jesus Christ comes by living under the increasing influence of the Holy Spirit, authentically revealing Jesus to those who do not yet believe.
- B) The church (God's people) vividly reveals God's love when we intentionally and openly live in unity together. Unity inside the church is most effective when it is visibly observable outside the church. Derivatively, unity inside the church is least effective when it is barely observable, or missing entirely (1 Corinthians 1:10-12).
- C) Ignoring unity within the church family is equivalent to rejecting the significance of the reconciliation which is provided by Christ's sacrificial death (Colossians 3:12-14). Further, a church family which does not transparently reveal the unifying effects of redemption within its cultural context reveals selfish disinterest in the redemptive purposes of Christ's sacrificial death, walking 'unworthily' in rejection of their "calling."
- D) The first mark of living "worthy of the calling" (Ephesians 4:1) is submission to the Holy Spirit which chooses peace and unity. Unity among those in the church reveals the redemptive 'Mission of God;' the primary focus of a series of seven unifying "one's," beginning with "one body and one Spirit" (Ephesians 4:4).

2) Complete Unity Under the Banner of One

- A) A 'series of seven' is significant in the Bible, representing completion or perfection (e.g., days of creation, days of the week, churches in Revelation, etc.). Not to be lost in individual statements, unity is inclusive of all seven "one's" declarations (Ephesians 4:4-6), providing a "complete" or "perfect" perspective.
- B) Beginning the series of seven declarations with "one body" (4:4) places sharp focus on the church, Christ's body (1:22-23). The passionate pursuit of unity is most significant in the church because of extraordinary ethnic diversity (2:12-22) including varied generations, temperaments, families (Ephesians 4-6)...
- C) The church is intimately connected by "one Spirit" (4:4), cohesively connecting Christ's body together (cf. 1:13). There is a similar connection in the church under "one hope" of salvation (cf. 1:18, 2:7-9): the unique work of God in creating His extraordinary church from seeming nothingness (cf. Romans 4:17-18).
- D) With conjunctions dropped (unified singularity, lexical diversity) the "one hope" of salvation is firmly rooted in "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). The 'series of seven' reaches its apex under "one God and Father of all" (4:6), all things under the sovereign plan and purpose of the Almighty God!
- E) One church, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God. Eagerly maintaining unity in our church family reveals our union with God's BIG picture of redemption in the universe!

Growth Group Guide

"divergent unity" (ephesians 4:4-6) november 2-7, 2014

Take Off!

What is one of your "pet peeves" (something you find especially annoying)?

How is unity among Christians explained by the phrases "one faith" and "one baptism?"

Take a Closer Look!

What do "one Spirit," "one Lord," and "one God" have to do with Christians maintaining unity?

How can unity in the church advance the Gospel?

Take It Home!

How can we live out these ideas from the Bible?

Where (a church, ministry, group of friends) have you seen Christians strongly unified? What can we learn from their example?

What can we do to maintain unity in our church in order to share Jesus with our neighborhood?

Take It Further!

Want to study more? Read here outside group time

Read 2 Corinthians 13:14 and Philippians 2:1-2. What is Holy Spirit's unique role? How do we see this in Ephesians 4:3-4? Once we know about this role of His, what must we do?