

Ultimately this unity will prevail throughout the earth, but such a result will not be achieved by the uniting of the present divided groups of Christendom, but by the destruction of all systems of false worship, Christian or otherwise. This will be a major work of the Lord Jesus Christ when he returns to the earth. **(2 Thess. 2:7,8)** Only by such drastic action can the way be cleared for the dissemination of Gospel Truth throughout the world. Then, and then only, will true Christian unity prevail — ‘they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them’. **(Jer. 31:34)** ‘The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.’ **(Hab. 2:14)** ‘Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. **(Zeph 3:9)** Then only will the prayer of Jesus to the Father on behalf of the unity of his true Church be fulfilled:

‘Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one’. **(John 17:20-22)**

The Christadelphians

Please be assured that anything connected with the Christadelphians is entirely free, and based wholly upon Christ’s precept, “freely ye received, freely give”. Christadelphians, or as the name implies, brethren in Christ, are a body of people (established initially in the mid nineteenth century) bound together by a wholehearted belief in the Bible. We do not profess to have received any new revelation, but hold that the Bible itself is able to make one “wise unto salvation” **(2 Tim. 3:15-17)**. Believing in the Divine Authorship of the Bible, we do not accept any interpretation which does not harmonise with its teaching as a whole. Finding that the creeds and practices of those who claim to be Christian are in many ways opposed to this teaching, we feel compelled to stand apart from them. We believe in the personal, visible return of Christ to the earth, to establish his throne and reign thereon, and we seek to share this knowledge with others. However we guarantee that we will not pressurise you in any way, if at any time you wish to discontinue contact.

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Christian unity

Watchman Christadelphians - Leaflet 61

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Christian unity

The wind of change is blowing strongly through Christendom. It is the growing desire of many religious bodies which profess Christianity, that there should be unity among them. After all, they say, the founder of Christianity prayed that his church should be a united body. **(John 17:20-22)**

The term 'Ecumenical Movement' describes a plan which envisages the reunion of all the dissentient bodies of Christendom, so that one Universal Church emerges. A Lambeth Conference, some years ago, launched an appeal to all Christians urging them to 'adopt a new outlook and new measures'. It continued:

'The vision which rises before us, is that of a church genuinely catholic, loyal to all and gathering into its fellowship all who profess and call themselves Christian, within whose visible unity all the treasures of faith and order, bequeathed as a heritage by the past to the present, shall be possessed in common and made serviceable to the whole body of Christ. Within this unity, Christian communions now separated from one another, could retain much that has been distinctive in their method of worship and service. The United Church is to be visible, free and based on one faith.'

On the face of it this seems an enlightened policy and a worthy ideal. Many sincerely grieve to see professing followers of Christ divided into sects through doctrinal disagreement. They see this disunity as the prime weakness of Christianity, contributing to the decrease in the number of church-goers and the general lack of interest in religion. They imagine that unification of the churches would be the answer to many of their problems. Certainly in the face of the growing power of humanism and agnosticism there is a natural desire to sink all differences and unite against the common foe.

A closer examination of this matter prompts the question: On what basis can such unity be found? Seeking an answer to this question reveals the problems involved. For example, the belief of the Roman Catholic Church, is that theirs is indisputably the one Universal Church, that their teaching constitutes the Truth and that it is for other people, their so-called separated brethren, to come back to the mother fold. A Roman Catholic Professor of Theology, a member of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, has declared:

'The Church of Rome cannot renounce anything which concerns dogma and morals, and therefore the only way to include her in reunion is to accept her whole faith'.

This is an attitude which other religious sects find hard to accept. It has been suggested that such unity would be political rather than spiritual and the question has been posed, 'Where is the gospel in all this?' This question could well be put to every sect that professes to be Christian. The gospel is the foundation of true Christian faith: 'it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth'. **(Rom. 1:16)** If the various bodies of believers bring to their unification councils' divided views on the gospel and on cardinal points of Bible doctrine, then their pretensions to unity are false and pernicious. There is only one gospel, a fact the Apostle Paul stressed in unequivocal words. Men were entering the church who were preaching 'another gospel' which, wrote Paul, was not 'another' but a perversion of the one true gospel. He strongly condemned such false teachers, 'though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed'. **(Gal. 1:8)** So strongly did Paul oppose the introduction of another gospel, that he would not unite with those who preached it, but commanded separation: 'A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject'. **(Tit. 3:10)**

On the authority of the inspired apostle, no unity can be countenanced with those who do not stand firm on the great doctrines proclaimed in the gospel. These doctrines taken together were described in the first century as 'The Truth' **(1 John 2:21)** and 'the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints'. **(Jude:3 R.V.)** Paul stressed 'the unity of the faith' in writing to the Ephesians:

'There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all'. (Eph. 4:3-6)

This is true unity — 'the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace'. In the early days of the apostles the church enjoyed such unity, but it was very short-lived. As we saw earlier, Paul strongly condemned those who were introducing teachings contrary to the true gospel. He foresaw that despite these warnings, the influence of such men would increase - 'The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables'. **(2 Tim. 4:3,4)** The same apostle foresaw that the eventual result would be the development of a powerful system of false Christianity, which would overspread the world and delude the vast majority. **(2 Thess. 2:1-4)** It would then be necessary for those who upheld the Truth to separate in obedience to God's command. **(2 Cor. 6:17)** There cannot be unity between Truth and error. Christ foresaw that because the majority would refuse to accept his true teaching, the inevitable result would be lack of unity. **(Matt. 10:34-36)** Only amongst his small band of true followers, those who have chosen the narrow way, **(Matt. 7:13,14)** can there be that unity of which he spoke. **(John 17:20-22)** Even amongst them the weakness of human nature prevents the full experience of this unity. Such experience is reserved for the future. ►►