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DEVELOPING MINISTRY TEAMS TO FOSTER CHURCH
UNITY AT BROADWAY BAPTIST CHURCH,
LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

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APPROVAL SHEET

DEVELOPING MINISTRY TEAMS TO FOSTER CHURCH
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I dedicate this project to the loving brethren of the Young Married Adult Ministry team of Broadway Baptist Church Lexington Kentucky, who are always thirsty for the Word of God, burnt with passion, and determined with the zeal to see people saved.

Also, to the dynamic and vibrant men in the men's wing who are leaving no stone unturned making sure that they are plugged in to the Great Commission.

And lastly, to my lovely wife, Pascaline, and our three children, Victory, Vida, and Vidette, whose earnest prayers and moral support continues to sustain me in ministry.

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PREFACE

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Rapheal Jumbuin

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 28:19 to “make disciples of all nations.” This evangelistic work of declaring the gospel is the primary ministry that the church has toward the world. Carrying out the Great Commission requires a diversity of gifts. Matthew 16:18 teaches that Jesus Christ himself builds the church by calling his people to himself. Luke tells believers in Acts 2:47 that the growth of the church came not by human effort alone, but that “the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” This process whereby Christ builds the church is just a continuation of the pattern established by God in the Old Testament whereby he called people to himself to be a worshiping assembly before him (Deut 4:10). For God’s people to worship together and carry out evangelistic work, it requires unity.

Context

As stated in its mission statement, Broadway Baptist Church is committed to bringing hope to the Lexington community through the gospel of Jesus Christ. The church is evangelistic and focuses on making disciples for Christ. The church takes keen interest in the Great Commission and all church activities are designed and geared toward winning souls for Christ. The church operates according to the principles of Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8, and Matthew 28:19-20. Even though disunity existed amongst members, the church is very much determined and committed to its mission as an evangelical church. The church is focused and responses to the Great Commission call: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world Amen.” (Matt 28:19-20)¹

Broadway Baptist Church Lexington (BBCL) is located close to downtown at the corner of Harrodsburg Road and Pasadena Drive. The church started as a mission field in August 1952 by Porter Memorial Baptist church. Later that same year, a charter was signed, and 25 members became the pioneers of the church. By 1957, the church registered a significant increase in membership to 257 members. This numerical increase brought the need for a bigger building to host the fast-growing congregation. The current location of the church was purchased on June 20, 1962, and the first service was held in August of that same year. As a member of the Southern Baptist Convention, BBCL remains affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention and the Central Kentucky Network of Baptists.

According to the US Census Bureau, Lexington, Kentucky, is one of the fastest-growing cities in the South, with a current population of about 323,780 inhabitants.² Among colleges in the city, the University of Kentucky, which has a student population of about 30,277, is a mission ground for Broadway Baptist church.³ As an evangelical church, BBCL embarked on a systematic biblical teaching to get all members to grow in the knowledge of the Word and actively participate in soul winning. The following ministries were created as evangelistic branches of the church and members were encouraged to use their God-given spiritual gifts to serve the body of Christ: outreach, Sunday school, youth ministry, students’ ministry, college ministry, young married adult, senior adult, the men and women’s ministries respectively. These ministries operate as the arm of the church while the senior pastor, as the under-shepherd, supervises the

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the King James Version.

² Steven R. Antonoff, *Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges*, 35th ed. (Hauppauge, NY: Barron’s Educational Services, 2019), 661.

³ Antonoff, *Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges*, 661.

activities of the groups, making sure their activities complied with the principles of Scripture and the doctrines of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Unfortunately, the church could not implement its mission of evangelism well because there existed the problem of disunity amongst members. A church that experienced a steady growth in membership of 735 registered members ten years ago, now struggled with fewer than 400 registered members.⁴ The sole reason attributed to the decline in membership was due to the failure of members to reconcile their differences and work together as a team in ministry. Many small factions of groups within the church have been created and collaborations among members of the church depended upon the camp to which one belongs. With this divide, it was hard for the church to effectively and efficiently carry out its primary mission, which was spreading the good news of salvation to the community of Lexington.

It was difficult for such a divided church as BBCL, to advance positively for the course of evangelism because the body of Christ is not divided. The apostle Paul, in addressing the issue of division amongst the brethren in the church at Corinth called for total unity of the body. In 1 Corinthians 1:13, in his teachings against disunity Paul asked the congregation, “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? Disunity, with all its forms and characteristics as manifested at Broadway does not reflect the character of God, which is love. On the contrary, such behaviors repel potential church members from joining the church. Over time, the unresolved grudges among members have hatched out to make the church a battlefield.

Current church membership records of Broadway showed that 60 percent of the total registered members are made up of the elderly, whose age ranges between 60-91 years, and are conservative. The next tier of members are those who fall within the active population category, whose ages ranged between 25-59 years; they made up 20 percent of

⁴ This information was obtained from Broadway Baptist Church membership book.

the church's 400 registered members. The last 20 percent is made up of youth, students, and children. A major area of division in the church pertained to conflict on the style of worship service. A decision by the church pastor, endorsed by the board of deacons, to start up a second service of contemporary worship was met with criticisms. A split erupted between the elderly (conservative Christians), who advocated for the old, solemn, traditional style of worship and the younger (liberal Christians), who endorsed a contemporary style of worship. Because of the dichotomy of opinions, many people became angry and left the church without consideration to any ground of understanding and reconciliation.

Another issue that widened the crack of disunity and conflict at BBCL centered on the need to hire a full-time youth pastor. In 2017, there was a need to convert the interim position of a youth pastor into a full-time position. After consulting the senior pastor, the pastoral search committee decided to hire a candidate considered to be best qualified. A good section of the church loved and sympathized with the interim youth pastor who occupied that position for two years. They had hoped, with assurance, that the interim youth pastor was going to be retained for that position. Unfortunately, when the aspiration failed to satisfy the expectations of sympathizers toward the youth pastor, the gap of divisions widened further over the decision to hire a candidate. There was a sharp disagreement between the church leadership and those who favored the interim youth pastor, resulting in more than seventy members, mostly church workers, leaving the church.

The problem of disunity has extended to affect prayer/Bible study schedules within the church. There are many sub-groups within the church whose leaders cannot sit in the same class with people with whom they disagree. The interest of some church leaders deviated from pleasing God to seeking popularity. It was noticed succinctly that some members directed their loyalties to people rather than to Christ. These side-tracked activities in the name of ministry were a distraction that created more cracks within the

church, thus widening the gap of disunity. For instance, Wednesday is the designated day for Bible study and prayer, when the whole church met to study the Bible and to pray as one family. Because some church leaders were not on good terms with others, an atmosphere of rivalry within the church was created, giving the impression that there exists no brotherly love at Broadway and people are free to do whatever they wanted without giving explanation to anybody.

Furthermore, another area of disunity observed at BBCL was the disconnection between the older and younger members due to ideological differences. Most of the elderly people within the church believed in the teachings of Titus 2:1-14, which exhort the age men and women to teach sound doctrine to the younger men and women. Sadly, the “Titus Ministry” (as it was called) no longer existed at Broadway because more emphasis was placed on the quantity of membership than the quality of members. The church had lost its tradition where older men and women, matured in faith, mentored new church members and young converts by teaching them sound biblical doctrine, helping them to grow in faith. However, today, newly admitted Christians no longer observed the process of mentorship and were given positions in the church without a good knowledge of serving. The elderly population of the church feel rejected often because they are no longer consulted when major decisions are made. Their interpretation of this saga suggests that their opinions were no longer needed. Most of this category of disgruntled Christians have left the church, and those that chose to stay were no longer as devoted to serving.

In conclusion, records from Central Kentucky Network of Baptists show that BBCL has witnessed a steady decline in membership both in baptisms and weekly worship services for the last ten years. Between 2014 and 2018, the church witnessed a 38.8 percent drop (363) in membership; the number of baptisms dropped by 68.4 percent; and regular Sunday worship service decreased by 17 percent (60 members per service). The church membership was also affected heavily as it moved from 735 in 2014, to about

400 in 2018; the number of baptismal candidates were 12 in 2014, while in 2018, 6 candidates went through baptism, a 50 percent drop.

The issues described in this section show that BBCL was suffering from disunity, which this project sought to resolve. When a church is fragmented, it shows the world that the church is preaching a gospel of divine incoherence. That is why Paul urged his friends in Ephesus to maintain the unity established by the Holy Spirit and to work at all times to keep it and repair it whenever it is fractured (Eph 4:1-16). This is essential to the church's vocation as the body of Christ. This project attempted to solve the problem of disunity in two ways. First, it sought to educate members with the awareness that, holistically, differences should not stop people from working together for the sake of Christ. Second, through selected activities, working together helped members understand that the body of Christ is not divided, and ministry is never done in isolation, but in teams. This project also gave members the opportunity to discover the power of cooperation and they discovered each other's potential of service to God. Because the church was divided, developing ministry teams to foster unity in the church in this project would serve to build unity amongst believers at BBCL.

Rationale

This project is necessary, useful, and achievable. It centered around the teaching part of the Great Commission, which is to help others obey God as well as the church, all learn to walk by faith, empowered by the indwelling Spirit, thus living in the presence of Christ who said He would be with believers until the end of the age (Matt 28:20). The apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16 provides the example of teaching in his ministry and he emphasizes the importance of teaching believers the truth found in God's Word for the growth of the church. This project shall be focused on equipping the body of Christ, such that members of the body shall be capable of doing the work to edify the body. This project shall see that the body grows in unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God until the church becomes mature in Christlikeness. The vision is to train all

members of the church broadly while giving specific trainings to members of the Young Married Adult Ministry through selected activities.

As the apostle Paul declared to the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 14:33 that God is not the author of Confusion, this course curriculum will show that even though members might be passionate about doing things for the Lord, they should do so in an orderly manner in which church designated and scheduled programs are not conflicted. By the end of session 7 of the course curriculum, members would understand that they all belong to the church, which represents the body of Christ and shall voluntarily, yet intentionally, refrain from holding separate activities within the church during planned church programs. It is also expected that as the sessions unfold, members shall be fed with the truth as stipulated in Romans 14:7 that “none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.”

This project was important because it served as a network of wisdom where members would sharpen each other in faith, as Proverbs 27:17 reads, “Iron sharpeneth Iron; so, a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.” As members participate together in selected activities, especially as they discuss the meaning and significance of the public ministry of the Word, they would share and receive wisdom for myriad issues. Together, the church family would grow in their ability to face the difficulties of life in God-honoring ways as they share life together in Christ. The public ministry of the Word helps build relationships where people worship, bear burdens, love, serves, enjoy grace, forgive, forbear, and evangelize together.

This project aimed at bringing a change, seeing that the church moved from spiritual gullibility to mature discernment as believers speak truth to each other as Paul stipulates in Ephesians 4:14-15. This project created a conviction where the life of the church included both a consistent emphasis on the meaning and impact of living out faith in Christ, as well as the reality of living in authentic relationship with others in the body. This curriculum diagnosed the cause of this disunity plaguing the church and presented

ways to establish reconciliation and promote peace amongst brethren. Biblical truth emphasized agreement in working together (Amos 3:3) and brought reasoning to the fact that it is difficult for two people to work together unless they agree. The hope of this project was that members would plan and implement two activities together and while doing so discover the joy of working with each other by celebrating each other's effort in the outcome.

Finally, developing a ministry team at BBCL would help to unify the members to a stronger body that gain confidence in the Word of God and establish trust toward each other. The church has a mission to reach out to the community, and this work cannot be properly done when members are wired on individualistic tendencies. When members see the need and importance to put aside their differences and rally their gifts toward one vision during the teachings, they would freely carry the good news to their community without any guilt of harbored grudges against fellow members. With this confidence, members would effectively and confidently share the Word of hope with unbelievers and make disciples for Jesus. A church that breeds strife, disunity, distrust toward each other, unsettled grudges, unforgiveness, and disorder cannot rightly and effectively serve its community (Prov 14:34).

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to foster unity among members of Broadway Baptist Church Lexington by developing ministry teams through selected activities to enable them better to serve their community for God's glory.

Goals

Multiple goals were required for the purpose of this ministry project. These goals reflected the progress made in the steps to foster unity through the development of ministry teams in the Young Married Adult Ministry at Broadway Baptist Church.

1. Assess existing unity and attitude of church members working together.

2. Develop a seven-session curriculum to assist in training on the biblical principles of unity and the importance of working together in ministry teams.
3. Improve unity by teaching the curriculum.
4. Plan two service projects wherein members can practice unity in ministry.

Embedded within each of the goals was the research methodology necessary to indicate the means of measurement, benchmark of success, and instrumentation used. This methodology clearly showed how teamwork in ministry was the best practice as applied to instances in both Old and New Testament. More so, this gave the church an ideal platform of unity to work together as a team while doing service for the Lord.

Research Methodology

The first goal of this project was to assess existing unity and attitudes of church members, working together before and after two selected projects. Twenty church members participated in this project. Ten members were chosen from the Young Married Adult ministry and pastoral staff, while ten others were randomly chosen from the general congregation. A pre- and post-curriculum survey was conducted to evaluate their level of understanding and practice—how much they knew or did not know about unity.⁵ These tests were conducted prior to and after the projects. This goal was considered successful when 90 percent of participants participated in the survey to assess their existing understanding of unity and could practice working together as a team.

The second goal of this project was to develop a seven-session curriculum to assist in training on the biblical principles of unity and the importance of working together in ministry teams. This curriculum was developed with recommendations from experts in the field and approval from the church pastor. Other sources included the Bible and relevant books and texts. The curriculum targeted and addressed key elements of unity and working together as teams in ministry. This goal was measured by a panel of experts

⁵ See appendix 1. All the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use.

knowledgeable in team building and church unity who had served in leadership positions, including the senior pastor of BBCL, pastor in charge of the senior adults ministry at BBCL, pastor in charge of education and missions at BBCL, and the head deacon of the church. The panel used a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, scope, and applicability.⁶ This goal was considered successful when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluated criteria met or exceeded the sufficient level. If the minimum was not met, then the curriculum was revised to address the handicap identified.

The third goal was to improve unity by teaching the curriculum. The curriculum was taught using a discussion method, where participants were assigned given questions to discuss within their groups before presenting their responses. The twenty project participants were divided into groups of four and they discussed questions together before giving a response through one person that they nominated. This method gave participants the opportunity to collaborate with others. A group assignment enabled participants to connect with others such that, in the process of working together, they would understand each other better as a fellow brothers/sister in Christ. This goal was considered successfully met when the curriculum was completely taught, and all participants attended all seven sessions, with evaluation indicators showing met or exceeded expectation. All participants would fully participate in the project with each person performing a single role. This goal was measured by the pastoral and leadership staff using indicators to evaluate the training elements, activities chosen, communication processes, and action steps.

The fourth goal of this project was to plan two service projects wherein members could practice unity in ministry. A planning committee was set up that included the church pastor and two of his staff, two members of deacons, two church members, and two members of the Young Married Adult Ministry, for a total of nine members. The

⁶ See appendix 2.

projects were outreach-based, where members were given the opportunity to exercise their different spiritual gifts to serve the Lexington community. The projects were determined by the planning committee and aligned with the vision of the church. They were practical, realistic, assessable, and participants incurred no cost monetarily. The planning phase of this project was declared successful when the projects were on the church calendar with the required number of participants signed up and ready to start on a stipulated date.

Definitions and Delimitations

Certain terms used throughout this project are defined below to aid in the reader's understanding of the project.

