

“Be of one mind”

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WE ARE TRULY privileged to be members of a worldwide and close-knit community, united in our beliefs in those fundamental truths taught in the Bible. We, like the believers at Corinth, are encouraged by the timely words of the Apostle Paul when he wrote: “Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (2 Cor. 13:11). Paul was able to help the ecclesia at Corinth in their handling of the problems that arose among the members, who derived from such disparate backgrounds in the cosmopolitan city of Corinth.

The apostle, who had laboured so long and hard to establish ecclesias where the teaching of Jesus Christ could take firm root, was meticulous in maintaining his pastoral commitment to the Christian converts. With this in mind, he assures the believers at Corinth that he will continue to have their best interests at heart, and guide and serve them with the same zeal and responsibility that he nurtured for the other lightstands of the Mediterranean world: “Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches” (11:28).

Paul spared no effort in working for stability and peace in the ecclesias, and addresses himself with firmness to the divisive elements in the flock at Corinth as he says: “Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Cor. 1:12,13).

He saw his duty in the clearest terms, and was not prepared to let his labour of love on their behalf be undermined or frustrated. Thus he warns: “I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare” (2 Cor. 13:2).

It will be noted in this epistle that Paul, a man of driving force, was not a person to be trifled with, nor was he prepared to have his apostolic authority questioned or impugned in any way.

So he says to the dissidents: “. . . since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you” (v. 3). The apostle then brings them back to a sense of reality by saying pointedly: “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (v. 5). The Pauline admonition had the desired effect of curbing the unruly elements in the ecclesia, for he was seen by the members as an apostle of Christ who was able to speak of “our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification” (10:8).

Paul made the same plea to all the ecclesias to “be of one mind”. To the flock at Ephesus he writes: “. . . that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing” (5:27). The community at Rome is urged: “Be of the same mind one toward another” (12:16). In addressing the disciples in Galatia he makes the appeal: “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another” (5:25,26). He urges the Philippians: “let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things” (3:16). To the Christian converts at Colosse he says: “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving” (2:6,7).

The blessings that we enjoy together as children of the family of God, endeavouring to “be of one mind”, give assurance that the eagerly anticipated return of our Lord and Saviour will take place in the foreseeable future. This will usher in the Kingdom of God, in which the hopes and spiritual aspirations of the faithful followers of Jesus will be rewarded with life everlasting at the hands of Christ the King. “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (Rom. 6:4,5).