

“The Schismed Soul of Man”

1Cor 1:10-12

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1Cor 1:10-12, 3:1-4

Paul is in the midst of trying to create community and dissipate conflict in the Corinthian Christian community.” Ben Witherington

INTRO...If the Purpose of God includes “the building of community”, then one gets an opportunity to see whether this is a ‘Peripheral’ Interest or a ‘Critical Interest’, by the way Paul Handles it.

...Today—Understanding the Corinthian Setting and Understanding the Human Soul

Meet the Corinthians:

- Roman City + in Greece + Scattered Jews = Diversity of Racial/Ethnic Backgrounds
- Strategic Location (Enterprise & Opportunity) + Idol Rich Setting (numerous idol temples) + Party/Entertainment Rich (Isthmian Games, Theater, Concerts, foodies) = Diversity of Motivations & Personal Interests

Roman military and civil officials, resided in Corinth together with a multitude of settlers who were ex-soldiers and freedmen (former slaves) from Rome. There were also merchants, craftsmen, artists, philosophers, teachers, and laborers from many countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. ...a number of Jews from Israel and elsewhere, native Greeks, displaced persons, and slaves. All these people lived and worked in Corinth...”.

Hendrickson & Kendrick, 1Corinthians, NTC

In Paul’s day, it was probably the wealthiest city in Greece and a major, multicultural urban center. ...The massive hill overlooking the town, housed on its summit a temple to Aphrodite, goddess of love. ...to house the one thousand cult prostitutes that the ancient Greek geographer Strabo claimed once worked there. ...it is understandable how the Greek word meaning “Corinthian girl” came to be a slang term for a loose woman. Corinth housed other religious shrines too, most notably a temple to Asclepius, the Greek god of healing, as well as sites for worshipping Isis, the Egyptian goddess of seafarers, and her Greek male counterpart Poseidon. ... Corinth may have been one of the few predominantly middle-class churches of the ancient world, but we must remember that “middle-class” was still a far lower standard of living than what we

generally associate with that label today.” Craig Blomberg, 1Corinthians, NIV Application Commentary

1 Cor 1:10 | appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.

- ***A pointed summary of the central problem—“schism”.***
 - ***An Appeal for no “schisma”*** (Gk. = ‘to rend or tear or divide’)
 - analyzing this word used in the N.T. will reveal that ***“all schism” is Not Bad or banned.***
 - ***“but that YOU be United in same mind and judgment”***
 - ***“YOU”*** = the community of believers in Corinth (the Body of Christ, the Spirit Indwelt, Converted Christians) ...***be United*** ...a unique agreement and purpose
 - ***“same mind and judgment”*** = same *mind* (Gk.-mind/understanding) and *judgment* (Gk - opinion/resolve/purpose)

The Appeal for UNITY and the Reality of Division

- ***Unity, like our Identity, exists from outside of us. It is granted to us, not originated by us!***

John 17:20-21 “[I] do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

Ephesians 4:1-4 ¹ | therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain

the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—

- ***From the Outset of Local Church Communities—'schisms' have been an issue!***
- ***BEWARE—Division in a Fallen World is an Ever-Present Competing Agenda! ...There is something in the Fallen DNA of Human Beings that Naturally Gravitates Toward Schism—and True Unity is a Miracle***
 - 1Cor 3:3-4... Paul labels this “schismatic orientation” as “behaving in a human way”, as “natural” (1Cor 2:14), as “merely human” (1Cor 3:4)
- ***Ponder 'the World of Schisms'***
 - ***Racial Schism***
 - ***Ethnic/Tribal/Sub-Group Schism***
 - ***European Schisms***
 - ***Latin America's Schisms***
 - ***African Schisms***
 - ***Asian Schisms*** (Cambodia's Ethnic cleansing under Pol Pot)

