

Mark A McGee

Diversity in the Church

By

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Do We Need Diversity in the Church?

"Diversity" is a big word in the Church today, just as it is in the world. Though the word "diversity" is not found in the Bible, the idea is there. However, the Bible's idea of diversity and the world's idea have some profound differences. Here are some definitions of "diversity" I found from a quick search on Google. Let's compare the way the world views diversity to how God sees it.

"the condition of having or being composed of differing elements : variety; especially : the inclusion of different types of people (as people of different races or cultures) in a group of organization" Merriam-Webster Dictionary

"the state or quality of being different or varied : a point of difference" Collins English Dictionary

"Similarities and differences among employees in terms of age, cultural background, physical abilities and disabilities, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation." Business Dictionary.com

Those are definitions - words that describe an idea. But what about interpretation of those ideas? That's what people

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"believe" about words and ideas. And what about "application?" That's how people "behave" based on their beliefs. Here are some descriptions of how the idea of diversity is applied in society.

"The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual."
University of Oregon Diversity Initiative

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dimensions of diversity contained within each individual. Diversity is a reality created by individuals and groups from a broad spectrum of demographic and philosophical differences. It is extremely important to support and protect diversity because by valuing individuals and groups free from prejudice, and by fostering a climate where equity and mutual respect are intrinsic." Queensborough Community College

"Workplace diversity refers to the variety of differences between people in an organization. That sounds simple, but diversity encompasses race, gender, ethnic group, age, personality, cognitive style, tenure, organizational function, education, background and more. Diversity not only involves how people perceive themselves, but how they perceive others. Those perceptions affect their interactions. For a wide assortment of employees to function effectively as an organization, human resource professionals need to deal effectively with issues such as communication, adaptability and change. Diversity will increase significantly in the coming years. Successful organizations recognize the need for immediate action and are ready and willing to spend resources on managing diversity in the workplace now." Diversity Working.com

First, let me say that I understand the importance of diversity in our society. I grew up in America at a time when races were separated in almost every aspect of life - including Sunday

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mornings at church. I remember as a young child being pulled away from a water fountain at a grocery store by an adult of my race because the fountain was for people of a different race. That seemed so odd to me as a child and still does to this day. It was my junior year in high school before anyone from another race was allowed to attend our school. Again, how odd that children would be kept apart simply because of skin color. When I began working as a broadcast journalist in the 1960s, everyone in the newsroom was the same race. That didn't seem right to me either. When I became a hiring manager I helped diversify newsrooms with the best and brightest people for the jobs we had available. That included men and women of different ages, races and nationalities. That made sense to me as a human being and as a managing journalist who wanted to produce the best newscasts for our viewers every day of the year.

What I'm about to share with you from the Bible has nothing to do with the issue of diversity in hiring and promoting in the workplace or with any other aspect of usual race relations. What it does deal with is God's Heart for bringing people together around a simple Truth - He is the Creator and deserves worship and praise from His Creation.

God Created one man and one woman (Genesis 1). God used the flesh and bone from the man to Create the woman - so they were the same race (Genesis 2). They spoke the same language. They had the same directive from God to rule the earth

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together under His Guidance. Their primary difference (diversity) was sexual. The early human society continued with same language, same race, until God confused their language and DNA at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11). At that moment, everything in society changed. Families and tribes fled from each other and the challenge of diversity in the human race began.

I share that historical background first because it's important for us to know that God understands diversity better than anyone alive today or anyone who has ever lived or ever will live. God Created great diversity in the universe. Look at the millions of different kinds of species in the water, on land, and in the air. Look at the trillions of stars in the heavens - so many differences. Yet, in all of His Creative diversity, God Created humans to be of the same race and language. If it weren't for their fall into sin, all of us would be immortals of the same race and tongue.

God Created humans for the purpose of ruling with Him, and their ability to rule would come from their unity. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24) One flesh - not two, not three, not hundreds or thousands - one flesh. God's Design for the human race is oneness.

