

Covenant Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore – 2010 June Camp
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WE ARE ONE: (4) THE CALLING TO MAINTAIN IT

Introduction:

1. Ephesians 4:1-3 sets before us the important and urgent calling to maintain the unity of the church.
2. We now consider this calling in detail, especially as it applies to the local congregation.

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- I. The meaning of this admonition.
 - A. We are not called to create or establish unity, but to maintain it. It must be preserved and kept. We must guard this great treasure Christ has given us.
 - B. This must be done at a denominational level. We should seek to be united with those who are one with us in the faith. Independentism is wrong and to be avoided.
 - C. It must be done within the local congregation. A crucial aspect of this is to be at peace with each other (Eph. 4:3). Peace is necessary for many reasons, including being able to worship God (Psalm 122).
 - D. Implied in this calling is that we also seek to develop and improve oneness/unity.
 - II. There are many things which threaten and can destroy unity within the congregation.
 - A. Threats from outside the church.
 1. The devil and the world seek to tear the church apart.
 2. They try to create division and strife through heresy.
 3. They try to ruin the church's unity through worldliness.
 - B. Internal threats.
 1. A threat to unity is criticism (having a critical spirit).
 2. Another threat is when members are opinionated.
 3. Another threat is selfishness – not having an interest in or time for others.
 4. A major threat is when the church is not very important in your life – not at the center.
 5. The internal threats are perhaps more serious. Galatians 5:15.
 - III. The antidote to all this is to realize and remember that the church is a body – the body of Christ.
 - A. There is important instruction concerning this in I Corinthians 12. The body needs every member, and each member needs the rest of the body.
 - B. We strive to maintain unity and peace because of who our fellow church members are.
 1. Not because of who they are of themselves – their personality, status, friendliness, wealth, etc.
 2. But because of who they are in and through Jesus Christ.
 3. Our perspective is that of David in Psalm 16:2-3.
 - IV. May we faithfully seek and strive to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the church/congregation where Christ has given us membership.
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Discussion Questions:

1. In what ways can a church that is on its own properly seek to be united with others?
2. What are some of the problems with and dangers of independentism?
3. Mention and discuss other external threats to church unity. Also other internal threats.
4. How can unity within the local congregation be improved?
5. For what reason especially should we strive to maintain the unity of the church?