He argues that the Soviet elimination of a social class, the kulaks (who were higher-income farmers), and the subsequent killer famine among all Ukrainian peasants – as well as the notorious 1937 order No. 00447 that called for the mass execution and exile of “socially harmful elements” as “enemies of the people” – were, in fact, genocide. ...Stalin had nearly a million of his own citizens executed, beginning in the 1930s. Millions more fell victim to forced labor, deportation, famine, massacres, and detention and interrogation by Stalin's henchmen. ...30,000 kulaks were killed directly, mostly shot on the spot. About 2 million were forcibly deported to the Far North and Siberia. They were called “enemies of the people,” as well as swine, dogs, cockroaches, scum, vermin, filth, garbage, half animals, apes. Activists promoted murderous slogans: “We will exile the kulak by the thousand when necessary – shoot the kulak breed.” Cynthia Haven, “Stalin Killed Millions. A Stanford Historian Answers the Question, Was it Genocide?”, (article in The Stanford News)

The Rwandan genocide, also known as the genocide against the Tutsi, was a genocidal mass slaughter of Tutsi in Rwanda by members of the Hutu majority government. An estimated 500,000 to 1,000,000 Rwandans were killed during the 100-day period from 7 April to mid-July 1994 (Wikipedia)

“Cambodia’s Pol Pot slaughtered 2 million people—a quarter of his nation’s population ...Stalin murdered 30 million ...Mao 65 million ...the 3 or 4 million victims of the current civil war in the Congo...” Os Guinness, “Unspeakable”, p. 42-44

- *Gender Schism* ...Feminism vs Misogynism ...Gender Comparison & Competition vs Complementarianism ...Gender Privilege & Gender Inequality
- *Power/Authority/Control Schism* (the haves vs the have-nots)
- *Belief/Ideology Schism* ...Muslim World (Shiite vs Sunni)
- *Language Schism*
- *Personality/Temperament Schisms*
- *Baby Boomer/Millennial Schisms*

WARNING: *This “Appeal” to the Church is NOT to be contingent on whether we can agree on Conservative/Liberal Politics ...on White Privilege /Black Lives Matter ...on #MeToo ...Gender Equality/Inequality ...Generational Unity*

- ***The Corinthian Setting & Ours***

“...when human beings with diverse ethnicities, backgrounds, tastes, expectations, desires, priorities, peeves, admirations, and needs join their hearts and minds and voices and actions in unified worship of the one true God through Jesus Christ, a reality has come into the world that is beautifully fitting” John Piper, “Expository Exultation”, p. 35

The Nuts & Bolts of Schism

- **Unfamiliarity...**

- **Unnatural...**

...Beware that doing things that 'don't feel natural to you' is more difficult, takes more attention, doesn't 'feel right' ...In a world that craves EASE—we can all be vulnerable to 'Rising Up Against All Things Hard!'

- **“Enchantment Warning”** - Preserving & Promoting & Pursuing Personal Human Flourishing FEELS RIGHT! ...If you don't share MY Interests and Priorities—it feels right to not seek to be connected or be unified with you!

- **Upbringing...**

- **Self-interest and Self-Exaltation...** we struggle with an agenda for our own greatness, so we tend to want things to be arranged around what benefits US (our skill set, our temperament, our personal categories of enjoyment or safety or comfort)

- **The “Disorder” of a Fallen World—“Spiritual Entropy”**

...Ever since the Garden of Eden, creation has been moving away from Unity & Harmony. Death, disease, decay, social disorder, hostility, factions, wars, violence, etc.

- ***Without Something Intentionally Disrupting This Condition, there is NO HOPE for Unity!***

Philippians 2:1-8 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, ² make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. ³ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. ⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with

God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

...Like our “calling”—this unity does not originate with us!! It originates in God—Father (Jn 17), Son (Php 2), Holy Spirit (Eph 4)

SUMMARY: *These 'forces' and 'tendencies' are at work in human nature and they travel from race to race, from culture to culture, from generation to generation, from feminism to misogyny ...as long as we are vulnerable to fear & ambition—these things will need to be managed—they will not be 'cured'! ...The unity must be imparted to us from the Triune God to be tasted in this age and fully realized in the age to come.*