

Vision Lab – Unity in Diversity
Sunday, September 13, 2009

Introduction –

-How do you respond to these statements:

1. It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe in Jesus.
2. If you don't believe in Jesus the way I believe in Jesus, then you don't believe in Jesus.

I. People in the Bible had trouble agreeing with each other.

A. 1 Corinthians 1:10-13a.

1. God says that unity is important.
 - a. What is the significance of the question, "Is Christ divided?"
 - b. What was dividing the people?
2. God wants the people to perfectly united in mind and thought.
 - a. If a congregation were perfectly united in mind and thought, how would it show?
 - b. Do you think that if people are perfectly united in mind and thought, they would never disagree about anything?

B. Romans 14:1-23, 15:5-7

1. What were some of the issues which were dividing the church?
2. Did Paul decide who was right and who was wrong about these issues? Explain your answer.
3. What did Paul believe was important?
4. Do you believe that God intended to say that whatever you want to say or do is okay? Explain your answer.

II. Small Group discussion

A. On Sunday morning, two men you have never met are sitting at the other end of the pew in which you are seated. You notice that they are holding hands.

During the coffee time, Peter, a member of the church comes to you and asks if you noticed the two homosexuals who were holding hands. He tells you he is leaving the church because he cannot be part of a church that allows homosexuals to attend.

How would you respond to Peter?

B. One night, you receive a call from your friend Myrtle who has been attending Grace Church for about 2 years. She asks, "Did you know that Grace Church believes in predestination? I believe in free will. I cannot be part of a church who believes such an awful thing."

How would you respond to Myrtle?

C. At a congregational meeting, Mary points out that the sanctuary draperies are faded and worn. Mary says that she feels it is dishonoring to God to allow shabbiness in the place where the church meets for worship and asks that the elders purchase new drapes.

Frank stands to his feet. You can see he is upset. Frank asks how anyone could even consider buying new drapes when the missionaries the church supports have such great financial needs.

You can feel the tension in the room and want to say something to help. What would you say?

D. One morning after church, you are talking to your friend, Georgina. Georgina tells you how she gave out gospel tracts in a restaurant where she ate lunch. One of the people who received a tract asked to talk to her and made a profession of faith as they sat there. Georgina said that if you are not sharing your faith, you are not doing what God wants.

You have always been somewhat shy and find it hard to talk to strangers. However, you believe that God has used you in the life of your friend Gloria even though Gloria has never made a profession of faith.

What would you say to Georgina?

III. Larger group discussion

A. Think about the different issues discussed in the groups. How are they different from each other? How are they alike? Do you believe these issues are important?

B. What should you do when you cannot agree with the church's leadership about an issue that is important to you?

C. Should you continue to attend a church when you do not agree with something the church is doing? Do you think it is ever acceptable to compromise?

Summary

-Because we will never agree about everything all the time, we must be prepared to work for unity that is focused on our mutual love of Jesus.

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What would you say to Georgina?