"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over

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the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'" Genesis 1:26-28

What is God's Image and Likeness? It includes Unity - Oneness. It was the deep desire of Christ's Heart the night before He died that His disciples would be unified. "Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are." (John 17:11b) Jesus also prayed for everyone who would believe in Him through the words of His disciples.

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. 'Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me

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where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." John 17:20-26

That is one of the most beautiful prayers we have recorded from our Savior and Lord. Here's another way to read it that becomes extremely personal - replace the pronouns with your name. "I do not pray for these alone, but also for (insert your name here)". The Lord's Prayer is for you and me and everyone who will confess their sin, believe in their heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and be saved (Romans 10:9). Jesus wants you to "be one" as He is One with His Father in Heaven. The Lord wants us to be one in Him so the world may believe that God the Father sent God the Son. Jesus wants us to "be made perfect in one." Why? "... that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me."

So, here's what we have. God Created the human race for the purpose of being one with Him. Sin separated humans from their Creator. Later, because of their sin against their Creator, God separated humans from each other by confusing language and race. Jesus Died and Rose from the dead to prepare the Way for us to become one with God again. Given this

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historical background, why would we need diversity in the Church? The answer may surprise you!

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When Adam and Eve sinned against God, they brought a world of trouble into their lives and the lives of all who would be born from their seed. A big part of that trouble is what we know as diversity. God Created men and women to rule the earth with Him, but sin brought about a vast diversity in how men and women relate to each other and to their physical surroundings. God Created men and women to have sexual relations with each other in marriage, but sin has brought about all kinds of sexual diversities outside of marriage. God Created humans to speak the same language and share DNA qualities, but sin brought about many kinds of language and DNA diversities. God Created people to love and worship Him (the One True God), but sin brought about diverse worship practices that included millions of false gods.

We also saw that God has been in the process of bringing unity from diversity for thousands of years. God Created humans to be one with Him and that's where we're headed. A select portion of the human race will become one with God throughout eternity. God first chose Israel, then the Body of Christ, to be one with Him. And that will happen soon enough.

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.' Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' And He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.' And He said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.'" Revelation 21:1-7

That's our marvelous future! But what about now? Since God wants unity among His people, should we ban any type of diversity in the Church? No, in fact, we need diversity in the Church - the right kind of diversity. The beautiful thing about the right kind of diversity is that its goal is unity, but to reach that goal we need to be able to discern between the good diversity and bad diversity.

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Let's start with the facts that everyone faces in a local church - we're all different. I was an atheist. You may have been a Baptist or a Buddhist. The lady on the front row may have been kind. The man in the back may have been mean. Walk into any church in any country in the world and you'll hear so much diversity. He's poor. She's rich. They're black. They're white. They live in a mansion. They live in a shack. He's a teacher. She's a mother. He spent 10 years in prison for murder. She had an abortion. Christians come in all colors and sizes - but we absolutely have one very important thing in common.

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:26-28

Putting on Christ is how God Creates unity out of diversity - but we are still diverse. You are different than me. Your family background is different than mine. Your spiritual testimony is different than mine. The result - putting on Christ - is the unity - but we are still diverse. And we should embrace our diversity. It is through our diversity that we can impact the world for God's glory!

One of the biggest mistakes Christians make is thinking they are more special than others God has placed in the Body of Christ. We are special to God - but not more special than

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anyone else. God is a Perfect Father Who loves all of His children - including those who we may think of as "different." That's another beautiful thing about diversity in unity.

"For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'; nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God

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composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually." 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

One of the reasons these verses are so powerful is because of the reason Paul wrote them. The Christians in Corinth had a big problem with the wrong kind of diversity that causes divisions in the Body.

