

# Unity in the Church

## UNITY MEANS: WORKING TOGETHER IN HARMONY

The church is like an orchestra. Each instrument has a different sound and plays only part of the notes. But when the musicians play in tune and follow the conductor, they make beautiful music.

As church members we work together to create a symphony of God's love for the rest of the world to hear.



## UNITY STOPS HATE

Wars, bullying, discrimination—our world is full of fighting and hatred.

Jesus showed us a better way: "Love each other, just as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

When we love people who are different from us, it's clear that Jesus has changed our hearts. Jesus said, "If you love one another, everyone will know you are my disciples" (John 13:35). And love is our most powerful witnessing tool!

## DISCRIMINATION IS A SIN!

"Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes.

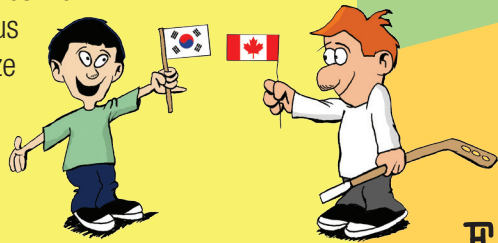
And suppose a poor man in worn-out clothes also comes in. Would you show special attention to the one who is wearing fine clothes? Would you say, 'Here's a good seat for you'? Would you say to the poor person, 'You stand there'? Or 'Sit on the floor by my feet'? If you would, aren't you treating some people better than others? . . . "But you sin if you don't treat everyone the same" (James 2:2-9).



LET'S FACE IT—WE'RE DIFFERENT!

It's easy to spot people who are different from us. Sometimes we put them in a category—us versus them. We categorize people in lots of ways:

- guy/girl
- rich/poor
- old/young
- Cowboys fan/Redskins fan
- Korean/Jamaican/Canadian/Panamanian . . .
- boss/worker
- high-school dropout/college graduate



Most of the time we hang out with people who are just like us. We're tempted to avoid or even dislike people who are different. Just look at the groups in your school cafeteria. Probably each group tells mean jokes about the other groups, right?

Differences divide us. But as Christians we're supposed to be different. We accept everybody without thinking badly of them.

## 4 FACTS THAT FIGHT PREJUDICE

1. God created each person on earth (Acts 17:26-28).
2. God loves each person on earth (John 3:16).
3. Jesus died for each person on earth (1 John 2:2).
4. God treats all of us equally. He accepts everyone who comes to Him (Acts 10:34, 35).

## THREE IN ONE

God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are individuals, but they form one God (see FUN-da-Mental #2). Jesus wants His followers to be loving individuals in one church (John 17:21).

## HOW TO BE UNITED

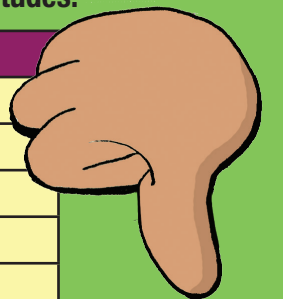
### 1. Get close to Jesus.

Individual Christians are a bit like spokes on a wheel. Jesus is the hub at the center. The closer we come to Jesus and His truth, the closer we come to each other.

### 2. Let Jesus change your attitudes.

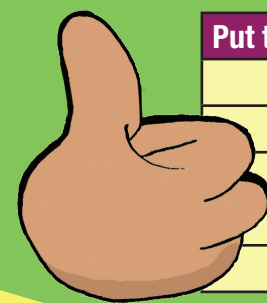
#### Get rid of these attitudes

pride
selfishness
jealousy
prejudice
hatred



#### Put these attitudes into action

kindness
forgiveness
patience
humility
love

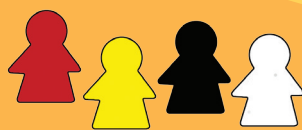
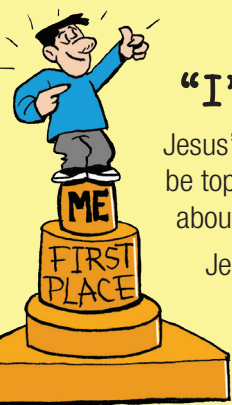


## "I'M THE GREATEST!"

Jesus' disciples had a problem: they all wanted to be top dog. It's not surprising that they often argued about who was the best.

Jesus told them that's not the way He operates. "[Jesus] did not come to be served. Instead, he came to serve others" (Matthew 20:28).

We get along a lot better when we help each other instead of demanding what we want.



## INTERNATIONAL CELEBRATION

If you plan on going to heaven, plan on making friends with all kinds of people! The Bible says that folks "from every nation, tribe, people and language" (Revelation 7:9) will be there.

## A NEW IDENTITY

When we believe in Jesus, we become new people with a new way of life. Suddenly our differences are less important than the big things we have in common.

- We love Jesus.
- We obey His Word.
- We look forward to His second coming.

### Old Identity:

- |               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| old           | young      |
| rich          | poor       |
| well-educated | uneducated |
| Nigerian      | Brazilian  |
| boy           | girl       |

### Cross of Jesus

### New identity:

- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| child of God | child of God |
|--------------|--------------|

*"You are all children of God by believing in Christ Jesus. . . . There is no Jew or Greek. There is no slave or free person. There is no male or female. Because you belong to Christ Jesus, you are all one" (Galatians 3:26-28).*



## NO COOKIE-CUTTER CHRISTIANS

Do we have to be exactly alike to be united? Nope.

As church members we have different abilities and interests. We may not like exactly the same clothes, music, or food.

But we have the same goal: "Go into all the world. Preach the good news to everyone" (Mark 16:15). If we stay focused on our goal, we won't get stuck arguing about whose opinions and preferences are best.

