

Becky Combee Ministries, Inc.

P.O. Box 3283 Lakeland, FL 33802-3283



ONE CHURCH

Suzanne D. Williams

*"As a prisoner of the Lord, I urge you: Live a life that is worthy of the calling He has graciously extended to you. Be humble. Be gentle. Be patient. Tolerate one another in an atmosphere thick with love. **Make every effort to preserve the unity the Spirit has already created, with peace binding you together.**" (Eph 4:1-3 VOICE)*

UNITY is God's desire for His church. Here in Ephesians 4, the apostle Paul says, we are "one body." There is "one Spirit." We are called with "one hope," and, "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, through all, and in all."¹

We are not many different sects and denominations, serving different Saviors, but **we are ONE CHURCH.**

In 1 Corinthians, Paul again describes the church as the body of Christ. As a body is made up of many members, having limbs and organs, each person in the church has their own unique gift. Each member is important, and the job of that member is valuable for the body to function.²

We are not just any body, but we are Christ's body. He is Head.³ We are all the parts that make Him mobile. We do the work, taking direction from the Head, as a physical body does.

But, He says, there is no place in the body for competition. Every member - the foot, the ear, the

eye - is needed for the body to work.⁴ There is no place in the body for strife, argument, and division. They destroy UNITY. We cannot speak against another member of the body and call it holiness.

God is not fooled. Jesus told us not to judge others. "How can you pick the speck out of your brother's eye?" He asked, "when there's a pole in your own?" These people He called hypocrites.⁵

In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul had choice words to the church over this very thing. They were arguing who was greater and throwing darts at those who didn't agree. He was so disappointed in them that he called them babies. Immaturity caused their argument. What did it matter who did what? he asked them. *"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."*⁶

The next verse begins: *"Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one."*

Paul was conscious that he didn't work alone. He knew he needed others to work alongside him. This doesn't mean he got along with everyone all the time. In fact, if you study the book of Acts, there were moments when the opposite was true. But Paul understood the work of Christ, that salvation for him was the same salvation for everyone else.

Jesus has destroyed what divided people from each other. He made peace between genders, between cultures and ancestries, between political parties, between educations and upbringings. There is no more circumcised or uncircumcised, no bond nor free, Jew or Greek.⁷

The church is ONE BODY, Christ's body, called

WE ARE GOD'S FAMILY

Becky Combee

I have been in church all my life. I have done church! Each and every moment in church proclaims the comradery of God's family of love and compassion. We are united as believers who walk through life, holding each other's hands in the good times and the difficult. We are a peace-loving body that sticks together and helps one another. At least we should be!

As a body, we stand on the solid rock of revelation with our hearts open to the work of God's Spirit. We are disciples of a great and mighty God, growing strong in His Word. Every day, we honor Him with our faith and obedience, boldly declaring Jesus as Lord. At least, we should!

We cannot let our differences divide us. We must stand arm in arm at the empty tomb and celebrate the sacrifice of the cross. This is what unites us. We are the redeemed! We are God's family from every kindred, tongue, people, and nation. God has made us kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth. Together!¹²

to display the same kind of love that caused our Savior to give His life, sacrificial love, compassionate love. We are meant to look like Him - a humble, meek, gentle servant - in whatever capacity He's given us to work, inside whatever church building He's placed us and to allow other believers to do the same.

When the Holy Spirit laid this topic on my heart, He spoke Ephesians 4:11-12 in a new way. He said, *"And he gave some, Catholics; and some, Baptists; and some Presbyterians; and some Pentecostals, Methodists, and Lutherans for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."*

God uses priests, bishops, reverends, the ordained, the unordained, the man raised Episcopalian, the man converted from Islam. God is in all men and women who believe and works through all men and women who accept Christ as Lord. God builds the church out of WHOSOEVER will call on His name.⁸ And there's the thing. He is the One who builds it.

These are Solomon's words in Psalm 127:1. *"Except the LORD build the house, they labour in*

vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." Any effort we make to build the church is wasted. The church is God's building. God makes the increase. We do what God has called each of us to do, working in HARMONY with other believers. We let God deal with those we think are in error. That's His job, not ours. Ours is to pray for them and keep working.

We've been tearing down the walls as He erects them and lobbing the bricks at each other. Instead of being a beautiful tapestry made of God's own design, we've picked at the threads and created huge holes. We unravel the edges, hoping that this scene will fall apart, not realizing cutting one thread ruins the entire work.

God has seated us at the table TOGETHER in the presence of OUR enemies.⁹ We are UNITED in the feast. We are NOT seated there to BECOME enemies but to SHARE the victory He's provided. He's raised us up TOGETHER to sit TOGETHER in heavenly places in Christ.¹⁰ We are not seated in defeat or struggle, not seated in judgment and scorn,¹¹ but in a heavenly place of joy and peace and service.

I saw a video the other day from the Supreme Court Justice confirmation hearing. A Senator described the difference between "civics" and "politics." He said "civics" is the fundamentals we all agree on.

We can agree on the fundamentals. We agree that Jesus is the Son of God, that He came in the flesh, was born of a virgin, and He died on the cross for our sins. We agree He rose from the dead on the third day and now lives in the heart of anyone who believes. We agree on these truths and build a foundation for the church to stand UNITED against the work of the actual enemy, the devil.

Here is the love of God for each other: We love with our words, with our actions, no matter what church someone attends. We love them, even if we think they're in error. We UNITE in faith across denominations and cultures, and when we do, we will change our cities, our nation, and the world.

Greatest of all, God will be pleased.

¹Eph 4:4-6 ²1Co 12:27 ³Col 1:18 ⁴1Co 12:15-17 ⁵Mt 7:1-5 ⁶1Co 3:6-7 ⁷Gal 3:28; Col 3:11 ⁸Rm 10:13 ⁹Ps 23:5 ¹⁰Eph 2:6,22 ¹¹Ps 1:2 ¹²Rev 5:9-10