DEMANDS OF UNITY

By Donald Townsley

INTRODUCTION

1. Men teach many false concepts of unity.
   (1) Man-centered unity
   (2) Ecumenical Movement

2. One of the popular concepts today is "unity-in-diversity".
   (1) This is a contradiction of terms
   (2) Denominations fellowship each other on the basis of "unity-in-diversity".
   (3) Institutional churches fellowship denominational churches on the basis of "unity-in-diversity".
   (4) Ed Harrell taught in 1989, on the basis of Romans 14, that we can have fellowship with another when there is a difference of "considerable moral and doctrinal import" (Christianity Magazine, May 1989, pg. 134.)

3. In this lesson we will see the New Testament does not teach "unity-in-diversity".

4. The word "unity" means: Oneness; a togetherness that can only come by following the word of God (John 17: 20 - 21; Eph. 4:13).
   (1) This unity is the absence of diversity.

5. Jesus prayed for unity upon the basis of the word of God --John 17:11, 20 - 21; Matt. 6: 9 - 10; Psa. 119: 89
6. Paul pleaded for unity on the basis of the word -- I Cor. 1:10.
7. Peter exhorts it -- I Pet. 3:8 "Finally, be ye all of one mind".
8. I John 1: 3 - 6; Eph. 5:11

I. UNITY DEMANDS THAT BRETHREN AGREE

1. Amos asked, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" -- Amos 3:3

2. The standard of agreement is the word of God.
   (1) John 17: 20 - 21; John 12:48; I Cor. 1: 10; I Pet. 4:11
   (2) We are to walk in truth -- II John 4; III John 3 - 4; John 17:17; I Pet. 1:25; II Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17

3. Facts the Bible teaches about truth:
   (1) Truth can be KNOWN -- John 8:32; Heb. 10:26; I Tim. 2:4; II Tim. 4:2
   (2) Truth can be IDENTIFIED -- John 17:17
   (3) Truth can be UNDERSTOOD -- Eph. 5:17; Eph. 3:3 - 4; Matt. 13:15; Matt. 7:21
   (4) Truth is ALWAYS CONSISTENT because GOD CANNOT LIE -- Tit. 1:2; I John 2:21
   (5) Truth is ABSOLUTE -- Psa. 119: 89; Matt. 24: 35
   (6) Truth must be OBEYED -- I Pet. 1:22; Rom. 6: 17 - 18
   (7) There can be NO COMPROMISE with Truth -- Gal. 2:5
   (8) Truth is ALWAYS NARROW -- Matt. 7: 13 - 14
NO SUBSTITUTE for Truth -- Gal. 1: 6 - 7

ALL WORSHIP to God must be BASED ON TRUTH.

1. Worship not based on truth is vain -- John 4:24; Matt. 15:9

4. We who know the truth, understand the truth, and walk in truth, will be of the same mind and of the same judgment -- I Cor. 1:10; I Cor. 4:6

II. UNITY DEMANDS THAT WE SPEAK THE SAME THING.

1. All are the speak the same thing -- I Cor. 1:10

2. Paul taught the same thing in every church -- I Cor. 4:17

3. We all are to preach the same plan -- Eph. 4: 1 - 6

   (1) One body, one church -- Eph. 1: 22 - 23
   (2) One Spirit, one revelation -- II Tim. 3: 16 - 17; Jude 3
   (3) One Hope, heaven -- John 14: 1 - 6
   (4) One Lord, one authority -- James 4:12; Matt. 28:18
   (5) One faith, one body of revelation -- II John 9 - 11; Rev. 22: 18 - 19
   (6) One baptism, unity of practice -- Rom. 6: 3, 4
   (7) One God, unity of worship -- John 4:24

III. UNITY DEMANDS EFFORT.

1. Christians must ENDEAVOR to keep the unity of the Spirit -- Eph. 4:3

2. The word, "Endeavor" means: To give diligence; to put forth effort; to try.

3. This means that brethren are to work at being united on truth rather than doing and teaching things that divide them.

4. Forbearance in things of indifference -- Eph. 4:2; Rom. 14:4, 10, 13 - 14, 22; I Cor. 8:8

IV. UNITY DEMANDS THAT BRETHREN STAND FOR THE TRUTH

1. God’s people are to stand together against all evil -- Eph. 6:11; 5:11

2. They are to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel;" Phil. 1: 27

3. Paul said, "for by faith ye stand" -- II Cor. 1:24

4. We are to stand in the gospel -- I Cor. 15:1

V. UNITY DEMANDS ONENESS

1. The unity of the New Testament has at its foundation the word of God -- John 17: 20 - 21

2. This unity eliminates all error -- II John 9 - 11; Rom. 16: 17

3. It prohibits division -- I Cor. 1: 10; Phil. 1: 27

4. Bible unity fulfills the word of God -- Matt. 7:21
CONCLUSION

1. Let us consider Paul's question to the Corinthians: "Is Christ divided?" -- I Cor. 1:13

2. The answer is "NO"
   
   (1) Christ is not divided in WILL -- John 17: 20 - 23
   (2) Christ is not divided in MESSAGE -- Eph. 4:5
   (3) Christ is not divided in BODY -- Eph. 4:4; 1: 22 - 23
   (4) Christ is not divided in AUTHORITY -- Eph. 4:5; Matt. 28:18
   (5) Christ is not divided in PLAN -- Eph. 4: 3 - 6

3. Let us all be alert to the difference in Bible unity and "unity-in-diversity".

4. This false unity is the Devil's compromise, and it is destroying the church of the Lord in many places.

5. We must all work for unity that is based upon the will of God -- John 17: 20 - 21

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