Ministry teams. Stephen A. Macchia writes, "Ministry teams may be succinctly defined as a body of believers having the traits of trusting, empowering, assimilating, managing, and serving the church for the glory of God."⁷ Referring to 1 Corinthians 12:12, Macchia teaches that the team is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one team, which is with Christ. Some layers of this project were deduced from Ervin F. Henkelmann and Stephen J. Carter's conception of ministry teams:

Your Team, empower and directed by God in Christ, becomes a model in the parish for harmonious relationships and effective ministry. Working together, supporting each other, urgently sharing the Gospel, caring for others, admitting mistakes and confessing sins, forgiving and giving, your team's example catches on contagiously and infectiously.⁸

Young married adult. Broadway Baptist Church defines a *young married adult* as someone between the ages of 23-45 who has been married from one day to ten years.

⁷ Stephen A. Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team: Five Traits of Vital Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 1.

⁸ Ervin F. Henkelmann and Stephen J. Carter, *How to Develop a Team Ministry and Make It Work* (St Louis: Concordia, 1985), 89.

This project had several delimitations. Those who participated in this project were chosen based on their church record. They were considered “in good standing” with regard to both their financial obligations to the church and their participation in Lord’s Supper and church events. Participation was strictly reduced to married people. The primary delimitation of this project was to select two activities to implement within seven working sessions. The activities selected were those that stimulated and motivated members within the confines of unity and to work together as a team. While the basic principles of unity and teamwork were taught within this framework, participants may have needed additional training and supervision to apply these principles in ministry. The completion of the seven-week project included pre-curriculum survey, curriculum development, course instruction, post-curriculum survey, and development of a ministry plan.

Conclusion

A look at the ministry of Jesus Christ reveals that He worked with the disciples as a team. Even though He was betrayed by Judas Iscariot (John 18) and denied by Peter (Matt 26:75), they were still together as a team. To fully carry out its mission to reach out to neighbors, BBCL members should first seek to put their differences away and be taught from God’s Word the importance of working together as a team in ministry. The following chapters show how this model helped develop the spirit of working as a team while in ministry and fostering unity in the body of Christ. Chapter 2 focuses on Scripture’s sufficiency of developing teams and fostering unity. Chapter 3 focuses on Scripture’s sufficiency for a biblical methodology of teamwork.

CHAPTER 2

THE THEOLOGICAL AND FOUNDATIONAL BASES FOR UNITY AND DEVELOPING MINISTRY TEAMS

Ministry in the church is about using God-given gifts to connect people with each other and with Christ so that they are able to think, desire, and do what he calls them to do. Imagine a church wracked by disunity and egocentrism. Powerful leaders promote themselves against each other, each with his band of loyal followers. Believers select the people they chose to associate with and reject those who fall short of their expectations. Any decision the pastor and his staff make is met with sharp criticism from church members, and the slightest disagreement causes many to break away from the church. This chapter outlines theological and foundational bases for using spiritual gifts to serve the body of Christ and foster unity at Broadway Baptist church, Lexington, Kentucky. Gifts are not obtained through educational training; they are given freely by God for the edification of the community of believers.

Several passages in the New Testament clearly establish a basis for believers to walk in unity. An exegesis of Ephesians 4:1-16, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, and John 17:21-23 show that believers should walk in unity and use their gifts to serve the body of Christ.¹ Ephesians 4:1-16 is discussed first, and is divided in three parts: (1) Paul teaching on the basis of unity (4:1-6); (2) Paul analyzing the means of preserving that unity (4:7-13); and (3) Paul's teachings accounts for the ultimate explanation to grow in unity (4:14-16).

¹ Other scriptural passages give a fundamental explanation for why believers should be united in ministry and work together to serve the body of Christ, including, but not limited to Gen 1:26-28; Dan 1:1-30; Matt 10:5-16; Acts 9:26-27; 11:22-26; 13:4-5; 16-12; 13-15, but for the sake of the limitation of this project, I limited myself to the stated passages because of their comprehensive focus on the spiritual aspect to address the problem of disunity.

Ephesians 4:1-16

Ephesians 4:1-16 details the apostle Paul's teachings on unity and diversity in the body of Christ. Harold Hoehner teaches, "The revelation of the unification of the Jewish and Gentile believers positionally as 'one new person' (2:15), the body of Christ, and the prayer that this unity would result in a mutual experience of Christ's love (3:16-19), leads Paul to demonstrate the manner of walk expected of this unified body."² This act of unifying the Jews and Gentiles can only be accomplished by God's power through the ministry of gifted believers who Christ gives to the church. Hoehner further explains, "The purpose of Paul's revelation is to bring all members of the body to the unity of faith and to the full stature of Christ with the result that they will be a stable and growing body in living union with Christ the head."³

Paul Teaches Believers the Bases of Unity (vv. 1-6)

Paul exhorts believers to have a proper attitude toward unity (vv. 1-3) and then illustrates how the three persons of the Trinity serve as the basis of this unity (vv. 4-6). The first four words ("I, therefore, exhort you.") are the same Greek words as in Romans 12:1 where, likewise, they follow a doxology that concluded the preceding chapter.⁴ The smooth and unified functioning of God's new human being is necessary for the completion of God's plan to restore his creation in Christ. If the church is not unified, then God's work of bringing together "all things . . . on earth" in Christ (1:10) will remain incomplete, and his plan to unite all of his creation beside Christ or beneath his feet will go unproclaimed among the hostile heavenly powers (3:10).⁵

² Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 501.

³ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 501.

⁴ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 501.

⁵ Frank Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 403.

Exhortation of unity (4:1-3). Because of the new position in Christ both individually and corporately, unity should exist among the believers in Christ. Paul, therefore, exhorts the believers at Ephesus to maintain this unity.⁶ Paul tells his readers how they can live in a way that is consistent with the unity toward which God is moving the universe. He offers practical admonitions on how to avoid social discord and urges them to use the diversity of gifts that Christ has given to enhance unity. He speaks not only to the church generally, but also more specifically to Christian families within the church, and especially to Christian husbands and wives, whose physical unity illustrates the merger of Christ and the church into one, unified body.⁷

Frank Thielman teaches, “At the same time that the church works toward unity, however, it must be careful not to compromise its identity as the people who reflect the character of God. For this reason, Paul weaves into his practical advice for maintaining social cohesion statements that urge the church to maintain its holiness.”⁸ The church should do this, Paul insists, by avoiding erroneous teaching, remaining separate from “the Gentiles,” and imitating God and Christ in its conduct. This calling is further seen in the salvation of the unregenerate by God’s grace and their placement in the heavenlies in Christ (2:1-10).⁹ This calling proceeds from the individual to the union of the Jews and Gentiles into one body, called the church (2:11-3:13). Because of this call of Jews and Gentiles into one body, Paul prays for Christ’s strengthening love in order that the union would not only be true theologically but also experientially among the believers.¹⁰ Because

⁶ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 501.

⁷ Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament*, 403.

⁸ Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament*, 403.

⁹ F. F. Bruce, *New International Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 502.

¹⁰ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 502.

of this calling from individual salvation to a corporate body of believers, Paul infers that believers should walk worthy of that calling (4:1).

Robert H. Gundry explains the necessity to maintain Christian unity in Paul's exhortation. Gundry states, "Paul is speaking the exhortations from within the Lord. . . . Paul's Greek contains a wordplay between three words that share the same root: 'I . . . exhort [*parakalo*] . . . calling [*kleseos*] . . . you were called [*eklethete*].' This wordplay underlines the exhortation (4:1)."¹¹ Frank Thielman instructs, "The Spirit of God produces and maintains the necessary unity. The Spirit is the means through which the unified church of Jews and Gentiles gains access to the Father (2:2) and is also the presence of God that inhabits his temple once it is constructed from diverse peoples (2:18)."¹² Gundry wants his readers to know that the Spirit has revealed to the apostles and prophets the mystery that the church is a new body, comprised of both Gentiles and Israel who are in Christ Jesus (3:6). Not surprisingly, then, the unity of the church comes from the Spirit (4:3), the oneness of the church as Christ's body matches the oneness of the Spirit (4:4), and Christians grieve the Spirit when they behave in ways that disrupt the church's harmony (4:30).¹³

Gundry goes on to explain,

Such behavior (1 Cor 12:13) was countercultural in that pagans thought that to preserve and heighten honor and avoid shame one should not be humble, meek, patient, forbearing, or noncombative. Paul sees, however, that pride, retaliation, impatience, forbearance, and competition for honor will destroy the behavioral unity that should mirror the spiritual unity of Christians (2:14-16). . . . The foregoing reference to the "unity of the Spirit" leads directly to the statement, "[there is] one body (representing the church as a unity) and one Spirit (whose oneness ensures the oneness of the church in that all Christians are 'in the Spirit' according to Romans 8:9)."¹⁴

¹¹ Robert H. Gundry, *Commentary on the New Testament: Verse-by-Verse Explanations with a Literal Translation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 768.

¹² Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament*, 404.

¹³ Gundry, *Commentary on the New Testament*, 768.

¹⁴ Gundry, *Commentary on the New Testament*, 768.

Their calling gave them hope, which implies they had confidence of eternal salvation at Jesus' return so that the "in one hope" (Eph 4:1) makes this confidence the element in which the call took place. "In one hope" implies that since Christians have a common destiny, they should live in unity now just as they will eternally.¹⁵

The worthy walk that provides the basis and atmosphere for unity, evidences itself in at least four graces or virtues: lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, and forbearing one another in love.¹⁶ Willard H. Taylor remarks, "These graces are not natural traits of the natural human spirit. Rather, they are gifts of the Holy Spirit to Christ's followers (cf. Gal 5:22-23) and they emanate from the Redeemer himself. The call to a worthy walk is a call to conduct one's life in conformity to the image of Christ; to live in holiness and righteousness among men."¹⁷ Charles Hodge writes that lowliness is "a thankful sense of dependence upon God" and is the opposite of pride and conceit. Meekness is that "unresisting, uncomplaining disposition of mind, which enables us to bear without irritation or resentment the faults and injuries of others."¹⁸ Longsuffering, as Taylor notes is "the enduring, unwearable 'spirit,' which know how to outlast pain or provocation in a strength learnt only at the Redeemer's feet."¹⁹ Forbearing one another in love is the practical outworking of a patient spirit in which one goes on loving and respecting others despite faults and weakness. The harmony within the fellowship, which is the harbinger of

¹⁵ Gundry, *Commentary on the New Testament*, 768.

¹⁶ Willard H. Taylor, *Galatians through Philemon*, Beacon Bible Commentary, vol. 9 (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1965), 201.

¹⁷ Taylor, *Galatians through Philemon*, 201.

¹⁸ Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Wm Eerdmans, 1950), 200.

¹⁹ Taylor, *Galatians through Philemon*, 202.

universal harmony, can be maintained only in the measure that all Christians practice the virtues here mentioned.²⁰

Elements of unity (4:4-6). Paul gives the theological basis of unity by explaining in more detail how elements of the Christian faith revolve around the three persons of the Trinity. Hoehner teaches, “Unity is stressed by the sevenfold use of ‘one’ (body, Spirit, hope) found in (4:4-6).”²¹ He continues, “There is one body which refers to the universal church (Eph. 1:23; 2:16; 3:5-6). Briefly, this consists of the body of believers, an entirely new concept in New Testament, never envisioned in the Old Testament.”²² It is not that Gentiles becomes Jews, as in the Old Testament, nor Jews become Gentiles, but that unbelieving Jews and Gentiles become one body of believers when they place their faith in the work of Christ at Calvary. They are no longer two entities but one. Second, there is the one Spirit referring to the Holy Spirit mentioned in Ephesians 2:18, 22. Hoehner explains, “The passage, Eph. 2:16-22 explains how this body, reconciled to Christ, now has access to God in one Spirit and how it is portrayed as a temple in which the Spirit dwells. There is unity in the universal church and in the Holy Spirit and there also should be unity in the local body of believers.”²³

Hoehner teaches that “the word ‘hope’ discussed in Ephesians 1:18 was defined as an eager expectation of the outworking of God’s plan. Hoehner emphasizes that this hope presented in Ephesians is the reality that all things will be headed up in Christ (1:19), and though the believers are presently seated with Christ, in the future they will be displayed in heaven as trophies of his grace (2:7).”²⁴ Further, believers have been

²⁰ Taylor, *Galatians through Philemon*, 202.

²¹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 513.

²² Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 514.

²³ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 515.

²⁴ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 515.

brought near to God, united into one body in Christ, and reconciled to God (2:11-3:13). Before this they were without hope and without God in the world (2:12). Hence, the element of objective hope is laid up for the believers (Col 1:5; Rom 8:24), which serves as the basis of the subjective hope. Since both believing Jews and Gentiles have “one” hope, it would further support the concept of unity portrayed in Ephesians 4:4-6.²⁵

The elements of unity are portrayed in the one body, the one Spirit, and the one hope of their calling. The third person of the Trinity is the unifier. Bruce breaks down the detailed elements of unity:

Every expression of unity is based on the following: One body (the new body of vv. 2:15, 16); one Spirit (given alike to Jews and Gentiles, 1:13); one hope (there are no second class Christians in God’s plan); one Lord (even Christ the source of all unity); one faith (either the common faith given to all the saints [Jude 3], or, possibly, the subjective faith each believer puts in Christ); and one baptism (usually taken to refer to baptism in water, but many reasonably refer to the baptism of the Spirit).²⁶

These seven unities can be compared with the four unities that Paul sets out in 1 Corinthians 12:4-13, where he deals at length with the unity produced by the baptism of the Spirit.

Hoehner helps his readers understand that the elements of unity are portrayed in the one body, the one Spirit, and the one hope of their calling. The third person of the Trinity is the unifier. He offers two observations pertaining to the elements of unity.

First, the Trinity is an integral part of the treatise on unity. The one body of believers is vitalized by one Spirit so that all believers have one hope. The body is united to its one Lord (Christ) by each member’s one act of faith, and his or her identity with him is in the one baptism. One God, the Father, is supreme over all, operative through all, and resides in all. In reality, the Triune God is the center and model for unity. Second, the order in the listing of the three persons of the Trinity is interesting. It is in reverse order of the Apostles’ Creed, for Paul begins with the Holy Spirit rather than with the Father.²⁷

²⁵ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 515.

²⁶ Bruce, *New International Bible Commentary*, 1435.

²⁷ John Reumann, *Variety and Unity in New Testament Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 121.

The reason Paul reversed the apostle's creed is that the context is about the unity of the Spirit (Eph 4:3) and the gifts of the Spirit (Eph 4:7-13), hence the Spirit is mentioned first.²⁸

The Preservation of Unity (4:7-16)

Having discussed the need to preserve unity (vv. 1-3) and the elements of unity which serve as a model for Christian unity (vv. 4-6), Paul then analyzes the means of preserving that unity of the body; namely, by the use of various gifts given to the church (vv. 7-16). Paul stresses unity in verses 1-6, diversity in verses 7-10, and a return to unity in verses 11-16.²⁹

The donation of the gifts (4:7-10). Hoehner notes, "Within the body of believers, God has bestowed gifts. The exercise of these gifts plays a vital role in maintaining unity within this unique body. This section expounds on the concept of gift bestowal and is divided into three parts: description (v. 7), validation (v. 8), and interpretation (vv. 9-10)."³⁰

First, in verse 7, Paul describes that each believer is sovereignly and graciously given a gift or gifts. Hoehner remarks that such gifts are not, as some think, limited only to church leaders. Significantly, the conjunction "but," marks a contrast from the preceding context, going from the whole church to every individual within the church.³¹ In the oneness of the body there is also diversity (cf. Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 12:4-19). Every single believer (changed from "you" in v. 1 and v. 4 to "us") is included—no one is excluded; it

²⁸ It has been suggested that the order is based on experience. See R. R. Williams, "Logic versus Experience in the Order of Credal Formulae," *New Testament Series* 1 (1954): 42-44.

