

# THE CHURCH AS ONE

*“There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called...” —EPHESIANS 4:4*

In the Garden of Eden, not only did the individual fall away from God, but community and society as well. The message in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians is about a fallen society, which is restored, first to God and then to each other. This new society or community is what the New Testament calls ‘the church’.

Paul writes, “There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:5-6). This unity within the church is already a reality for those who are in Christ. The one body is the body of Christ and His Spirit is its life. As Christians, we are members of that body, and in Christ, we are being built together to be a dwelling place where God lives by His Spirit. It’s a Spiritual oneness, which takes place in our hearts, and unites us together with others who belong to Christ.

The problem is that many people are not satisfied with the unity that characterizes the church of Jesus Christ. They want it to be external as well as internal, and organizational as well as spiritual. All kinds of adjectives have been added to the church in order to define exactly who they are. There is Conservative Evangelical Christian, Bible-Believing Conservative Evangelical Christian, Reformed Bible-Believing Conservative Evangelical Christian, and so on. With every adjective added, the church gets narrowed down until there are just a few left who are the faithful few. Having distinguished themselves sufficiently, these multi-named churches get into their narrow identities and believe they

have a wonderful unity. But actually, it isn't unity. It is 'uniformity' and the very act of specifically distinguishing themselves is what creates disunity in the body of Christ.

Fundamental in Scripture is the nature of God and of Christ, the nature of His work on the cross, and the work of the Holy Spirit in restoring us into the image of God. These are essential beliefs in which there must be unity. If someone is seeking to understand Scripture in its context and comes up with different conclusions, such as what not to eat, or setting one day aside as special to the Lord, we respect that. These are non-essential issues, and there is liberty in choosing them. What is important is that in all our beliefs we show charity. In essential beliefs there must be unity, non-essential beliefs, liberty, and in all beliefs, charity. In this way, Paul tells us, "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3).

***PRAYER: I pray, Lord, that every Christian remains united in You, and works in harmony together, respecting each other. Thank You, Lord.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: Am I respecting of others in their specific beliefs that honour God?***