



# *The Right Basis for Unity*

without the desire to motivate Him to put His power into action. The most superficial consideration of God's nature will show that God has both the desire and the power (which is an unbeatable combination) to speak to man in a way to be understood. The apostles declared that we can understand the Bible (Eph. 3:3-4; 5:17) and that we must be unified on what it teaches (Eph. 4:4-6).

The answer to unity is not to agree to disagree, dropping "creedal barriers" and remain divided into denominations (the word "denomination" itself signifies a part of a whole, a class, or division). The answer to true unity is to discard all of the creeds of men which contain the doctrines peculiar to each denomination. If denominational creeds and doctrines have more than the Bible, they have too much. If they have less than the Bible, they don't have enough (2 Jn. 9). We must go back to the word of God and stand together upon truth, for this alone is the right basis for unity.

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Biblical unity should be the concern of everyone, for religious division is contrary to Jesus' prayer (Jn. 17:20-21) and to the apostles' plea (1Cor. 1:10). We must be aware, however, that biblical unity can only be attained by being unified concerning the teaching of the Bible. True, biblical unity is *of* God, *in* Christ, and *upon* Truth (Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Jn. 1:7). Unity with any other basis is not of God and not actually unity at all.

Many over the years have been soliciting compromise and calling it unity. We hear assertions that "if there is any unity at all, it must be unity in diversity...There is no other kind of unity" (*Carl Ketcherside, Mission Messenger*). The idea behind "unity in diversity" is, though one fellow believes and practices one thing and another fellow believes and practices something else, they should overlook their differences and agree to disagree. This false concept of unity is still being promoted today. We are told that to achieve unity all denominations should "accept each other as brothers and treat each other as children of God in the same heavenly family...drop creedal barriers, having fellowship on the Lordship of Christ and nothing else" (*Leroy Garrett, Restoration Review*). At a "Spiritual Renewal Conference" in Florence, AL, in a speech entitled, "*God Calls for the Unity of His Body*," Rubel Shelly stated, "We will not lose our separate denominational identities. We will not give up our particular heritage's and histories. We will not give up our distinctive practice with regard to our different organizational structures, worship, and so on. I see no need for that. But we will have to decide...to recognize one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord." Such statements declare that unity is to be achieved by

people in all the different denominations, with their conflicting teaching and practices, just agreeing to disagree.

Such cannot be the proper basis for unity for Jesus declared, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine" (Jn. 8:31). It is possible to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and not follow His word (Lk. 6:46). It is possible to offer up worship to the Lord in vain (Mt. 15:9). How then can those who teach different doctrines simply agree to disagree and be acceptable to God? They cannot. The only way true unity can be attained is by agreeing to follow the Bible and it alone for what we teach and practice.

Some who propose the unity in diversity idea state that agreement on what the Scriptures teach cannot be achieved because men cannot understand the Bible alike. For example, it has been stated, "It isn't that God's revelation speaks with two voices; it is simply that man's interpretive power is affected by many factors" (*Robert Myers, Restoration Review*). Thus, they excuse all the conflicting teachings and practices in the religious world on the basis that men's interpretive powers being affected.

However, when one declares that men cannot understand the Bible alike, the blame is actually placed on God not men. It is obvious that if God has the desire to speak to man in an understandable way, He would do so unless He were without the power to carry out His desire. At the same time, if He had the power to speak to man, He would do so unless He were