²⁹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 521.

³⁰ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 521.

³¹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 522.

is not only for the leaders of the assembly.³² Paul proceeds to show that unity does not mean uniformity but harmony. Taylor weighs in that “the shift is from the unity of the whole to the parts that make up the whole; namely, the individual members.”³³ He goes on to explain that “The apostle recognizes a lack of uniformity in endowment for service in the church and this is the source of diversity in the distribution of gifts.”³⁴

Each is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. In this context grace does not refer to saving grace, but rather to special endowment as illustrated in Paul’s mission to the Gentiles (Eph 3:7).³⁵ Taylor explains that “the law which governs the bestowal is not only the variation in human abilities, but the pleasure of the sovereign God.”³⁶ Bruce helps his readers to understand that

the gifts come from the ascended Christ and are part of the promise of the Spirit. Apostles, in the narrower sense of Ephesians 2:20 are the permanent authority; prophets are considered inspired men who revealed the truth of God; evangelists are preaching missionaries through whom men become followers of Christ; and lastly, pastors and teachers, elsewhere called elders or bishops, care for the converts and their growth.³⁷

According to Bruce, the three purposes of these gifts are to (1) prepare people (2) who will do service, (3) which will build the church.³⁸ All this activity is to go on until the church reaches the measure of the fulness of Christ. It is an attained unity, while the unity of 4:3-6 is a unity already existent.

³² For a discussion of the relationship between spiritual gifts and office, see Ronald Y. K. Fung, “Ministry in the New Testament” in *The Church in the Bible and the World: An International Study*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 154-212, esp. 163-77.

³³ Taylor, *Galatians through Philemon*, 206.

³⁴ Taylor, *Galatians through Philemon*, 206.

³⁵ Taylor, *Galatians through Philemon*, 207.

³⁶ Taylor, *Galatians through Philemon*, 207.

³⁷ Bruce, *New International Commentary*, 1436.

³⁸ Bruce, *New International Commentary*, 1436.

The second part of giving gifts is the validation of the giving of gifts (4:8). The measures with which Christ's gifts are given differs to each individual.³⁹ Thielman suggests that Paul gave specific guidelines to his audience for how they can pursue harmony while using their gifts. The author states that "they should be "completely humble and gentle . . . patient, bearing with one another in love" (4:2). They should recognize that the diversity of gifts Christ has distributed to the church is intended to foster service to one another (4:12), and that by being built up in this way the church, as Christ's body, is moving toward the eschatological goal of being entirely filled with Christ (4:13, 15-16; cf. 2:20-22). They should speak truthfully, avoid letting anger simmer overnight, and instead of stealing should engage in productive work that will allow them to share with the needy (4:25-28).⁴⁰

The third part is the interpretation of the giving of gifts (4:9-10). After quoting Psalms 68, Paul now interprets the Psalm for believers in this age. His discussion of the first word in verses 9-10 is somehow parenthetical because the main thesis in the context is the giving of gifts. However, these verses are important to establish the fact that Christ after his descent to the earth did ascend and thus, as the victor over the enemy, has the right to give gifts.⁴¹ By using these gifts, Paul cautions his audience that they should abstain from unwholesome speech and replace it with edifying and gracious words. They should "get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice" (4:31) and instead be kind, compassionate, and forgiving (4:32).

A. Hanson is quoted by Hall as he asks the following question to share light on Ephesians 4:8-9: "Now what is the meaning 'he ascended,' except that 'he also

³⁹ Gundry, *Commentary on the New Testament*, 769.

⁴⁰ Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament*, 404.

⁴¹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 530.

descended.”⁴² Harris W. Hall gives an astounding historical background of the path of early believers’ stand on the interpretation of “ascending” and “descending” for a better understanding. Hall quotes an excerpt of Hanson’s doctrine of “descensus”:

The belief that Christ spent the triduum (the interval between his death on the cross and his resurrection) in the underworld was common in the Christian teaching from the earliest times. It may have been in the background of a number of New Testament passages, as A. T. Hanson recently sought to prove. The doctrine did not appear in credal formulations until 359 CE, when it was mentioned in the ‘Fourth Formula of Sirmium’: the Lord “died and descended to the underworld, and regulated things there, whom the gatekeeper of hell saw and shuddered. But the tradition of a descent of Christ to the underworld between his death and resurrection is far older.⁴³

Hoehner reports several views pertaining to the interpretation of descent. The traditional interpretation has been that the descent refers to Christ’s descent from heaven to earth at the time of his incarnation and the ascent refers to Christ’s ascent from earth to heaven after the resurrection.⁴⁴ Another view proposed by Von Soden suggests that “the descent refers not to Christ’s descent at the incarnation but to Christ’s descent at Pentecost to give his spiritual gifts to the church.”⁴⁵ According to Soden, it is thought that this makes good sense of the parenthesis in verses 10-11 in that Christ ascended and then gave gifts. His descent, then, was in the person of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶

These views have much to commend, yet they have some problems. Lincoln, an advocate of Christ’s descent on Pentecost, admits that the descent, prior to the ascent, “has the advantage of following the order in the original meaning of the Psalm (68:18), for the descent inferred from the ascent of Jahweh to Mt. Zion would be the fact that he

⁴² Harris W. Hall, *The Descent of Christ: Ephesians 4:7-11 and Traditional Hebrew Imagery* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1996), 176.

⁴³ A. T. Hanson, quoted in Hall, *The Descent of Christ*, 177.

⁴⁴ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 531.

⁴⁵ Von Soden, *Books of the New Testament: Contributions to Early Christian Literature* (New York: Putnam’s Sons, 1907), 176.

⁴⁶ Von Soden, *Books of the New Testament*, 532.

first came down to deliver his people and triumph over his enemies before going up to his dwelling place.”⁴⁷ The real problem is identifying the syntactical relationship of the genitival phrase “lower parts of the earth.”⁴⁸ There are three views about genitival phrase. First, traditionally this view has been taken as a genitive of comparison or a partitive, which would be interpreted as parts lower than the earth or under the earth, that is, Christ’s descent into Hades.⁴⁹ Second, some commentators think “lower part of the earth” is an exegetical genitive or a genitive of opposition signifying “the lower parts, namely, the earth,” as distinct from heaven.⁵⁰ Third, some think that “lower parts of the earth” is a partitive or possessive genitive indicating that Christ descended into “the earth’s lower part, the grave.” This viewpoint includes both Christ’s incarnation and his death where he won the victory over Satan and sin.⁵¹

In conclusion, Hoehner remarks,

Each of these three views has supporters. View 1, denoting Hades, seems unlikely. The most probable are views 2 or 3. On balance it seems that the last view fits the context well and has the least problems. Christ’s death accomplished victory over the evil powers and sin and redemption for those who believe. The gifts are given to those redeemed saints.⁵²

⁴⁷ Andrew T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, Society for New Testament Studies, Monograph Series 41 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 160.

⁴⁸ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 533.

⁴⁹ Hanson, *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture*, 135-41. For a brief history of this view, see Hall, *The Descent of Christ*, 4-14. Larry Kreitzer suggests, The lower parts of the earth corresponds to the myth regarding Demeter, Persephone, and Hades; and on the basis of numismatic evidence of the Neronian period (A.D. 54-59) people of Asia minor would have associated the “lowermost parts of the earth” with the Plutonium of Hierapolis (city east of Ephesus) which was :a small sub-terranean cavern situated next to the temple of Apollo in the center of the city and commonly regarded as passageway to the underworld. (Larry J. Kreitzer, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, Epworth Commentaries [Peterborough, England: Epworth, 1998], 21-30)

⁵⁰ Harris W. Hall, “The Ascent and Descent of Christ in Ephesians 4:9-10,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 151, no. 602 (1994): 202-4.

⁵¹ Martin McNamara, *The New Testament and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch* (Rome: Pontifical Bible Institute Publication, 1966), 81.

⁵² Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 536.

Gundry writes with piercing clarity that “the spoils of Christ’s victory consist now in the gifts of grace given to Christians, seated as the Christians are (from God’s standpoint) in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. Since Christ is the “one Lord” (4:5), Paul infers that Christ’s ascent implies a descent.”⁵³ Gundry goes on to say that “the descent in burial makes a fine contrast with ascension ‘above all the heavens’ despite their multiplicity.”⁵⁴ Gundry also notes that the “‘Is himself the one who ascended’ (Eph 4:10a) underscores the identity of the ascender’s consequent supremacy; while the ‘In order that he might fill all things’ (4:10b) supplements this supremacy with an infusion of the whole universe with his presence and power.”⁵⁵

The distribution of the gifts (4:11-16). The central point of Ephesians 4:11-16 is the distribution of gifts to the church which are given to unify the church. When Paul wrote these words, he apparently had in mind his listing of the ministries in 1 Corinthians 12:28. The Corinthian passage involves a longer list of spiritual gifts (*charismata*), but in Ephesians 4:11-16 Paul is interested in setting forth especially these offices necessary for the expansion and nurture of the church.⁵⁶

The Provision: Gifted Persons (4:11)

Hoehner wants his readers to understand that the Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost preceding the presentation of the gifts of the Spirit (Acts 2:33). Acts 2:33 refers to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within every believer. Hoehner adds, “The Ephesians context is discussing something different. Although each believer is indwelt,

⁵³ Gundry, *Commentary on the New Testament* 769.

⁵⁴ Gundry, *Commentary on the New Testament*, 769.

⁵⁵ Gundry, *Commentary on the New Testament*, 769.

⁵⁶ Taylor, *Galatians through Philemon*, 208.

with no distinction, the present context (Eph. 4:11) is talking about the gifts that are given to each with distinction.”⁵⁷ Thielman notes,

At the same time that the church works toward unity, however, it must be careful not to compromise its identity as the people who reflect the character of God. The author adds that for this reason, Paul weaves into his practical advice for maintaining social cohesion statements that urge the church to maintain its holiness. The church should do this, he insists, by avoiding erroneous teaching, by remaining separate from ‘the Gentiles, and by imitating God and Christ in its conduct.’⁵⁸

Considering the specific gifted persons, Hoehner enlists the specific categories of gifted persons mentioned in Ephesians 4:11. The first mentioned is “apostles.” Hoehner interprets an apostle as an official delegate of Jesus Christ, commissioned for the specific tasks of proclaiming authoritatively the message in oral and written form and of establishing and building up the church.⁵⁹ Three kinds of apostles are mentioned in the New Testament: those who had been with Jesus in his ministry and had witnessed his resurrection (Acts 1:21-22); Paul, who was born out of season (1 Cor 15:8-9); and those who received the gift of apostleship. The first two categories should be regarded as offices, whereas the last is a spiritual gift to the church.⁶⁰ The second gifted person, the prophet, is also listed among the gifts. Hoehner suggests, “The prophet was one who was endowed by the Holy Spirit with the gift of prophecy for the purposes of edification, comfort, encouragement (1 Cor. 14:3, 31), and further, to understand and communicate the mysteries and revelation of God to the church (1 Cor. 12:10; 13:2; 14:23, 30-31).”⁶¹

The third gifted person listed is the “evangelist.” Hoehner remarks that the term occurs only two other times in the New Testament, first as a designation (Acts 21:8), and second a kind of ministry Paul exhorted Timothy to perform (2 Tim 4:5).

⁵⁷ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 541.

⁵⁸ Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament*, 403.

⁵⁹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 541.

⁶⁰ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 541.

⁶¹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 542.

Hoehner notes, “In the early church it was thought that the evangelists were those who preached the gospel and were the successors to the apostles in that they laid the foundations of the faith in new areas, appointed shepherds, and then moved to other lands and people.”⁶² The next set of gifted persons are pastors and teachers. Hoehner remarks, “It seems that these two gifts, pastoring and teaching, are distinct although it could be said that all pastors should be teachers but not all teachers are pastors.”⁶³ Certainly, Jesus recognized that he was both shepherd and teacher and as such was and is a model for all others with like gifts. Teaching includes instruction in doctrine and its application to daily life, but the teacher may not have all the administrative and shepherding responsibilities of the pastor.⁶⁴

In conclusion, Bruce notes three purposes of these gifts: (1) to prepare people (2) who will do service, (3) which will build the church. All of this activity is to go on until the church reaches the measure of the fulness in Christ. This is an attained unity while the unity of 4:3-6 is a unity already existent.⁶⁵ The gifts that Paul described to the Ephesian assembly have application to the present-day church. Christ has sovereignly given gifted people to the church. These gifts were not to be used for self-promotion but for building up the saints.

**The Immediate Purpose:
Prepare for Ministry (4:12)**

Speaking primarily of the internal life of the Christian community, Paul describes the purpose for which Christ has given the church these various ministries: to

⁶² Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 543.

⁶³ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 545.

⁶⁴ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 545

⁶⁵ Bruce, *New International Bible Commentary*, 1436.

prepare believers for the work of the ministry for edifying the body of Christ.⁶⁶ The three phrases in 4:12, each one commencing with the preposition “for,” give the impression that a threefold purpose is being expressed by the apostle. Another view holds that “for” expresses the immediate purpose while the other two prepositions denote direction or goal.⁶⁷ The point is that the gifted persons listed in verse 11 serve as the foundational gifts used for the immediate purpose of preparing all saints to minister. Thus, every believer must do the work of the ministry.⁶⁸ Taylor adds, “The expectation is that there shall be an active and fruitful labor for the Lord, with the result that the church will be built up, souls are won and simultaneously the life of the community is deepened and strengthened by the church’s unified service.”⁶⁹

In conclusion, Hoehner asserts, “Christ gave foundational gifts to the church for the immediate purpose of preparing all the saints for the goal of service and in turn this service is for the final goal of building up the entire body of Christ.”⁷⁰ As each believer functions with the gift given, Christ’s body, the church, will be built up. The gifts are never for self-edification but for the edification of the whole body of believers. The gifted people listed are not to be considered as officers of the church but rather gifted individuals who are foundational. The work of ministry continues as these gifted individuals prepare all the saints for the work of the ministry with the ultimate goal of building up the body of Christ.

⁶⁶ Taylor, *Galatians through Philemon*, 209.

⁶⁷ Even in Rom 3:25-26 the first preposition (whom) is more indicative of the remote goal in that God was just with regard to the past sins. The second preposition (his) indicates immediate purpose or goal, showing that Christ’s death made it possible for God’s righteousness to be vindicated, making possible his justification of believing individuals in the present day.

⁶⁸ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 549.

⁶⁹ Taylor, *Galatians through Philemon*, 209.

⁷⁰ Ernest Best, *Ministry in Ephesians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburg: T & T Clark, 1998), 162-63.

The Final Goal: Attain Maturity (4:13)

Having established that the gifted people were given to the church for the immediate purpose of preparing all the saints to minister for the building up of the body Christ, Paul explains the need for the process to continue until attaining the goal that believers mature to the measure of the fulness of Christ.⁷¹ Ephesians 4:13 reflects back to the previous verse 12, and Paul offers further explanation of the “building up” of the church. Paul uses three phrases, each introduced with the preposition *eis*: (1) in the unity of the faith; (2) unto a perfect man; (3) unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.⁷² Taylor explains, “This should not be taken as parallel ideas. The first one speaks of the means of maturity, the second of the reality of maturity, and third of the measure of maturity.”⁷³ Bruce notes, “The integrated oneness of the body is real enough, but is not the oneness of the mature man. The unity toward which the church moves is one of the personal knowledges of the Son of God.”⁷⁴

Thus, Christ gave foundational gifts to prepare all the saints in ministry to edify the body. Further, the corporate body is to reach or attain the unity of faith and the knowledge of God, to a mature person as a corporate entity, and to Christ’s full stature.⁷⁵ Hoehner explains,

This can be accomplished because believers who function in the body have the foundational gift to prepare them and also because each individual believer has been given a gift in measure (7). Hence, if every individual believer allows the Spirit to use that gift to the measure given to him or her, then all the body of Christ will grow in Christ’s full measure.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 551.