"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, 'I am of Paul,' or 'I am of Apollos,' or 'I am of Cephas,' or 'I am of Christ.' Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize,

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but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect." 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Before we get all pious about how we're so much better than the Corinthians, we'd better take a close look at ourselves. The Corinthian Church had four divisions: Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and Christ. That sounds silly to us now, but how many divisions of Christians are there where you live? I'll bet it's lot more than four. The number of Christian denominations around the world is estimated to be close to 38,000. The "Corinthian Syndrome" is a huge problem in the Church today. That means we'd better read Paul's Letters to the Corinthians again and again until we get God's message to His Church.

Unfortunately, Christians have accepted divisions within the Body of Christ as a good diversity. That's not what I read in 1 Corinthians.

"And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, 'I am of Paul,' and another, 'I am of Apollos,' are you not carnal?" 1 Corinthians 3:1-4

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Paul called that kind of diversity "carnal." The Greek words Paul chose to describe early divisions in the Church were *sarkinos* and *sarkikos*. Both come from the same root word that means "flesh." *Sarkinos* means "having the nature of flesh." *Sarkikos* means "consisting of flesh, composed of flesh." Paul wanted to speak with the Corinthian believers as "spiritual people," but they were still "fleshly people" - babes in Christ. At first Paul fed them with the milk of the Word and not with solid food. After he left Corinth to continue his missionary travels, the Christians in Corinth developed separate followings based on which teacher or teaching they liked best. But the fact was they weren't understanding any of the deep truths of Scripture. They displayed their carnality through envy, strife and divisions in the Church. They were behaving like "mere men." I can tell you from my experience as an atheist turned Christian and the experiences of hundreds of other people I've talked with through the years, that divisions in the Church are one of the main reasons unsaved people do not want to be saved. That kind of diversity the Church can do without.

So, what does God think about diversity and what kind does the Church need?

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How God Sees Diversity in the Church

God's views about diversity are clear in Scripture - and that clarity should guide Christians in the decisions we make about diversity in the Church. Though the issue of diversity can be complex to us, we can sum up God's view of diversity in three words: **birth**, **belief** and **behavior**.

Birth

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28

"Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ." Ephesians 2:11-13

"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—

whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." 1 Corinthians 12:13

Belief

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 'He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.'" John 3:14-18

"And he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' So they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.' Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house." Acts 16:30-32

"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call

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upon Him. For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.' Romans 10:10-13

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

Behavior

"For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." Ephesians 5:5

"I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Revelation 21:7-8

Notice that birth is not a barrier to God. That means race, ethnicity, language and gender are not a barrier to becoming a member of the Body of Christ. That's a key to how God sees diversity and how you and I should see diversity. The world has turned inclusion and exclusion inside out. People look on the outer appearance, while God looks on the heart. That's the key that unlocks the door to diversity.

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"For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7

All people are born into sin and need God's forgiveness. No one can be born a Christian. They can be born to Christian parents, but they aren't saved because of that. Salvation comes through repentance and confession. It's always been that way. God sees the heart, sees the need, and presents the cure.

When you see me - what do you see? When I see you - what do I see? When God sees us - what does He see? Do we see skin color? Do we see ethnicity? Do we see gender? Do we see barriers because of diversity? We shouldn't because God doesn't. God knows our skin color. He knows our ethnicity. He knows our gender. And none of those things deters Him from loving us and wanting us to be saved. God sees people based on their spiritual position. Are you in Christ? That's how God sees us - and how we should see each other.

Gender exists because God Created it. Skin color, ethnicity and language differences exist because God caused that to happen because of the sinfulness of the human race (Genesis 11). God is not holding any of that against us. We are who we are. Members of Christ's Body need to get over ourselves about race and nationality. We need to accept each other in the same way Jesus accepts us. Do you think any of that matters in Heaven? Of course not. What matters is that we love God with all our

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heart, soul, mind and strength.

God is asking people of all genders, races, nationalities, and languages to do two things - believe Him and obey Him. That's not complicated, but it seems to be the most difficult thing for people to do. People in the world today are running all over the place trying to find meaning and purpose in life, but most are missing it by running around it. Faith in God is what God desires and demands. Jesus made it clear that nobody comes to God unless they come through Him (John 14:6). It is very clear in the writings of the Apostle Paul that faith in Christ is the only way to God. Every person on the planet is the same - a sinner - and the cure for sin is the same - faith in Jesus Christ.

