

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Keeping The Unity

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Paul exhorts Christians, “...to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (*Ephesians 4:3*). The context of the passage alerts us to the fact that keeping unity demands “*diligence*”, or for that which we are to be “*zealous*”. This unity is what is prescribed by the Spirit. It is not man’s plan for unity but “*the unity of the Spirit*”. Also, we must make sure in keeping the unity we follow the path making peace. We are to keep it in “*the bond of peace*”.

Bringing to this unity the proper attitude of “*lowliness, and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love*” (*Ephesians 4:2*), we can keep it in the bond of peace for we are manifesting the attitudes which surround and protect true peace. By first building on the proper foundation of unity of “*one body*”, “*one Spirit*”, “*one hope*”, “*one Lord*”, “*one faith*”, “*one baptism*” and “*one God and Father of all*” (*Ephesians 4:6*), we promote the “*oneness*” which is a necessity for unity.

The unity we are to keep demands that we promote “*one faith*”. The one faith is revealed

in the one Gospel (*Romans 10:17, Galatians 1:8,23*). The faith has been once and for all delivered. We must now *contend* for it, and *strive* for the faith of the gospel (*Jude 3, Philippians 1:27*).

The one faith includes everything revealed and taught in the gospel. We can be unified in the Spirit by appealing to the one Gospel as our only standard for living, not adding to nor taking away from the inspired testimony (*I Timothy 1:9-11, I Corinthians 4:6, Revelation 22:18-19*).

In the 1970’s, men such as Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett began to promote a “unity and diversity” concept among churches of Christ. Demanding all be unified in “one fact” and “one act”, these men opened the umbrella of fellowship to cover Denominations, such as the Christian Church. Their use of instrumental music in worship was not a barrier to unity for they believed in the Deity of Jesus, and were baptized for the remission of sins.

Being labeled a heretic then, Leroy Garrett has lived long enough to see “unity and diversity” make more inroads. Now, men

such as Max Lucado welcome more diversity by not only embracing instrumental music in worship, but not requiring baptism for the remission of sins. In his book, *IN THE GRIP OF GRACE*, Lucado looks at the church of Christ as being in a “big boat” with Lutherans, Catholics and Methodists. All are diverse, but unified, because of one reason: they all have the same “captain.” Garrett’s “one act” is now too controversial and divisive for some to demand it in keeping the unity.

Others, going down the unity and diversity path, are promoting a unity that allows for contradictory teaching regarding matters of moral and doctrinal import. Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage, Gambling, Immodest Apparel, and Social Drinking become matters some feel we can disagree on and still have unity. Will “Same Sex Marriages” fit into this category of “moral import” in which we can practice unity in diversity? If not, why not? In love, we must keep upholding and promoting all that the Spirit reveals, in order to keep the unity of the Spirit.