⁷² Taylor, *Galatians through Philemon*, 209.

⁷³ Taylor, *Galatians through Philemon*, 209.

⁷⁴ Bruce, *New International Bible Commentary*, 1437.

⁷⁵ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 558.

⁷⁶ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 558.

Maturity involves sharing individual spiritual growth and using one's spiritual gifts within the body. This is not only evidence of spiritual maturity for the individual, but it also brings unity to the body and the possibility of measuring up to Christ's full stature.

**The Ultimate Purpose:
Grow in Unity (4:14-16)**

The topics of the previous verses illustrate how gifts were given to gifted people of the church (v. 11) for the purpose of preparing believers for the work of the ministry (v. 12) and for the goal of attaining maturity to the measure of Christ (v. 13). Paul next discusses the ultimate of growing in unity (vv. 14-16). Paul first states the negative purpose (v. 14) and then the positive purpose (vv. 15-16). In verse 14, Paul states that believers should no longer be children because this brings instability which, in turn, leads to disastrous consequences.⁷⁷ Verse 14, "In order that we might no longer be children," offers detailed explanation highlighted by Hoehner, who explains that "the conjunction 'in order' serves both verse 14, giving the negative ramifications, and also looks forward to verses 15-16, where the positive aspects are slated."⁷⁸

Another area of importance explained by Hoehner is rooted in Ephesians 4b: "Being tossed back and forth by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine." Hoehner remarks, "These two participles further describe one who is childish and lacks stability."⁷⁹ The first participle, "being tossed forth and back," conveys the idea of being thrown around by the waves of sea and being thrown into confusion (Isa 57:20 is the only occurrence in LXX).⁸⁰ Thus, in the present context, it means that children are easily confused in their thinking and are easily influenced by others. The second participle, "to

⁷⁷ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 559.

⁷⁸ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 559.

⁷⁹ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 561.

⁸⁰ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 561

carry about or around,” appears four times in the LXX and can denote “turn around, make dizzy, turmoil” (Eccl 7:7; Prov 10:24).⁸¹ It appears three times in the New Testament: twice in the literal sense “to carry about or around” (Mark 6:55; 2 Cor 4:10) and in the present verse it is also used as a metaphor for confusion. Hoehner suggests, “This teaching is designed to counteract the pastor-teachers’ teachings mentioned in verse 11. He notes that pastor-teachers bring stability and unity whereas these teachers came from every direction and brought only confusion, turmoil, and disunity.”⁸²

Hoehner further explains, “Ephesians 4:14 conveys the idea that childish understanding is easily confused by all sorts of doctrine devised by the trickery of people.”⁸³ These people use deceitfulness for their own plan, which are characterized by error (cf. 5:6). It suggests the error is propagated with the intent of luring others to embrace the error (cf. Rom 1:32). Consequently, it is of utmost importance for believers to follow God’s plan for edification of the body through the gifted people provided for his purpose.⁸⁴

Paul positively discussed the purpose of walking together in verse 15; namely, that each believer might grow to the measure of Christ. These ministries are to make possible a growth into Christ. Taylor teaches that “speaking the truth” is derived from the word “*aletheuo*,” which is generally translated “to speak,” but that there is more in Paul’s thoughts in terms of living and acting.⁸⁵ Also, this section of 4:15 puts light on the purpose of walking together: “But rather being truthful with love.” The stark contrast

⁸¹ Flavius Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews* (Milan, Italy: CreateSpace Independent, 2013), 92.

⁸² For the roles of teachers in the development of unity within a sociological framework, see Peter W. George, “Networks and Exchanges: Ephesians 4-7-17 and the Community Function of Teachers,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 30 (Winter 2000): 135-43.

⁸³ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 564.

⁸⁴ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 564.

⁸⁵ Taylor, *Galatians through Philemon*, 211.

with verse 14 is marked in three ways: (1) by the adversative conjunction “but”; (2) by the participle “being truthful,” and (3) by the subjective with the “in order that” (v. 14) from the static condition, “we might no longer be children (v. 14), to the dynamic, “we might grow” (v. 15).⁸⁶ Hoehner recalls that in Ephesians “the concept of ‘being truthful’ is the best sense of the word. In contrast to the preceding verse (14), where there are three prepositional phrases to denote falsehood and deceit, the present word speaks of being real or truthful in both conduct and speech. Their deceit was not only in their words but also in their conduct (cf. John 3:21).”⁸⁷ In other words, the believers’ conduct should be transparent, revealing the real state of affairs, as opposed to hiding or suppressing the truth through cunning and deceit.

Having developed the negative and positive purposes of growth for individuals who make up the body, Paul continues in verse 16 to discuss growth but with reference to the whole body of believers. Spiritual gifts are not contradictory to Christian unity, they are complimentary to it (v. 16). John Calvin adds that no member of the body of Christ is endowed with such perfection as to be able, without the assistance of others to supply his own necessities.⁸⁸ Considering his expression, “from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together,” Paul returns to the analogy of the body and uses it to emphasize the unity which Christ, the Head, brings to the church.⁸⁹ He visualizes the wonderful, yet complicated structure of the human body with its several parts being fitted and joined together. Christ, therefore, is the source of the gifts that enables the individual to build up the body of Christ, and Christ is also the source of the body’s unification through the

⁸⁶ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 564.

⁸⁷ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 564.

⁸⁸ John Calvin, quoted by Francis Foulks, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1963), 114.

⁸⁹ Taylor, *Galatians through Philemon*, 212.

interaction of believers which causes growth of the body.⁹⁰ The final prepositional phrase “in love” denotes the sphere in which this was to occur (in love); hence, members are to contribute the measure of the gift that each has been apportioned to other members in the body in an atmosphere of love.

In conclusion, there can be unity in diversity in the church. Although there is oneness of structure, there is variety in function. The unifying force is the oneness of purpose, that is, the use of gifts for body edification, not self-edification. Paul sees the unity of the church in organic and not organizational terms. The real unity lies within and is the result of a healthy organism. The Spirit creates such oneness; it is not the work of men, however clever and personable they might be.⁹¹ When this unity prevails, participated in by each member and encouraged by the faithfulness of gifted ministers, the church grows in symmetry and beauty, to the glory of God.

First Corinthians 12:12-31

First Corinthians 12:12-31 records Paul’s account of unity with diversity in the body. Ralph G. Turnbull teaches that “the bond for Christian union is not ordinances, creeds, or confessions, but the baptism with the Holy Spirit.”⁹² According to Turnbull, the baptism with the Holy Spirit is the only feasible basis for Christian union; one body—the church, that is, the spiritual body of Christ (Jews or Gentiles, bond or free widely divergent but made one in Christ).⁹³ Through spiritual gifts, God dispenses diversity of ministries to his children. First Corinthians 12:12-31 shows that these special endowments

⁹⁰ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 578.

⁹¹ Taylor, *Galatians through Philemon*, 212.

⁹² Ralph G. Turnbull, *Proclaiming the New Testament: The Epistles to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1961), 51.

⁹³ Turnbull, *Proclaiming the New Testament*, 51-52.

of supernatural energy, all different, are bestowed so that Christ shall be exalted and his kingdom advanced.

From 1 Corinthians 12, Paul's single emphasis centers on the great diversity of gifts that the one God distributes/manifests through his one Spirit for the sake of the community. The reason for such emphasis is not immediately clear from what is said, but when Paul finishes, the Corinthians should have no doubt about Paul's concern and the corrective nature of this present argument.⁹⁴ The human body is a living organism that has many members, each member is different, yet each makes a specific contribution to the entire body. The successive waves of Paul's argument may be summed up as follows: (1) not disunity, but (2) unity; yet unity (3) not uniformity, but (4) of mutual concern and love.⁹⁵

The Body-Diversity in Unity (12:12-14)

Gordon Fee notes, "Paul pressed for the need for diversity within unity and adopts a common analogy from antiquity and applies it to the Corinthian situation."⁹⁶ In so doing, as often happens with such rich metaphors, he makes further points about attitudes that need correcting in Corinth. Gordon Fee teaches, "Paul's primary concern with this imagery (the body) is not that the body is one even though it has many members, thus arguing for their need for unity despite their diversity."⁹⁷ Rather, Gordon notes that Paul's concern is expressed in verse 14, "that even though the body (the church) is one, it

⁹⁴ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 599.

⁹⁵ Craig L. Bloomberg, *1 Corinthians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 243.

⁹⁶ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 600.

⁹⁷ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 601.

does not consist of one member but of many, thus arguing for their need for diversity, since they are in fact one body made of many members.”⁹⁸

Anthony C. Thiselton remarks, “Few terms have undergone so many twists and turns in the history of Pauline scholarship than *body* and *body of Christ*. At first sight the logic of Paul’s argument clearly develops the theme of unity-with-diversity or diversity-in-unity already established in 12:4-11.”⁹⁹ Paul in effect warns that the so-called “weak” must not feel worthless if they do not have certain gifts, and should not think that they are not a genuine part of the body. First Corinthians 12:15 says, “If the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less part of the body.” Thiselton reminds his audience that

Paul reassures those who are anxious about supposedly more “gifted” members, and underlines their role, status, and welcome. On the other side, he rebukes “the strong” who seem to think that only those of similar social status and similar spiritual gifts are “real” Christians, as he alludes to 1 Corinthians 12:20-21, The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you.”¹⁰⁰

According to Fee, the opening sentence somewhat redundantly strikes both notes with equal force: “For just as the body is one, yet has many members, and all the members, though many, are one body, so also is Christ.” The “for” with which this sentence begins in verse 12 indicates that what follows is intended to offer further explanation of the point made in verses 4-11.¹⁰¹ Fee explains “The explanation of the ‘one body’ returns to the imagery of the church as the ‘body of Christ’ first used in 10:17

⁹⁸ Fee, *The Epistle to the Corinthians*, 601. Hans Conzelmann comments on v. 14: “Now the accent again lies (as in vv. 4-11) upon the notion of differentiation.” Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: English Translation, 1975), 212. Conzelmann notes that this notion of differentiation stands over against both the NIV and a large number of interpreters, who, despite the structure and all the signals to the contrary, see the passage as emphasizing unity. See most recently C. H. Talbert, “Paul’s Understanding of the Holy Spirit: The Evidence of 1 Corinthians 12-14,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 11 (1984): 98-99.

⁹⁹ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 991.

¹⁰⁰ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 991.

¹⁰¹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 601-2.

and picked up again in 11:29.”¹⁰² As noted in 1 Corinthians 12:12, the emphasis shifts to the many who make up the one body. Fee reiterates, “In the opening sentence the points are made: The body is one, yet the body has many members. In saying that it is one, Paul’s concern is for its essential unity. But that does not mean uniformity.”¹⁰³ In saying “so it is with Christ,” Fee remarks, “Paul is probably using metonymy, that is, substituting ‘the body’ for many “members.” Thus “Christ” means the church as a shortened form for the “body of Christ.” Clear evidence for this is found in verse 27: “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it”; followed by verse 28: “And in the church God has appointed.”¹⁰⁴

In verses 13-14 Paul give a twofold rationale for permitting diversity within unity: (1) those who are being saved come from all ethnic and socioeconomic brackets of the ancient world; and (2) that is how a human body works. Verse 13 refers to incorporation into the body of Christ as “baptism in one Spirit.” Spirit-baptism is not identical to water baptism but occurs at the moment of conversion (cf. Rom 8:9). However, Paul probably associated the concepts closely together, inasmuch as water baptism in the early church regularly followed quickly on the heels of belief. As mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:13, Bloomberg wants his readers to know that the expression “Given the one Spirit to drink” could also be rendered “watered with the one Spirit” (cf. Paul’s use of the same verb in 3:6-7). Either way, both clauses of verse 13 refer to the same spiritual

¹⁰² The very commonness of the imagery makes much of that discussion irrelevant. Less likely still is the suggestion that the “source” was the temple of Asclepius with its many clay replicas of “dismembered” parts of the body. See A. E. Hill, “The Temple of Asclepius: An Alternate Source for Paul’s Body Theology?” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 99 (1980): 437-39; G. G. Garnier, “The Temple of Asclepius at Corinth and Paul’s Theology,” *Buried History* 18 (1982): 52-58.

¹⁰³ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 603.

¹⁰⁴ For a discussion of the church as the body of Christ, see Eduard Schweizer, *The Church as the Body of Christ* (Louisville: John Knox, 1964), 43-76.

action of being incorporated into the company of the redeemed and suggest that the Spirit both indwells and surrounds believers.¹⁰⁵

Fee notes, “Verses 13 and 14 pick up the two parts of verse 12 by way of explanation and elaboration. . . . The present sentence further explains the presupposition ‘the body is one.’” In keeping with the preceding argument as with the section as a whole, Fee suggests that the explanation is given in terms of the Spirit: “What makes the Corinthians one in verse 13 is their common experience in the Spirit, the very Spirit responsible for and manifested in the great diversity as argued for in 4-11.”¹⁰⁶ The Spirit is what essentially distinguishes the believer from the nonbeliever (1 Cor 2:10-14); the Spirit is what especially marks the beginning of Christian life (Gal 3:2-3); the Spirit above all is what makes a person a child of God (Rom 8:14-17).¹⁰⁷ Thus, it is natural for Paul to refer to their unity in the body in terms of the Spirit. Fee explains, “Despite the considerable literature on this text suggesting otherwise, Paul’s present concern is not to delineate how an individual becomes a believer, but to explain how they, though many, are one body.”¹⁰⁸

In verse 14 Fee teaches, “With another ‘for indeed,’ Paul proceeds to elaborate the second motif of verse 12, that even though they are one body, made so by their common experience of the Spirit (v. 13), the body itself, though one, is not one ‘part’ but ‘many.’”¹⁰⁹ Verse 12 reiterates the meaning of the body by a stated matter-of-factly: “The body is one: the one body has many members.” Fee enlightens his readers that, here, Paul mixes the two themes with a negative contrast: “The one body is not one member; rather,

¹⁰⁵ Bloomberg, *1 Corinthians*, 246.

¹⁰⁶ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 603.

¹⁰⁷ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 603.

¹⁰⁸ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 603.

¹⁰⁹ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 607.

it is composed of many constituent parts.”¹¹⁰ The essence of the human body is its unity in diversity. It has many parts. If the body had only one part, it would be ridiculous to exalt one member of the church above the other.

Mark Taylor writes, “Paul makes three self-evident observations about the individual members of the body in 1 Cor. 12:15-20.”¹¹¹ First, each member of the body is equally a part of the body. The rhetorical device of personification (“if the foot should say . . .” “if the ear should say . . .”) allows Paul to portray more vividly the envy that one Corinthian believer might have for another, or the sense of being an “outsider” instead of an integral part of the church.¹¹² Just because the foot is not a hand or an ear does not mean that either is any less a member of the body (12:15-16). Second, Taylor also explains, “Each part of the body has its unique function, and the logic of 12:17 is intuitive and simple. The corollary point is that there is no such thing as a body that is only one part, expressed in question of 12:19.”¹¹³ Third, the one body of many parts is by God’s sovereign design (12:18). Paul is careful to stress that God placed “each one” of the members in the body just as he wanted them to be.

Taylor further explains,

In 1 Cor. 12:21-27, the personification of the body parts continues in order to make a different point. The main consideration in this section is the need that members of the body have for one another with an emphasis on the weaker, less honorable, and unpresentable members of the body. The shameful treatment of the poor at the Lord’s Supper by the more distinguished and honorable members of the church (11:17-34: especially 11:22) is undoubtedly in the background and aptly illustrates the necessity of this particular application of the body image.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 607.

