

The Witness of Unity

Scripture Reading — John 17:20-26

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”
John 13:35 —

Hypocrisy—saying one thing and doing another—gets us into deep trouble. This is often seen in the lack of love and unity shown between Christians and in Christian churches. Hypocrisy severely damages our witness. Jesus’ plea is clear that we “may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know” that God loves them.

Churches have often acted as if they were in competition with one another, with lots of critique and judgment. At the same time, we preach a gospel of love and acceptance.

Increasingly we recognize that our real competitors are the false, enslaving gods of our culture. Christians and churches are finding each other across denominational lines and traditions, appreciating one another’s sincere desire to follow Christ in his mission.

It is important to understand the difference between “unity” and “uniformity.” It is easy for Christians to confuse the two. We may also think that simply by gathering together we are expressing unity. But the witness-authenticating kind of unity for which Jesus prays is love for each other. By the genuine, practiced behaviors of love, others will know we are Jesus’ disciples.

People can tell the real thing when they see it. Whom have you taken time to love today?

Prayer

Lord, we pray that the world will see our love for each other as individuals and churches in a way that cannot deny your power. Help us to support and build one another up. Amen.

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