



United In Christ

All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation 2 Corinthians 5:18

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Unity In Reconciled Diversity

²⁰ Father neither do I pray for these alone but for those also who shall believe in Me through their word,

²¹ that they all may be one as we are Father . . . that the world may believe that You have sent Me.

The Gospel of John (17). Jesus of Nazareth

There is so much within the Christian world that is healthy and growing; so many gifts. Yet among the individual churches we find hurt, distrust and misunderstanding. This is crippling the family of God and it is not what Jesus prayed for. While ecumenical activities have produced some surprising agreements they have also stuttered and stumbled in actually bringing together the Body of Christ.

Unity in the church has too often been seen as one side winning or where agreement is reached only through the lowest common denominator.

Unity does not have to mean *uniformity*. When we recognize the gifts and value in the diverse communities within the church and strive to reconcile or understand our differences, we build

healthy relationships filled with the Life of God.



Unity in the church can only be a gift of the Holy Spirit; it is unity in diversity . . . recognizing others in all their variety as true Christians.

Unity through Diversity (1986)

Lutheran Theologian Oscar Cullmann



Unity In Reconciled Diversity is the work of The Holy Spirit. It does not begin with doctrinal issues or theology but with recognition of the gifts God has placed within each person and church. It is a *'walking together'* not a *'sitting at the table'*. And it is *Alive* with His Hope and Presence.

Who is United In Christ:

United In Christ is an established association that has been working for 15 years to network, strengthen and facilitate understanding within the Body of Christ. Individual board members and associates have been working and ministering much longer.

United in Christ is present in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. Please join us in prayer, ministry and support.

The mission of United in Christ is to promote the reconciliation of all Christians and Christian Churches who profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Messiah; through worship, prayer, interdenominational fellowship, preaching and teaching. These truths are lived out through the power and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, born of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. *Therefore, let there be unity in what is necessary, freedom in what is unsettled and in all things charity.*

We are committed to being ecumenical and assuring the dignity of each individual the right to free will decisions in matters of faith. Recognizing that the church has been divided; we do not look to uniformity or the lowest common denominator but promote unity in the Church as Reconciled Diversity.

As such, United In Christ with the entire Body of Christ long that there may be one Church of God, a Church visible, truly universal and sent forth to the whole world that the world may know His Joy, be converted to the gospel and so be saved, to the glory of God.

From: UIC Mission Statement 04-12 2014

How do different churches understand Unity In Reconciled Diversity:

Meaningful & Significant when we open our hearts

Unity is meaningful only if it includes those who are not alike;
Diversity is significant only when it is seen in relationship to the other distinctive members of the whole body.

Christian Understanding of Unity in an Age of Radical Diversity 2010

A Vision and Study Paper from the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA

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Unquestionably the work of The Holy Spirit

A unity negotiated by men could only be a matter of human right . . . consequently it could not be a testimony to the mystery of Jesus Christ but would merely speak in favor of the diplomatic skill and willingness to compromise of those who conducted the negotiations.

I have found very helpful the formula that Oscar Cullmann recently injected into the debate: unity through multiplicity, through diversity . . . Along the path marked out by Cullmann, therefore, we should first try to find unity through diversity, in other words, to accept what is fruitful in our divisions, to detoxify them, and to welcome the positive things that come precisely from diversity

The Ratzinger Reader: Mapping a Theological Journey, pg. 170

Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) 2010

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Broken families make broken people – Celebrate Diversity

229. . . . We find that the locus of this reconciliation of differences is within ourselves, in our own lives, ever threatened as they are by fragmentation and breakdown. If hearts are shattered in thousands of pieces, it is not easy to create authentic peace in society.

230. The message of peace is not about a negotiated settlement but rather the conviction that the unity brought by the Spirit can harmonize every diversity. It overcomes every conflict by creating a new and promising synthesis. Diversity is a beautiful thing when it can constantly enter into a process of reconciliation and seal a sort of cultural covenant resulting in a "reconciled diversity". As the bishops of the Congo have put it: "Our ethnic diversity is our wealth".

(Evangelii Gaudium 2013) The Joy of the Gospel (229-230).

Pope Francis

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Diversity does not threaten the core gospel message

Diversity in itself is not a goal, but it is a natural part of being different churches, in different contexts, with different forms of ecclesial identity. It's a reconciled diversity as though it in itself does not threaten the fundamental unity achieved on core issues.

European Unity as a Challenge to Religious Communities

The Norwegian Academy of science and Letters 2007

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Pope Francis in The Joy of the Gospel reminds us that the purpose of a Unity In Reconciled Diversity is much broader than ecumenical work between churches. It undergirds, strengthens and opens new avenues for ministry and evangelization. After all, it is The Gospel the Church has been charged with taking to the World and the Lost.

Unity will not come about as a miracle at the very end. Rather
unity comes about in the journeying.

Pope Francis (January 2014)

What Can You do?

You can make it a matter of prayer and share these prayer points as starters.

- ❖ Pray the Good News of Jesus and the Joy of His Gospel will not be hindered but shared with everyone, everywhere.
- ❖ Pray the Christian church throughout the world be built up and strengthened;
- ❖ That understanding compassion, forgiveness and consideration be foremost.
- ❖ Pray that Unity in Reconciled Diversity be better understood as a work of the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ Pray for wisdom and courage for United in Christ's team members.
- ❖ Pray for and consider financial support.
- ❖ Pray that the Grace of The Father, the Authority of Jesus and the Work of The Holy Spirit reign above all.

Thank You!

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The United States and Canada. Your contributions are tax deductible.

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