¹¹¹ Mark Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, The New American Commentary, vol. 28 (Nashville: B & H, 2014), 297.

¹¹² Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 297.

¹¹³ Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 297.

¹¹⁴ Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 297-98.

In 1 Corinthians 12:21-27, Paul makes four key assertions pertaining to the body parts: members of the body need one another (12:21); the weaker members are indispensable (v. 22); God gives greater honor to members that lack honor according to his design (v. 24b); and what affects one member of the body affects all members of the body (v. 26).¹¹⁵

In 1 Corinthians 12:28-31, Taylor helps readers understand that for the fourth time in the span of seventeen verses Paul mentions the sovereign action of either the Spirit or God in the distribution of gifts to believers and the arrangement of the church, Christ's body (vv. 11, 18, 24b).¹¹⁶ Taylor remarks that verses 28-31 essentially reprise the main emphasis of verses 4-11, yet with some additional elements. Taylor writes, "Paul mentions prophets, those who work miracles (powers), those with gifts of healing, those speaking in tongues, and those interpreting tongues. But to this list he adds apostles, teachers, those who help others, and those with gifts of administration."¹¹⁷ The focus of the distribution of gifts is on God's sovereign appointment of both persons and gifts in the church, and as the rhetorical question of verses 29-31 indicate, not all hold the same office and not all exercise the same gift, which has been the point all along.¹¹⁸

To conclude, Taylor states that the concluding command in 1 Corinthians 12:31 to earnestly desire the greater gifts is not a contradiction to the principle of the divine arrangement and endowment of the church. To desire what is "greater" likely means to desire what is the most beneficial for the church.¹¹⁹ Paul's emphasis on unity within diversity calls into question the behavior of the growing numbers of believers who

¹¹⁵ Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 299-300.

¹¹⁶ Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 300.

¹¹⁷ Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 300-301.

¹¹⁸ Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 301.

¹¹⁹ Taylor, *1 Corinthians*, 302.

claim to be religious, believe in God and even Christ, and yet drop out of organized church life or at least fade to its periphery. In a world heavily influenced by a heritage of rugged individualism, believers need to work even harder to demonstrate that Christianity is not a merely personal religion but is fundamentally corporate.

John 17:21-23

For what purpose does a gift serve the church if the gifted are in disunity? Just like an assembly line in a factory, believers must come together (unity) with the help of the Holy Spirit to assemble (put together) their gifts for the edification of the whole body—the church—for God’s glory. An exegesis of John 17:21-23 shows Jesus’ petition for unity in his prayer for future believers to be one.

Jesus’ Prayer for Future Believers Sets the Tone for Unity in Ministry Teams (John 17:21-23)

D. A. Carson explains,

The extension to those who will believe through the witness of the original disciples assumes that the witness will in some measure prove effective. . . . What Jesus prays for these believers-to-be is that all of them may be one (John 17:21)—a petition that repeats what Jesus has prayed for his original disciples, a petition whose significance is further unpacked in the remaining clauses of the verse.¹²⁰

Carson continues by pointing out that this is not simply a “unity of love”: “This unity is predicated on adherence to the revelation the Father mediated to the first disciples through his Son, the revelation they accepted (v 6, 8) and then passed on (“those who will believe in me through their message,” v. 20).”¹²¹ Carson interprets this unity to be analogous to the oneness Jesus enjoys with his Father, here fleshed out in the words in verse 21: “just as you are in me and I am in you.”¹²²

¹²⁰ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England: Apollos, 1991), 568.

¹²¹ Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 568.

¹²² Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 568.

Carson further explains, “The Father and the Son are distinguishable (the pre-incarnate Word is “with” God [John 1:1], the Son prays to his Father; the Father commissions and sends, while the Son obeys), yet they are one.”¹²³ In a similar way, the believers, still distinct, are to be one in purpose, in love, in action undertaken with and for one another, and in joint submission to the revelation received. The fact that Jesus prays to his Father that these disciples may “also be in us” (v. 21) probably alludes to the “union” language of the vine metaphor in John 15. They are “in” the Father and his Son, so identified with God and dependent upon him for life and fruitfulness that they themselves become the locus of the Father’s life and work in them (cf. John 14:12; 15:7).¹²⁴

Joseph Mayfield writes, “First, the characteristics of this unity for which Jesus prays is evident that it is grounded in the ultimate purpose for which Christ was sent in to the world, and for which he gave his life—the redemption of man, which is the glorification of the Father, and the Son.”¹²⁵ Mayfield alludes to John 17:22 to reinforce his teachings on the characteristics of the unity: “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.”¹²⁶ Second, this unity issues in perfection or completeness: “I in them and, thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one” (v. 23). More so, Jesus prays to his father that these disciples may also be in us probably alludes to the “union” language of John 15.¹²⁷

¹²³ Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 568.

¹²⁴ Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 568.

¹²⁵ Joseph H. Mayfield, *John*, Beacon Bible Commentary (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1965) 195.

¹²⁶ C. Kingsley Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 428. Barrett continues, “The glory of Christ is acquired through and is most completely expressed in the crucifixion. The church receives glory on precisely the same terms, by unity in faith death and resurrection of Jesus, and expresses it in obedience.” Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John*, 428.

¹²⁷ Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 568.

Lastly, Carson remarks,

Although the unity envisaged in this chapter is not institutional—the purpose clause at the end of verse 21 shows beyond possibility of doubt that the unity is meant to be observable. . . . This unity is not achieved by hunting enthusiastically for the lowest common theologian denominator, but by common adherence to the apostolic gospel, by love that is joyfully self-sacrificing, by undaunted commitment to the shared goals of the mission with which Jesus’ followers have been charged, and by self-conscious dependence on God himself for life and fruitfulness.¹²⁸

It is a unity necessarily present, at least in a nutshell amongst genuine believers; it is a unity that must be brought to perfection (v. 23).

Conclusion

Even though believers are endowed with different spiritual gifts, the body of Christ (the church) cannot be well served if members fail to unify those gifts for the common good of the church. Ephesians 4:1-16; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; and John 17:21-23 looked closely at the biblical bases for unity and for working together in ministry to edify the body of Christ. The hope for this project was that God’s Word would foster unity as it gives clarity on God’s standard for the use of diverse gifts to unify the body of Christ while enabling members to work together in ministry at Broadway Baptist Church, Lexington, Kentucky.

As explained in chapter 3, disunity amongst believers not only weakens the vision and mission of the church, but it also distorts God’s plan for the church as alluded in Psalms 133:1: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” When a church is unified, it is easier to discharge its missions and lives are directly impacted not only within the church, but within the community at large as well.

¹²⁸ Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 568.

CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED
TO DEVELOPING MINISTRY TEAMS
WHILE FOSTERING UNITY

The problem of disunity is crumbling many churches in America today. The world is hurt by all sorts of problems, many of which are built on greed, selfishness, and egocentrism. For the most part, the manifestation of these egocentric ambitions is seen through separations and divisions within families, groups, and even organizations. Sadly, many churches have allowed this spirit of disunity and antagonism to reign, which is contrary to scriptural doctrines. When this unchristian lifestyle is unchecked, untold damages, both spiritual and physical, will affect the body of Christ

The Bible teaches in Romans 12:5 that “we [the church] are one body in Christ Jesus, which is made up of many members, and every member is one of another.” Therefore, why is there disunity, confusion, and division in the church today? If there is one body, and one Spirit, and the church is called in one hope of its calling, then why the separation? The precious words of Jesus in Matthew 12:25 remind the church that every kingdom that is divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against itself will fall. If the church believes what the Savior said, then what makes the church (body of Christ) to be so divided?

This chapter looks at some practical and theoretical issues that can foster unity by motivating believers to work together in ministry teams. The problem of disunity can be addressed in the following five ways: (1) doing ministry together addresses the contemporary challenge of division among members; (2) working together in ministry builds trust and develops confidence among members; (3) a unified church minimizes the possibility of conflict and erects a bond of love; (4) a unified church multiplies efforts

and prospects to win more souls; and (5) a unified church benefits from the biblical advantages of unity.

Doing Ministry Together Addresses the Contemporary Challenge of Faulty Division among Believers

One way to prevent disunity in the church is by engaging Christians to do ministry together, thus uprooting possible avenues for division. George Cladis teaches, “A team that learns how to discern the spiritual gifts of the individual team members and how members can work together, pray hard, and share information and energy to move toward a sharply defined mission, vision, or cause, is an extremely powerful unit of ministry.”¹ When believers identify themselves as one in the Lord (1 Cor 1:10), agree with one another, and perfectly unite in mind and thought, it is difficult for disunity and division to occur. Cladis continues,

When members of a team collaborate in order to accomplish what they discern is God’s will, they experience the beauty of Spirit-given synergy; they feel as though they have made important contributions to help move the group toward a meaningful end. In contrast, groups that falter and fizzle out lack a high degree of collaboration, and people wind up feeling at best confused about what they were supposed to be doing and frustrated that the group could not work together.²

Doing ministry together means that members must learn to collaborate with each other. Collaboration is the art and skill of negotiating community, networking gifts, and focusing individual contributions to fit in to the larger movement of the faithful fellowship.³ In learning to collaborate, members put legs on the theology of the body of Christ and takes steps to walk and talk of working together. The team progress in this effort becomes a model and symbol to other ministry groups in the church. Team learning about collaboration, disseminated throughout the congregation through the normal

¹ George Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church: How Pastors and Church Staffs Can Grow Together into a Powerful Fellowship of Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 88.

² Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 88.

³ Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 89.

communication channels, becomes shared wisdom for others to follow. Cladis remarks, “Because collaboration is a difficult skill requiring trial and error, permission is needed to fail at collaboration and to discuss these failures. The failures then serve as a teaching tool for other groups in the church.”⁴ Grace needs to be extended as members learn how to work together and keep each other accountable for their progress.

A detailed understanding of avoiding faulty division amongst believers is enhanced in the definition of Christian ministry teams by Stephen Macchia: “A manageable group of diversely gifted people who hold one another accountable to serve joyfully together for the glory of God by sharing a common mission; embodying the loving message of Christ; accomplishing a meaningful ministry; and anticipating transformative results.”⁵

Stephen Macchia offers key components to explain that doing ministry together addresses the problem of faulty division among believers. In his explanation, Macchia states that such a team is composed of a Christian ministry teams, a manageable group, diversity gifted people, who hold one another accountable, joyfully serve together, for the glory of God, and sharing a common mission embodying the loving message of Christ.⁶ This explanation is descriptive of a distinctly Christian team, composed of those who serve together within a local church or parachurch ministry setting with Christ as the center of their endeavors.

The composition of every team in ministry is unique because the members are unique. What glues the church together is the calling of the church to a particular mission. When team members understand and focus on the mission, and when each member focuses on his or her specific role, conflict shall be avoided and the team’s calling can be

⁴ Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 89.

⁵ Stephen A. Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team: Five Traits of Vital Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 41.

⁶ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*, 41.

fulfilled.⁷ Each member of the team needs to know with certainty what God’s call is on his or her life. Empowering members of the team to fulfill their responsibilities reduces conflict and avoids division. It is incumbent for ministry leaders to know the members of the team, and knowing requires time spent with members and leads to the identification of their gifts.⁸ Within a Christian community, the primary mission is to cooperate with one another in shared endeavors to beat the one and only enemy that seeks to devour the cooperative spirits of God’s people.⁹ When members are empowered to fully express their uniquely distinct contribution to the body of Christ, trust is established, thus minimizing the risk of a faulty division.

Working Together in Ministry Builds Trust and Develops Confidence among Members

Another practical issue related to developing ministry teams and fostering unity is that it builds trust and develops confidence among members. Scripture makes reference to the church in Acts 2:42-47 as a generous and growing church, which can be considered the model for churches in this millennium to emulate. They devoted themselves to the teachings of the apostles, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. “All the believers were together and held all things in common. . . . Every day the devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts” (Acts 2:42-47 CSB). Ministry teams are made up of people who are diverse in skill and temperament. Each member contributes skill and knowledge for the benefit of the group’s goal. This collaboration is synergistic, producing a net effect far outweighing the sum of the work of individuals.

⁷ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*, 19.

⁸ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*, 18.

⁹ Cooperation among members in any given ministry team reduces the chances of conflict, thus uniting them to be stronger, and the stronger they get the harder it will be for the devil to break through.

A Wakeup Call for the Church to Unify for God’s Glory

The rate at which membership is shrinking is a wakeup call for the church to embark on unity for the glory of God. Matthew 12:25 says, “And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, ‘Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.’” Larry Osborne teaches, “It is an incredible thing when a group of sinners saved by grace start to work together, reading from the same page, united by the same vision, reaching for the same goals, and most important, sticking together to advance the cause of the King and his kingdom rather than our own agendas and goals.”¹⁰ It is not an accident that Jesus predicted church growth but prayed for unity, as mentioned in chapter 2. Unity, as Osborne mentions, “is one thing that cannot be left to chance, and if left unattended or taken for granted, unity quickly disappears.”¹¹

Alfred Poirier notes,

Unfortunately, when the world turns to the church, it finds little evidence that those who calls themselves Christians are really the sons of God, for it finds little evidence that Christians are the makers of peace. . . . The church looks more like a bunch of fighting street orphans than sons and daughters sitting peaceably and working together at the family table. If the world is little unconvinced that Jesus is God’s Son and that Christians are the children of God, then it is due less to any apologetic deficiency and more to the disunity and dysfunction of our life together as the family of God. . . . The church’s failure in peacemaking and disunity is due in large measure to her failure as members to believe and appropriate the biblical truth that the church is God’s family. Genuine service to God shall only be met when Christians recover the meaning and practice of the church as the family of God.¹²

The church was of critical importance to the Lord and, for that reason, it is of critical importance to believers as well. Ephesians 4:12 calls on the church to grow further in unity and to equip those who have been trained to do ministry for God’s glory

¹⁰ Larry Osborne, *Sticky Teams: Keeping Your Leadership Team and Staff on the Same Page* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 22.

¹¹ Osborne, *Sticky Teams*, 22.

¹² Alfred Poirier, *The Peace-Making Pastor: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 91.

because the church is a battleship, on a mission, engaged in a spiritual war.¹³ Bill Hull recognizes this problem when he writes,

The evangelical church has become weak, flabby, and too dependent on artificial means that can only simulate real spiritual power. Churches are too little like training centers to shape up the saints. . . . The average Christian resides in the comfort zone of “I pay the pastor to preach, administrate, and counsel. . . . I am consumer, he is the retailer. . . . I have the needs, he meets them . . . that’s why I pay for.”¹⁴

One way for a Christian to get serious about growing and maturing as a follower of Christ is by being honest and speaking the truth. Members need to be told when they are knocked down, when they fall apart, and when sin captures their hearts. And the church is the most natural place in the world where this should occur.¹⁵ Developing teams is a learning process by nature. No sequence of events will unfold precisely the same way twice when people must interact to coordinate ideas or actions; participants in such a process are always in a position to learn.¹⁶

Amy Edmonson remarks, “For the church of God to grow toward unity, members needs to be educated and be made to understand that walking in unity and developing ministry teams is a learning process by nature.”¹⁷ Teaching biblical truth enables the church to grow and become stable. The content learned corporately and individually provides a greater understanding of God’s perspective for all matters of living. The church cannot be a true representation of Christ as long as it stays in disunity, thus the wakeup call for the church is to unite and stand as one body for God’s glory. Edmonson adds,

¹³ Paul Tripp, *Biblical Counseling and the Church: God’s Care through God’s People* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 25.

¹⁴ Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Maker Pastor: The Key to Building Healthy Church* (Tarrytown, NY: Revell, 1988), 24.