"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." Romans 3:21-26

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What matters to God about those who belong to Him - and should matter to us in the Church - is behavior. The Bible makes it crystal clear that God cares very much about how His children behave. That's what most of the Bible is about - the behavior of God's people. What God cares about should be what Christians care about. God loves people - hates sin. That's our diversity. We should love people and hate sin. Unfortunately, we can visit many, many churches around the world that have that turned around and inside out. They love what God hates and hate what God loves. How did that happen? An even more important question - how do we change that?

Change comes to the Church as Christians accept Christ's Kingship over their lives. As long as Christians want to be little kings in little kingdoms, they will miss what's important to the King of kings and Lord of lords. Nothing we need to know has been hidden from us. God has communicated His Will to the Church clearly through His Word. All we have to do is read the Bible in context and do what God tells us to do. However, that is the really hard part.

Many Christians don't know what God says. They follow traditions of men, but haven't heard from God. It continues to amaze me that millions of Christians have a God-deafness - they don't hear what God says to them. They live their lives according to the ways of the world instead of the Way of God. The Church - and that means every individual Christian who

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makes up the Church - needs to take a hard look at the Word of God, themselves, their ministries, and their local assemblies. Do you see diversity in your church that matches what the Bible says a local church should be? Does it have a diversity in people of race and ethnic background? Is it open to people of all ages? How does your church deal with sin? Does it teach that sin is wrong? Does it name the sins God says are wrong? Does it stand for what God loves and against what God hates? Or does your church stand with the world and allow sinful behavior among its people?

The Apostle Paul called on the carnal Corinthian believers to take a stand against open, sexual sin in their church. "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife!" (1 Corinthians 5:1) Can you imagine that? A man is having sex with his father's wife. What did the Corinthian Christians do about it? "And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you." (1 Corinthians 5:2) Did I just hear Paul say that some members of the Corinthian Church were puffed up and actually justified his actions? They should have been mourning this terrible thing and taken quick action against the offending brother. That's exactly what Paul told the Corinthian Church to do. "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus

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Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."
(1 Corinthians 5:4-5)

It's easy for Christians today to shake their heads and wag their fingers at the Corinthians - but what are we allowing to go undisciplined in our churches? If we take a hard look at the behavior of many in our local assemblies and denominational leadership today, we should be ashamed. We're as bad, if not worse than the Corinthians.

But - you say - life is complicated today. It's just not easy to deal with all of the different kinds of behavior that people bring into churches today. Why not? What's different between AD 61 and AD 2011? Did God's Word change during that time? Did God send new prophets and apostles to the Church to rewrite His Word so we don't have to do what He said in the original letters of the Apostles? As silly as that may sound, that's exactly how many Christians treat God's Word today. They act as if the original writings of Scripture have been replaced by some other document that's a lot easier to live out. Sorry, but there is no other document. There is no easier way to live the Christian life. It's spelled out clearly in the Bible. And in case we forget - here are some of the last words recorded in the Bible - "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this

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prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Revelation 22:18-19)

To summarize - God accepts men and women, boys and girls of all races into His Church. He accepts people of all national backgrounds into His Church. He accepts people of all languages into His Church. God takes the many and makes than one in His Son - "by grace through faith" - unity from diversity. God does not accept blatant sinful behavior from members of His Church. He wants Christians to love what He loves and hate what He hates. This is how God sees diversity in the Church.

I leave you with several important examples of what God wants from His Church.

"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place— unless you repent. But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." Revelation 2:4-6

"But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit

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sexual immorality. Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth." Revelation 2:14-16

"Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works." Revelation 2:20-23

"I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you." Revelation 3:1-3

"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are

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lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent." Revelation 3:15-19

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