

SPIRITUAL UNITY

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity.”

Psalms 133:1, A Psalm of David

Surely, everyone greatly appreciates the warm sentiments of this psalm from the pen of David, “the sweet psalmist of Israel.” All of us have experienced the ups and downs of life and endured the trying experience of intense disagreement, strife and division in various relationships, including the human aspects of religious matters.

In these, we are all aware of the well intentioned, but feckless, efforts to smooth things over with compromise of the most fundamental of religious principles. Ministerial alliances, ecumenical conventions, interfaith meetings of denominational factions—all designed to create a feel-good atmosphere via simple agreement to simply disagree.

But, is this the sort of thing David had in mind? More to the point, is it the concept of unity that David’s Lord, and ours, had in mind?

In the looming of the cross, Jesus prayed fervently to his Father. That prayer is recorded in the 17th chapter of *The Gospel According to JOHN*. Verses 1-5 record Jesus’ prayer for the Father’s comforting presence. Verses 6-19 speak of his prayer in behalf of his apostles that they might fulfill the work they would be sent to do. Then, in the following verses, we find Jesus’ prayer for those who would heed his word conveyed to the world by those apostles. He said, “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” (John 17:20-22).

Clearly, Jesus’ prayer imposes a much heavier burden on us than simply agreeing to disagree while, at the same time, claiming to serve the same Christ. Rather, it requires us to strive to be one as Jesus was/is with the Father, and as the Father was/is with him.

One may object that such a degree of unity is not humanly possible. Well, yes, but that is the point, isn’t it? Oneness is not possible by HUMANLY devised schemes. Therefore, if oneness is to be had, humans must rely on a DIVINE plan. Yes, such a plan exists and we will be consulting it as outlined at Ephesians 4:1-6 —Jerry F. Bassett