¹⁵ Tripp, *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, 25.

¹⁶ Amy C. Edmondson, *Teaming: How Organizations Learn, Innovate, and Compete in the Knowledge Economy* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 50.

¹⁷ Edmondson, *Teaming*, 50.

Learning in teams involves iterative cycles of communication, decision, action, and reflection; each new cycle is informed by the results of the previous cycle, and cycles continue until desired outcomes are achieved. As team members engage in this cycle; they surface and integrate their knowledge, and find ways to effectively use the new collective knowledge to improve organizational routines.¹⁸

Furthermore, Edmondson emphasizes the importance of recognition when developing ministry teams in the church. Edmondson remarks that “unless members are aware of their interdependence on others for accomplishing whole jobs, efforts of unity and working as a team cannot get underway.”¹⁹ She continues,

When people recognize the need for coordination, communication becomes natural, despite departmental silos. Individuals reach out and talk to those with whom they must interact to get their work done well, and this begins the conversation, often very brief about how to coordinate their respective tasks. Next, the flow of interdependent action unfolds, followed by feedback and reflection that may simply acknowledge each other’s contribution or may instead suggest changes to make things work better going forward.²⁰

Establishment of Trust amongst Members within the Church

It is difficult for ministries to succeed if members do not trust each other. How does a church go about building trust? Unfortunately, vulnerability-based trust cannot be achieved overnight.²¹ Patrick Lencioni explains, “It requires shared experiences over time, multiple instances of follow-through and credibility, and an in-depth understanding of the unique attributes of church members. However, by taking a focused approach, a church can dramatically accelerate the process and achieve trust in relatively short order.”²²

Lencioni suggests that the use of a personal histories exercise can be used to establish trust among church members. He further explains,

¹⁸ Edmondson, *Teaming*, 50.

¹⁹ Edmondson, *Teaming*, 50.

²⁰ Edmondson, *Teaming*, 51.

²¹ Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Functions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 197.

²² Lencioni, *The Five Functions of a Team*, 197.

The lower risk exercise requires nothing more than going around the table during meetings and having members answer a short list of questions about themselves. Questions need not be overly sensitive in nature and might include the following: hometown, unique challenges of childhood, number of siblings, favorite hobbies, first job, and worst jobs. Simply by describing these relatively innocuous attributes or experiences, members begin to relate to one another on a more personal basis and see one another as human beings with life stories and interesting background. This encourages greater empathy and understanding and discourages unfair and inaccurate behavioral attributions.²³

Macchia educates, “Trust is built, and confidence is developed when people work together in ministry as a team. He underlines that without trust there is no team, no effective service, no quality of life together, and there are few blessings from God.”²⁴ Trust is the starting point for all healthy relationships, the fuel for ministry teams, and the cornerstone of group effectiveness. When trust is breached and left unrepaired, relationships are destroyed, and the Christian’s witness is diminished. Therefore, trust that is broken and left unresolved is the nastiest, most catastrophic, and most destructive force fighting against team effectiveness. Macchia goes on to emphasize, “That when we honor one another in a spirit of unity and oneness, we are embodying the basis for trusting relationships, thus building confidence toward each other.”²⁵ Macchia adds that “the ‘one another’ in Scriptures are further descriptors of the kind of community within teams that God delights to impart to his people. We therefore need to submit to his love and lordship in our individual lives and invite the empowering presence of God’s Spirit into our shared experience as a team which in turn builds trust and develops confidence.”²⁶

Another way trust and confidence are cultivated amongst members in a ministry team, as mentioned by Macchia, is that “trust is built through community. In addition to individual team members deepening their spiritual vitality, the healthy team grows

²³ Lencioni, *The Five Functions of a Team*, 198.

²⁴ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*, 53.

²⁵ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*, 54.

²⁶ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*, 54.

together in their trust in God.”²⁷ This happens as individual members come to the team within the context of their own personal spiritual development, having a heart’s desire to see each member of the team grow spiritually. As the team meets together, the quality of their shared spiritual experience is the apex of their gatherings. Macchia makes reference to an established community in the early church found in the book of Acts:

And they continued steadfastly in the apostle’s doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favor with all people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.²⁸

Macchia indicates, “Ministry teams build trust through celebration. He admonishes that healthy teams not only grow in community with one another, but they celebrate the wonderful ways God has brought them together and used them for his glory.”²⁹ Celebrations, according to Macchia “bring the team together and acknowledge the many ways that God has blessed and multiply their ministry.”³⁰ Teams can celebrate in any number of creative and recreational venues. Remarkably, leaders who make it a priority to regularly celebrate the accomplishments of the team will soon discover an everlasting commitment level among all members.³¹ Not only will the celebration of accomplishments be meaningful, but an atmosphere of trust amongst members shall spring forth, setting the ground for working together in ministry with confidence.

Building trust through conflict is another area of gain observed when people work together in ministry, as Macchia articulates. A study within the community of

²⁷ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*, 59.

²⁸ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*, 59.

²⁹ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*, 62.

³⁰ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*, 62.

³¹ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*, 68.

humans reveals that all the very best relationships in marriage, family life, friendships, business, and ministry are built through conflict. According to Macchia, “it is in the crucible of conflict that the refiner’s fire matures relationships.”³² When conflicts are resolved, strength and stability are created in relationships. Through a process of healthy conflict resolution church members learn lessons individually and collectively that chip away at the brittle areas and bring out their very best, thus establishing trust in the people with whom they work.³³ As a wakeup call to ministry teams, Macchia teaches, “Teams in general need to learn how to resolve conflict, and biological families are the dominant teacher in how conflicts get resolved. The role models of parents and extended family members are the first influences the church members have in shaping their understanding of how to handle conflicts.”³⁴

Cladis remarks, “Ministry teams are communities that covenant in fellowship together and live out the love of God.”³⁵ Such a covenant generates trust and develops confidence amongst members as they are fully committed to meet their obligations of fulfilling the purpose that brought them together. Common sense teaches that the longer people work together, the more trust is cultivated and the better they relate. Cladis continues,

The members of these teams make a covenant with one another both to be in a relationship of God’s love and to agree on their purposes and plans and the way to move toward their fulfillment. Also, the covenant describes how their love will be lived out in their own team community and in the communities of the congregation and society. Lastly, ways and methods of doing ministry are defined and agreed upon, and the covenant forms the basis for trust and confidence for their community.³⁶

³² Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*, 68.

³³ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*, 70.

³⁴ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*, 70.

³⁵ Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 10-11.

³⁶ Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 11.

A team covenant enhances trust and develops confidence amongst members of ministry teams. Cladis offers some benefits of team covenants: “A team covenant illustrates the relationship of team members, one to another, in positive, loving, and nurturing terms with a goal of creating a small community founded upon the love and grace of God in Jesus Christ.”³⁷ Cladis also explains that the covenant can identify behaviors that work against the image of perichoretic love. Gossip, hierarchical thinking, withholding pertinent information, and other dysfunctional activities are brought up and recognized as a threat to a good community.³⁸ The covenant is a powerful tool for creating a setting of love and trust; the team members hold each other accountable for upholding the covenant made. Going against the covenant is not to go against the principal leader but to sabotage the effort of the whole team.

In the context of building a team, Lencioni explains, “Trust is the confidence among team members that their peers’ intentions are good, and that there is no reason to be protective or careful around the group.”³⁹ Trust requires shared experiences over time, multiple instances of follow-through and credibility, and an in-depth understanding of the unique attributes of team members. By taking a focused approach, a team can dramatically accelerate the process and achieve trust in relatively short order.⁴⁰

Establishment of Trust between Members within the Church and the Unchurched

Christians are called to “shine their light before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father in heaven (Matt 5:16 CSB). For the unchurched to be able to glorify God, believers need to live their lives worthy of their

³⁷ Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 11.

³⁸ Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 11.

³⁹ Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, 195.

⁴⁰ Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, 197.

calling so as to gain their trusts. Macchia teaches, “A Christian ministry team is not Christian in name only. When we describe ourselves as Christians we need to talk, live, and serve as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ; that means we need to prioritize individually and collectively.”⁴¹ Machia also explains that the priority of a team is to maintain the discipline of sharing its spiritual lives with one another. Sharing the same spiritual journey with others builds trust and develops confidence because each one is indwelled by the same Spirit of the same God; and each shares the same Savior who died for the sins of mankind.⁴² When believers meet as a team, their first order of “business” is to hear about their spiritual journeys. They read and pray through the same devotional materials individually and together, so that, when they arrive at a meeting, they are talking about readings and prayers and topics that they have previously discovered in their individual devotional experiences.⁴³

The joy of working well together with other members of a church/group/team sets the tone for members to know and understand each other better. Knowing each other sets the stage to minimize possibilities for conflict.⁴⁴ Hackman points out that having a clearly bonded team does not mean that members must do all their work in the same place at the same time, nor does it mean that membership cannot change as circumstances change. It merely means that members know who is on the team, a seemingly simple matter but one that builds a bond and minimizes conflict. Hackman also indicates that members are sure to run into difficulties if there is so much ambiguity about who is actually on the team that they cannot reliably distinguish between the people who share

⁴¹ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*, 71.

⁴² Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*, 71.

⁴³ Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, 62.

⁴⁴ J. Richard Hackman, *Leading Teams: Setting the Stage for Great Performances* (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2002), 44.

responsibility and accountability for the collective outcome and others who may help out in various ways but are not team members.⁴⁵

When trust is established amongst members, love for one another grows. John Piper admonishes the love and feelings that should accompany outward acts of love:

Love is the overflow and expansion of joy in God, which gladly meets the needs of others. Love is not merely the passive overflow, but the aggressive extension and expansion and completion of joy in God, reaching even to the poor in Jerusalem. That is why a person can give his body to be burned and not have love (1 Cor. 13:13). Love is the overflow and expansion of Joy in God. It is nit duty for duty's sake, or right for right's sake. It is not a resolute abandoning of one's own good with a view solely to the good of the other person. It is first a deeply satisfying experience of extending this joy in God to another person.⁴⁶

Piper goes on to enhance his definition of love with the reminder that

the very nature of our longing for the abundant life of love in Christ is measured in the amount of comfort we are willing to give up getting it. The gift of eternal life is magnified as we are willing to hate our lives in this world to lay hold of it (John 12:25). This defines a God-centered self—denial and obedience to the call of God on our lives as his servants.⁴⁷

When trust is established in a team, love grows; when love grows toward each other, corporate efforts push the team's agenda forward (positive results).

When trust is established in a team, and when team members agree to put away their differences to unite and genuinely serve God, the Holy Spirit will empower them. Os Guinness remarks, "The focus on giftedness can be dangerous as well as wonderful, and that the encouragement to 'do what we are' can be taken as a blank check for self-indulgence."⁴⁸ Guinness makes a compelling argument of God's call for believers to use their gifts to serve others: "God does call us to 'be ourselves' and 'do what we are.' But we are only truly 'ourselves' and can only truly 'do what we are' when we follow God's

⁴⁵ Hackman, *Leading Teams*, 44.

⁴⁶ John Piper, *The Dangerous Duty of Delight* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2001), 44-45.

⁴⁷ Piper, *The Dangerous Duty of Delight*, 130.

⁴⁸ Os Guinness, *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1979), 47.

call. Giftedness that is ‘ours for others’ is therefore not selfishness but service that is perfect freedom.”⁴⁹ When the church allows its dichotomic behavior imposed by the dictates of the millennium to be scanned and changed by the Holy Spirit, the need of working together shall multiply efforts that shall lead to win many for Christ.

Scripture teaches that the church (believers) is the light of the world and is like a city situated on a hill that cannot be hidden (Matt 5:14). Poirier writes, “When a group of believers agree to work together, they become peacemakers who not only benefit the church, but also benefits those who are unchurched.”⁵⁰ Poirier notes that the church becomes peacemaker because Jesus Christ is the author of peace who makes the church to be at peace; forgives sins; restores souls; purifies hearts; replaces sinful habits with holy habits; and makes them his people so that they can also reach out to the unchurched.⁵¹ Specifically, Poirier helps his audience understand that the church must strive for the regular preaching, teaching, and ministry of the Word, the practice of humility, continually turning to the gospel, and the frequent confession of sin received with the equally frequent response of forgiveness. The church must seek to exercise patience, kindness, restraint, and discipline, which are qualities that help to establish relationship with the unchurched.⁵²

Minimized Possibility of Conflicts, High Prospects of Good Ties amongst Members

In the midst of conflict, no progress can be met. This section shows how conflict can be minimized and good ties can develop among members when they work together. Working together in ministry teams creates a network of shared wisdom among members.

⁴⁹ Guinness, *The Call*, 47.

⁵⁰ Poirier, *The Peacemaking Pastor*, 297.

⁵¹ Poirier, *The Peacemaking Pastor*, 297.

⁵² Poirier, *The Peacemaking Pastor*, 298.

As members work together, they have conversations with each other. In their conversations, especially as they discuss the meaning and significance of their ministry, they share and receive wisdom for myriad issues affecting them.⁵³ Together, then, the church grows in its ability to face the challenges of ministry in God’s honoring ways as members share experiences together in Christ. Ministry teams helps build relationships where people worship, bear burdens, love, serve, enjoy peace, forgive, forbear, and evangelize together.⁵⁴ Working together in ministry not only unifies the body but also creates a community of wise believers who together receive and share the content (meaning), wisdom (significance), and encouragement (implications) of the Bible (1 Thess 5:14; Eph 4:17).

God’s call on believers is normally along the line of their giftedness, but the purpose of giftedness is stewardship and service, not selfishness and strife. Poirier teaches, “Only by grasping the deep reality of the Triune God as the God of peace can the church begin to recover a truly biblical understanding of conflict.”⁵⁵ If peace characterizes the eternal relations of the Triune person of God and his original creation, and if man’s fall disrupted that peace, then the resulting reality of sinful conflict should neither surprise nor confuse the church.⁵⁶ Poirier helps his readers to understand that “in all things, God ordains conflict according to his sovereign, wise, and good purpose. The author states that this great truth must be the church’s central confession, its anchor in the midst of conflict, so that the church will be compelled and emboldened to be true ambassadors of reconciliation—to persevere as peacemakers.”⁵⁷

⁵³ Tripp, *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, 82.

⁵⁴ Tripp, *Biblical Counseling and the Church*, 82.

⁵⁵ Poirier, *The Peacemaking Pastor*, 75.

⁵⁶ Poirier, *The Peacemaking Pastor*, 75.

⁵⁷ Poirier, *The Peacemaking Pastor*, 76.

Clear expectations expressed on paper in the form of job descriptions restrict members to specific functions thus limiting conflicts. Ervin Henkelmann and Stephen Carter explain,

Linked to the parish goals, the church can express both the normal responsibilities of each staff member and the relationships between staff members and lay leaders thus minimizing frequent occurrence of conflicts. . . . The team members should be willing to spend time sharing their dreams for the parish and for the ministry with each other. Discussing those expectations opens up possibilities and ways of involvement and interaction leading to the development of a strong bond amongst members.⁵⁸

When team members are constantly in the process of finding the most effective way of ministering together, they tend to discover their gifts and talents, thus minimizing the possibility of potential conflict.

Ideal ministry teams will regularly clarify expectations as they study the Word together, which is an avenue to bring members closer to each other as a team.

Henkelmann and Carter instruct, “An in-depth study of God’s Word by professional staff and laity will reveal God’s intentions for his church in the world with the gospel as the power for that ministry.”⁵⁹ Mission teams will both guide and respond to the growing parish understanding of their mission in their community and the world. It is an indication of a close bond when individual team members begin communicating expectations based on ministry needs, individual strengths and weaknesses, and their willingness to serve God and others.

