

Glad Tidings

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

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Only One

(Jerry Fite)

The Holy Spirit led Paul to reveal the basis upon which unity among Christians could thrive. Paul writes, “*There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, through all and in all*” (Ephesians 4:4-6).

During apostolic times, the point was clear as to how many churches were authorized by God. There is only one. The body of Christ was the church of Christ over which Jesus is the sole head. Earlier in the letter to the Ephesians, Paul wrote, “...and He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head of all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all” (Ephesians 1:22-23). The body is the church; therefore, the one body is the one church.

When we teach and preach the same truth today, people, who have lined themselves up with various denominations, believe we are intolerant, too narrow minded and even bigoted. But think about it for a moment. When Jesus said, “*I will build my church*” (Matthew 16:18), did He have in mind that He would be

one head over hundreds of different religious bodies? When the Holy Spirit led Paul to write that there should be no divisions among God’s people, and that we are all to speak the same thing, be perfected together in the same mind and judgment, (I Corinthians 1:10), was he at the same time saying it is okay for people in hundreds of distinct denominations to teach conflicting and contradictory doctrines in the name of Christ?

Yet, we are too narrow minded when we try to turn the hearts of people back to the truth of the New Testament that there is only one body – the church of which Jesus is Head. Remember, this is the basis for unity (Ephesians 4), not division. We believe and teach that if people will simply follow the New Testament, taking nothing from it, nor adding anything to it, we will be united in “one body”, teaching “one faith”, and fulfilling Jesus’ prayer for unity in our day (John 17:20-21).

If we were to turn our backs on God’s truth of only one body, and tolerate all the different denominations existing today, how should we react to the other plain statements in God’s platform for unity?

With the continual immigration of people from the far East, bringing with them their religions of many “gods,” should we no longer teach, or boldly proclaim that there is only “one God?” Will the sincere person, who worships Buddha as his god, be accepted by the “tolerant,” “loving,” “fair minded” people in the various Denominations? If not, why not? The same Bible which says there is “one God,” says there is “one body.” If we overlook the fact of “one body” in order to embrace the many denominational bodies, why can’t we overlook the “one God” in order to embrace the Buddhist?

The Muslim religion is growing in our country today. Sincere Muslims accept the teaching of Mohammed as authoritative in their lives. Mohammed is said to have received a vision from the angel Gabriel in A.D. 609, which moved him to begin to preach. While Paul said there is only “one Lord” (I Corinthians 8:6), are we to be silent in our claims, and be “tolerant,” “loving,” and “fair minded”, accepting the sincere Muslim who regards Mohammed’s teaching as the final, complete revelation from God? As there is “one body,” and “one God,” there is only “one Lord.”