Macchia explains, “Healthy teams serve others not merely for the fruit of the labors of love on their behalf but primarily because of their willingness to lay down their lives for others, whatever it takes to reach out in love.”⁶⁰ The role of the church is merely to serve others in Christ’s name in love and God will bring along any increase as he sees

⁵⁸ Ervin E. Henkelmann and Stephen S. Carter, *How to Develop a Team and Make It Work* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1985), 16.

⁵⁹ Henkelmann and Carter, *How to Develop a Team and Make It Work*, 17.

⁶⁰ Macchia, *Becoming A Healthy Team*, 129.

fit. Looking within the environs of the church, Macchia adds that the church has mission fields among families, neighborhoods, communities, urban centers, urban centers, and workplaces where members find ourselves daily. As ministry teams function together in reaching out to their particular sphere of influence (whether in a local church, as an outreach of a local church, or in concert with a parachurch ministry), they have a higher chance to impact unchurched people through love.

Conflict separates and isolates, but a theology of the God of peace is eminently practical when church members unite and work together as one body. Poirier teaches, “God’s propriety in peacemaking should strengthen our (the church) resolve to preserve as ministry of reconciliation.”⁶¹ Fostering unity among believers is hard work but Christ is the supreme example of the hardship, suffering, and misunderstanding that awaits true peacemakers. When believers admit that their identity is traced in Christ and not on their personal gifts, then there is a possibility that conflicts will be minimized. When conflict is minimized, the bond of oneness as God’s children emerges. Poirier helps readers understand that “the temptation to give up in the face of opposition or to succumb is ever present, but true faith, the faith that perseveres in peacemaking, is the faith whose eyes are turned and fixed on God.”⁶²

A Unified Church Shall Multiply Efforts and Prospects to Win More Souls for Christ

There are truths in the saying that when people are united they become stronger and their output increases. This section explains the possible positive outcome when a church becomes unified in ministry to serve God. In ministry teams, each member is unique and endowed with individual gifts, sometimes different from the others. Each member is expected to contribute skill and knowledge for the benefit of the group’s goal.

⁶¹ Poirier, *The Peacemaking Pastor*, 88.

⁶² Poirier, *The Peacemaking Pastor*, 88.

This collaboration is synergistic, producing a net effort that far outweighs the sum of the work of individuals.⁶³ Cladis teaches, “The church has known the power of God working through collaborative groups long before the postmodern management and business world discovered the power of even secular teamwork.”⁶⁴ Paul described a type of team ministry in terms of the human body (1 Cor 12-14). The church represented as the body of Christ is like the human body: diverse, with many different kinds of parts, yet that function interdependently. Cladis quotes William Easum, who argues, “Paul’s body of Christ description of the church is a crucial image for congregations today. The sense of camaraderie, fellowship, interdependence, sharing, and intimacy implied in the image fit the self-understanding of Christians in a postmodern world.”⁶⁵ Alluding to Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, collective efforts lead to higher output.

Ministry team members work best in an environment that values the importance of individual contributions to group effort, has a flatter (less hierarchical) organizational structure, gives power and permission to smaller groups to accomplish greater tasks (self-managing teams), and satisfies the need of members to be more actively involved in outcomes.⁶⁶ Cladis quotes Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith (1994) “as an example of works published about forming collaborative work groups.”⁶⁷ Cladis believes that a unified team (church) can be one of the most efficient and effective ways to accomplish tasks: “We believe that teams—real teams unified, and not just that management calls ‘teams’—should be the basic unit of performance for most organizations, regardless of

⁶³ Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 91.

⁶⁴ Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 91-92.

⁶⁵ William Easum, quoted in Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 92.

⁶⁶ Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 94.

⁶⁷ Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith, quoted in Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 94.

size.”⁶⁸ A unified team has the potential to deliver the most effect for the energy applied, and “teams” are more productive than groups that have no clear performance objectives, because team members are committed to deliver tangible performance results.⁶⁹

Another area of benefit from ministry teams is that they accelerate productivity. Drawing inspiration from Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, Dick Iverson and Ray Grant state, “More work can come to fruition by the labors of several people, coordinated and working together than by the same number of people working alone or separately.”⁷⁰

Grant notes,

In the physical, one strong man may be able to lift two hundred pounds when he tries to lift the object alone. Two strong men may be able to lift four hundred pounds if they work separately at the job. But two men working together are able to lift the four hundred pounds plus several more pounds as well. The reward of men working together is not merely doubled when two joined hands or tripled when three work together; instead the reward increases in geometric proportions.⁷¹

Edmondson writes, “Working as a team occurs when people apply and combine their expertise to perform complex tasks or develop solutions to novel problems.”⁷² Edmondson further explains that working in teams involves performing with others, integrating perspectives from a range of disciplines, communicating despite the different mental models that accompany different areas of expertise, and being able to manage the inevitable conflicts that arise when people work together.⁷³ Thus, teaming is both a mindset that accepts working together actively and a set of behaviors tailored to

⁶⁸ Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 94.

⁶⁹ Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 94.

⁷⁰ Dick Iverson and Ray Grant, *Team Ministry: Putting Together a Team That Makes Churches Grow* (Portland, OR: Bible Temple Publications, 1984), 48.

⁷¹ Iverson and Grant, *Team Ministry*, 49.

⁷² Edmondson, *Teaming*, 49.

⁷³ Edmondson, *Teaming*, 52.

sharing and synthesizing knowledge to boost productivity.⁷⁴ When members of ministry teams work together for a common goal, a natural boost of effort is generated amongst members with the help of the Holy Spirit thus increasing their prospect for greater output, which is winning more souls for Christ.

Another benefit of a unified church is an acceleration of productivity. Iverson and Grant explain,

More work can come to fruition by the labors of several people, coordinated and working together, than by the same number of people working alone, or separately. In the physical, one strong man may be able to lift two hundred pounds, when he tries to lift the object alone. Two strong men may be able to lift four hundred pounds if they work separately in the job. But two men working together are able to lift the four hundred pounds plus several more pounds as well. . . . The reward of men working together is not merely doubled when two join hands or tripled when three work together; instead the reward increases in geometric proportions.⁷⁵

As in the physical illustrations, the same applies to the spiritual realm. Iverson and Grant note, “More victories over spiritual evil can be accomplished when several men of God are agreeing, coordinating and focusing their efforts on the same issue.”⁷⁶

Lastly, A unified church is profitable because it best facilitates growth. In most cases it provides a growth factor that has unlimited potential. Iverson and Grant remark, “The pressures and stress that accompany growth are too much for any one person to bear alone. It is just common sense that more people require more attention, and more demands on a minister’s time and resources.”⁷⁷ However, a team can shoulder the “growing pains” easier than a single pastor ever could. Doubling the number of elders in a growing church does not merely double the number of people the elders can handle. Instead, the number of people the elders can manage increases geometrically in proportion. Making reference to growth in the church when believers work together, Iverson and Grant state,

⁷⁴ Edmondson, *Teaming*, 52.

⁷⁵ Iverson and Grant, *Team Ministry*, 48-49.

⁷⁶ Iverson and Grant, *Team Ministry*, 49.

⁷⁷ Iverson and Grant, *Ministry Team*, 49.

“Just as one puts a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight (Deut. 32:30), so also the additional minister increases the ability to reach out to more people and the result will be by more than just double.”⁷⁸ This growth comes faster when members commit to putting their gifts into service for God and others without selfish gratification.

Biblical Patterns to Unify the Church to Work as a Team

After having looked at ways in which disunity can be addressed, this section presents biblical patterns to unify the church to work together as a team for the glory of God. Iverson and Grant explain,

When dealing with the ministry of a local church, applying God’s perspective is paramount, and the matter must be approached with utmost sincerity. . . . The things of God should not be superficially considered and that members must scrutinize and evaluate any concept of ministry under the full light of God’s Word; and the vision must be from God’s perspective.⁷⁹

When believers choose only to apply their skills and depend upon human and traditional perspectives in ministry to win souls, they will fail. However, when God is included in the equation, only God’s perspective will produce life in the church. The primary source for obtaining light on God’s perspective is in the Word of God. Isaiah 55:8-11 says,

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways.” This is the Lord’s declaration. “For as the heaven is higher than earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For just as the rain and snow fall from heaven and do not return there without saturating the earth and make it germinate and sprout, and providing seed to sow and food to eat, so my word that comes from my mouth will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish what I please and will prosper in what I send it to do.” (CSB)

Richard Hayes finds a relationship between the body of Christ as described by Paul and the triune nature of God, underscoring the emphasis Cladis places on the perichoresis of the Trinity as a biblical model for team ministry.⁸⁰ Cladis explains, “Even

⁷⁸ Iverson and Grant, *Team Ministry*, 60.

⁷⁹ Iverson and Grant, *Team Ministry*, 11.

⁸⁰ Richard Hayes, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation (Louisville: Westminster Press/John Knox, 1997), 210.

though Paul did not have a developed doctrine of the Trinity that doctrine would come hundreds of years later.⁸¹ Hayes points out that Paul “experienced God as Trinity” in that he described “the activity of God in the community in three synonymous parallel clauses as the working of the Spirit and of the Lord Jesus and of God.”⁸² Hayes shows the following clauses (1 Cor 12:4-6): “Varieties of gifts—but the same Spirit; varieties of services—but the same Lord; varieties of activities—but the same God, who activates all of them in everyone.”⁸³ Cladis explains,

The grammatical form is parallel. The three sources of the ministries and gifts of God’s people are the one God. Once again, we see a sense of meaningful community—of team—enabled by God who is expressed in triune fashion. It is implied that meaningful Christian community is that which is gifted by a God who is, in essence, meaningful community. We find our fulfillment not only in being reconciled to God our Creator, but also to one another (2 Cor. 5).⁸⁴

Iverson and Grant explain, “A good benefit that becomes evident as derived from following biblical pattern of unity is total ministry.”⁸⁵ In a gathering where there are people with different ministries and roles working together, there is a complete ministry.⁸⁶ Iverson and Grant assert,

A complete ministry is the only kind of ministry that can properly take care of all the needs of the sheep. Also, ministers, in the natural realm, do not all have the same abilities or talents. When it comes to the different abilities where one minister excels, another is deficient, where one is amateur, another is professional, where one has insight, another in unenlightened, where one is called, another is forbidden, and where one flows, another is struggling . . . when all these are put together in a team, there is the probability for awesome potential for success.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Cladis, *Leading Team-Based Church*, 90.

⁸² Cladis, *Leading Team-Based Church*, 91. Also see Hayes, *First Corinthians*, 210.

⁸³ Richard Hayes, quoted in Cladis, *Leading Team-Based Ministry*, 94.

⁸⁴ Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 93.

⁸⁵ Iverson and Grant, *Team Ministry*, 42.

⁸⁶ Iverson and Grant, *Team Ministry*, 42.

⁸⁷ Iverson and Grant, *Team Ministry*, 42.

In the spiritual and supernatural realm, God bestows differing and various gifts and calls upon individuals according to his will.

Going forward, Iverson and Grant admonish, “Another biblical pattern of unity enjoyed by ministry teams is that ministry teams enhance another biblical principle: truth reiterated establishes truth.”⁸⁸ Iverson and Grant draw inspiration from 2 Corinthians 13:1 first recorded by Moses in Deuteronomy 19:15 and then reemphasized in the New Testament to elaborate the advantage for the church when team works together:

In the same way, a team of voices speaking the same thing can be very effective in establishing the truths of God in the hearts and lives of people. It is reassuring to the ears of the congregation when different ministers confirm the same thing from different viewpoints. One minister may preach on a truth needed for a specific time in the life of the church, another may prophecy the same message. A third may dig into Hebrew and Greek and show the bases for the same truth, thus, truth emanating from two or three sources tends to establish truth.⁸⁹

Ministry teams are also profitable because they best facilitate growth and provide a growth factor that has unlimited potential.⁹⁰ Iverson and Grant write, “The pressures and stress that accompany growth are too much for anyone to bear alone.”⁹¹ It is just common sense that more people require more attention and make more demands on a minister’s time and resources. However, a team can shoulder the “growing pains” with much more ease than a single pastor ever could.⁹² This growth comes faster when each member commits to putting their gifts into service for God and others without selfish gratification.

⁸⁸ Iverson and Grant, *Team Ministry*, 50.

⁸⁹ Iverson and Grant, *Team Ministry*, 50-51.

⁹⁰ Iverson and Grant, *Team Ministry*, 59.

⁹¹ Iverson and Grant, *Team Ministry*, 59.

⁹² Iverson and Grant, *Team Ministry*, 59.

Bill Hybels teaches that “one of his favorite definitions of the church is a ‘community of blessing,’ a community blessed by God so that it can bless the world.”⁹³ This acknowledgement of God’s blessings within the community seeks to explain that within the body of Christ, which is the church, members are given different kinds of gifts. Hybels explains,

When members within the community put together their various gifts toward one effort, countless wounds will be tended, mouths will be fed, grieving people will be comforted, broken marriages will be mended, lonely people will be embraced, children will be nurtured, and countless spiritual seekers will be befriended and coached toward Christ. God has bestowed the church with all kinds of gifts so that as members work together as a team, they can lavish goodness on others and win more souls for Christ.⁹⁴

The power of the church truly is the power of every member, as men and women, young and old, offer their gifts to work out God’s redemptive plan.

Working together in ministry teams multiplies the efforts of members through support and openness toward each other, which is vital to keep the church in unity. Frank LaFasto and Carl Larson teach, “This supportiveness may mean sometimes to encourage someone whose confidence is wavering, or to help someone overcome an obstacle rather than taking advantage of a momentary failure.”⁹⁵ By being supportive within a team, LaFasto and Larson note,

It will always means putting the team’s goal above any individual agenda, being easy to work with, and demonstrating the willingness to help others achieve. whatever the specific behaviors, people who are seen as supportive are clearly interested in doing what needs to be done and making whatever contributions they can so that the team succeeds. Listening to others, willing to pitch in whenever

⁹³ Bill Hybels, *The Volunteer Revolution: Unleashing the Power of Everybody* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 32-33.

⁹⁴ Hybels, *The Volunteer Revolution*, 36. Hybels made this emphasis to ascertain of the power involved in exchange when believers unite to serve the community by serving God and others. He states, “Once you decide to invest even a small portion of the blessings God has given you into the lives of others, you’ll find the seed of something powerful sown in your own soul. And someday, in the midst of giving yourself in the spirit and act of volunteerism, that seed will blossom into the amazing realization that this is what you were made for.” Hybels, *The Volunteer Revolution*, 33.

⁹⁵ Frank LaFasto and Carl Larson, *When Team Work Best: 6000 Team Members and Leaders Tell What It Takes to Succeed* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage 2001), 14.

necessary, being easy to work with, and working behind the scenes to aid the team are supportive ways that multiply efforts and add the prospect to win more people for Christ.⁹⁶

Conclusion

Stephen Macchia teaches with clarity that

scattered throughout the Scriptures, God's people provide examples of partnerships and teams. Often in the Bible the Lord makes clear that he delights to see his children functioning in unity (Gen 6–9; Exodus 17:12-13. God supports the significance and priority of teams (The Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—are the perfect team, working together from time past throughout all eternity).⁹⁷

Patrick Lencioni remarks,

When members acknowledge the imperfections of their humanity, they can overcome the natural tendencies that make trust, commitment, accountability, and a focus on results so elusive. When a team aligns with God's purpose, functions interdependently, and emulates Christ-like character, then they will do missions together wherein they will do more than merely accomplishing tasks or developing programs.⁹⁸

This chapter detailed some theoretical and practical issues that relate to developing ministry teams and fostering unity in the church. As explained in the next chapter, twenty members, both male and female, participated in a seven-week training at Broadway Baptist Church, Lexington, Kentucky, to develop ministry teams through two selected activities to foster unity in the Church. During this training, the brethren were assessed, trained, and equipped as catalysts for unity and working together.

⁹⁶ LaFasto and Larson, *When Team Works Best*, 15.

⁹⁷ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Team*, 27-28.

⁹⁸ Patrick Lencioni, *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, 203.

CHAPTER 4

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MINISTRY PROJECT

After laying the groundwork for developing ministry teams to foster unity at Broadway Baptist Church Lexington, Kentucky in the first three chapters, this chapter describes the project implementation and provides a detailed account of the four goals and their results. The purpose of this project was to foster unity among members of Broadway Baptist Church Lexington by developing ministry teams through selected activities to enable them better to serve their community for God's glory. The first goal was to assess existing unity and attitude of church members working together. The second goal was to develop a seven-session curriculum to assist in training on the biblical principles of unity and the importance of working together in ministry teams. The third goal was to improve unity by teaching the curriculum. The fourth goal was to plan two service projects where in members can practice unity in ministry. Implementation of this project commenced on June 23, 2020 and continued through August 4, 2020.

Project Sensitization

Sensitization and recruitment of the project started on October 6, 2019 in the Young Married Adult Sunday school class. Continuous awareness of the project was extended to other Sunday school classes of the church, to the whole church body during Christian meeting, the church staff, and to the board of deacons. A meeting was held on May 17, 2020, with the pastoral staff to plan and make a schedule for the seven sessions of implementation. During this meeting, an expert panel comprised of four members were selected. Selection was based on experience and qualification. The expert panel was comprised of one ThM (15 years of experience in ministry), one DEdMin (35 years of

experience in church leadership), one PhD (32 years of experience in ministry), and the head deacon (18 years of experience as a deacon). The expert panel approved the instrument that was used to collect information for this project. The panel also evaluated the curriculum used for this project to make sure it was theologically sound and fell in line with the goal of the project.

Summary and Evaluation of Teaching Sessions

This project was beneficial and reliably planned for seven sessions. The implementation of this project took an interactive classroom setting format, spiced with moments of demonstrative activities to illustrate important themes. Twenty participants who volunteered to participate in this project were present for the class sessions, but 14 members were physically present from session 1 to session 7, while the other 6 members watched a recorded version of the class online due to the prevailing pandemic. All 20 participants completed the pre-test and post-test surveys. Seven lessons and a teaching curriculum were developed and submitted to the expert panel for approval.¹ The approved lessons were taught within the specified frame of this project.

Session 1

Before getting into the details of the identification and distribution of various spiritual gifts in the church, it was necessary for students to understand the nature and purpose of the church.² Inspiration was drawn from Matthew 18:16 and Ephesians 4:25. Students were made to understand that the church is the community of all true believers for all time.³ This definition understands the church to be made of all those who are truly saved. Paul says, “Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Eph 5:25).

¹ See appendix 3.

² Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994) 853.

³ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 853.

Grudem notes, “Here the term ‘the church’ is used to apply to all those whom Christ died to redeem, all those who are saved by the death of Christ.”⁴ Jesus Christ himself builds the church by calling his people to himself. Christ promised, “I will build my church” (Matt 16:18). According to Ephesians 2:14, as Grudem explains, “the New Testament authors see Jewish believers and Gentile believers alike to be now united in the church.”⁵ In the New Testament, the word “church” may be applied to a group of believers at any level, ranging from a very small group meeting in a private home all the way to the group of all true believers in the universal church (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; 1 Cor 1:2; Acts 9:31).⁶

Next, the purpose of the church was introduced. Participants were taught that the purpose of the church can be understood in three ways: ministry to God (worship) as described in Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 1:12; ministry to believers (nurture) as explained in Colossians 1:28 and Ephesians 4:12-13; and ministry to the world (evangelism) as explained in Matthew 28:19. They were also taught that God, through the Holy Spirit, distributed gifts to believers so that the purpose of the church would be attained. Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30, and Ephesians 4:11 were consulted to deduce the different gifts. Students were taught that twenty-two different spiritual gifts are recorded in Scripture, including the gifts of apostleship, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher, knowledge, wisdom, miracle worker, healing, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, administration, mercy, service, leadership, and the gift of giving. Students learned that the purpose of these spiritual gifts were as follows: “given for the common good” (1 Cor 12:7); “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of

⁴ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 853.

⁵ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 854.

⁶ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 861.

Christ may be built up” (Eph 4:12); and “each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others” (1 Pet 4:10).

Session 2

In session 2, participants learned about unity in diversity. This lesson was drawn from 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 and Ephesians 4:13. After reviewing the purpose of the church, as learned in the previous session, students were taught that, according to Grudem, “the unity of the church is its degree of freedom from division among true Christians.”⁷ The definition that Grudem offers specifies “true Christians” because some people in the church are “Christians” in name only and have had no genuine experience of repentance by the Holy Spirit. At the grassroots level, students were taught that unity means the state of being united or joined as one, a whole, oneness, or combined into one.

An analogy using a labeled diagram of the human body and parts was used to describe a church that is diversified yet united. Participants learned that the body represents the church and the different parts represent the various spiritual gifts and that, though the body constitutes many parts, they are one, so also in Christ. Students were taught that all believers were baptized by one Spirit into one body, and the same Spirit was involved in the process of their experiences of conversion.

Session 3

In session 3, the biblical evidence of a unified team was taught with emphasis weighted on God’s nature (Perichoresis; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit) through their functions: both in creation and redemption. Students were called to pay attention to the unified nature and the force of teamwork governing this union. As concerned the work of creation listed in Genesis 1:2-26, students were taught that (1) God the Father spoke the creative words to bring the universe into being: “And God said let

⁷ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 874.

there be” (v. 14), and in verse 26, God again said, “Let us make man in our own image.” Genesis 1:26 teaches that to be human is to bear the image of God. This understanding emphasizes man as a unity.⁸ (2) God’s Son, the eternal Word of God, carried out these decrees pronounced in Genesis 1:26. John 1:3 and Colossians 1:16 were used to support the work of Jesus Christ in creation (all things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made). (3) The work of the Holy Spirit as seen in John 14:26; 15:26; and 16:7 was also taught during this session to give students an understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in ministry.

At the end of this session, students were exposed to the relationship that exists within the three persons and the being of God. They were taught that each person is completely and fully God.⁹ Each person has the whole fullness of God’s being in himself, and God’s being is not divided into three equal parts. Other biblical models of unified teams in ministry were taught, including extracts from Genesis 2–3 (Adam and Eve); Genesis 6–9 (Noah and his family); Daniel 3 (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego); and Jesus and his disciples (Matt 10).

Session 4

Session 4 dwelled on putting to practice the priestly prayer of unity for the church mentioned in John 17:20-23. Students were taught that the main theme of Jesus’ prayer in this section is that of unity; unity is not an option for the church. It was unanimously agreed that, even though Jesus prays for unity, (1) unity of the church is not easily achieved, (2) unity does not mean unanimity, (3) Jesus did not mean that his disciples will agree on all issues, and (4) it is possible to disagree on certain issues and still work together in the unity of the Spirit in pursuit of church unity. The type of unity

⁸ Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 137.

⁹ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 241.

Jesus prays for was elaborated to be the patient pursuit of harmony among his disciples for the good of the church, the glory of the Father and the Son, and the salvation of sinners, even as the church might disagree over certain important matters.

Furthermore, students were instructed on the evangelistic nature of Christian unity found in John 17:20-23. The evangelistic nature of Christian unity is centered around the Bible, the Spirit, and doctrine. Ways of promoting unity in the church were highlighted as follows: be humble, be gentle, be patient (Eph 4:2); work hard for peace (Eph 4:3); celebrate each other's unique gift (Eph 7) and; speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15). Last, for unity to reign in the church, students received lessons from Philippians 2:1-4 underlining the following points aligning to unity: (1) Christians must focus on the right resources (v. 1), (2) Christians must develop the right attitude (v. 2), and (3) Christians must develop the right practices (vv. 3-4).

Session 5

In session 5, students were introduced to some causes of division in the church. A study of James 4:1-17 was conducted to depict some problematic issues that relate to BBCL. Students were exposed to some truths that pertain to conflicts in the church, such as (1) failures to resolve conflicts causes disunity; (2) conflicts come packaged as people; (3) people, not paths, start conflict; and (4) people, not paths, make peace. Some causes of conflicts addressed included, but were not limited to, wrongful desires (Matt 15:18-19), including demanding desires (Jas 4:2), damming desires (Jas 4:11), divided allegiances (1 Cor 1:10-13), and authority issues (Num 12; Mark 20:25-28). Last, some suggestions were given on ways to resolve conflicts: (1) confess sin to one another (Jas 5:16) by addressing everyone involved, avoid "if," admit specifically, accept the consequences, alter behavior, and ask for forgiveness; (2) grant true forgiveness (Matt 6:12-15); (3) look out for the interests of others (Gal 6:2); (4) church discipline practices (2 Cor 2:6-8; Titus 2:15; 2 Thess 3:14; Rev 2:2), and (5) seek reconciliation and engage through the process of peace (Matt 18).

Session 6

Session 6 focused on maintaining long-range benefits of ministry teams and unity in the church. More emphasis was weighed on practical lessons that will cultivate unity and teamwork in the church. Participants were taught that a successful ministry requires dedication, which is predicated upon the willingness to work for the success. For the church to stay healthy as a team, the following attributes must be cultivated: (1) there must be a covenant team: within the nature of God there is community (Father, Son, and Spirit); (2) the team must be visionary: God is sovereign and acts with intention; (3) the team must collaborate: there is no competition among the Persons of God; (4) the team must trust: God exudes trust; the team must be willing to learn: God is all knowing, is revealed to believers in several ways; and (5) the team must be empowering: Scripture is full of the giving of God for believers and their salvation.

Additional lessons were taught on the essential qualities to cultivate and maintain unity and teamwork at BBCL, including ,(1) members must maintain and cultivate an open line of communication (John 15:15); (2) church leaders should keep biblical vision in perspective (Eph 4:11-12); (3) diversity and variety should be encouraged in the church (1 Cor 12:4-7); (4) the church should set the pace for personal growth (Phil 1:9; 1 Thess 4:1; 10); (5) members must learn how to listen more and speak less (Eccl 5:1-2); and (6) prayer should never be underestimated in the church (Luke 21:36; Eph 6:18; 1 Tim 2:1).

Session 7

The lesson for session 7 was enhanced by extractions from George Cladis' *Leading the Team-Based Church*.¹⁰ The theme of this session was building a graceful unified ministry team at BBCL. John 15:5 served as the platform of meditation throughout this session and students were taught that Christ remains the center for everything done in

¹⁰ George Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church: How Pastors and Church Staffs Can Grow Together into a Powerful Fellowship of Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999), 33-142

the name of ministry. Without Christ, every effort will be futile. Students learned that building a graceful and unified ministry teams in the church requires covenanting team (Gen 17:7). Students were reminded that God, in perichoresis, portrays to believers the unity of God in three persons.¹¹ Students also learned that team covenants, also, are forged between equal partners, and each person is respected as a child of God gifted for service in the church.¹²

Participants also learned that to build a graceful and unified church, members must learn to work as a team, and the team must be visionary. The following suggestions must be done in the church to achieve a unified church: (1) the church leadership should cast a vision that unites people around a God-given cause; (2) the church, as a visionary team, should be motivated by a strong sense of mission and purpose; (3) the church leadership should direct the mission of the church to be contagious/attracting others; and (4) the goal of the church as a unified body should be a vision-driven church that is pulled together by a strong focused purpose.¹³ Matthew 5 was studied to depict how Jesus modelled the house of love and exhorted his followers to live and show forth the culture of the kingdom of God. Toward the end of the session, a post-test was conducted, and participants were asked to fill it out based on their acquired knowledge on the teachings.

Evaluation of Project Goals

This project was comprised of four goals. This section will explain and evaluate the goals and how they were accomplished. The first goal of this project was to assess existing unity and attitude of church members working together. This goal was considered successfully met when 90 percent of participants completed the survey to assess their existing understanding of unity and could practice working together as a

¹¹ Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 34.

¹² Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 37.

¹³ Cladis, *Leading the Team-Based Church*, 48.

team. The second goal of this project was to develop a seven-session curriculum to assist in training on the biblical principles of unity and the importance of working together in ministry teams. This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluated criteria met or exceeded the sufficient level. The third goal of this project was to improve unity by teaching the curriculum. This project was considered successfully met when the curriculum was completely taught, and all participants attended all seven sessions, with the evaluation indicator showing met or exceeded expectations. The fourth goal was to plan two service projects where in members can practice unity in ministry. The planning phase of this project was declared successfully met when the projects were included on the church calendar with the required number of participants signed up and ready to start on a stipulated date.

Results for Goal 1

The first goal of this project was to assess existing unity and attitudes of church members working together. This goal was realized during session 1 by conducting a pre-test survey to members of BBCL on their initial knowledge about unity and working in teams.¹⁴ Results attained from this survey were used to develop a seven-session curriculum to train members of BBCL for seven weeks on unity and working in together in ministry. Twenty respondents filled out the surveys and turned it in by the requested date.

The fundamental focus of this project required BBCL members to be united as one body and work together as a team in ministry. The pre-test survey indicated that the majority of the members have an understanding of the importance of unity in the church, but personal reasons retrain them from fully living in unity. One hundred percent (20/20) of the respondents indicated that the church is more powerful and unified when members work together. One hundred percent of respondents (20/20) also indicated their

¹⁴ See appendix 1 for survey instrument.

understanding of biblical teachings on the unity of the body of Christ. Sixty-five percent of respondents (13/20) affirmed that a unified church glorifies God.¹⁵

Table 1. BBCL members initial knowledge about unity in the church

Survey Question	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Q5. Working together makes a group stronger, powerful, and more unified.	0	0	0	0	4	16
Q12. The Bible teaches that unity of the body of Christ brings Glory to God.	0	0	0	0	2	18
Q16. A unified church brings glory to God. ¹⁶	0	4	3	6	6	1

Working together as a team in ministry is another area of importance this project attempted to address. From the pre-test survey results, 50 percent (10/20) of respondents have never in their Christian life had any formal training on teamwork, while 100 percent (20/20) attested that they had a biblical understanding how Jesus and His disciples worked as a team to reach out to the lost (see table 2). Ninety-five percent of respondents (19/20) also indicated that they strongly agreed on the biblical idea of working together to encourage each other in Proverbs 27:17. With this biblical head knowledge of working together and being united, there was still a problem of disunity in BBCL.

Table 2. BBCL members biblical knowledge on teamwork

Survey Questions	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Q1. I have received training on teamwork at church	4	1	5	1	6	3
Q3. Jesus and his disciples worked as a team during his ministry.	0	0	0	0	2	18
Q9. Bible encourages Christians to work together.	0	0	1	0	5	14

¹⁵ See table 1 for details. In table 1, abbreviations are as follows: SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, DS= Disagree Somewhat, AS= Agree Somewhat, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree.

¹⁶ Part 2 on a Likert scale arranged from the lowest to the greatest. Respondents choose from, NI= Never Interested, NA= Not at all Aware, SA= Slightly Aware, MA= Moderately Aware, VA= Very Aware, and EA= Extremely Aware.

In table 3, even though only 20 percent (4/20) of respondents admitted that they are uncomfortable working together with people they disagree with, 85 percent (17/20) of respondents indicated that they work well only with people they trust. Ninety percent of respondents (18/20) indicated that they are on good terms with everyone in their Sunday school class, giving the impression that they are not comfortable with members outside of their class. The discrepancies that exist between the 80 percent of respondents who indicated they work well with people they disagree with, the 85 percent who work well only with those they trust; and the 90 percent on good terms with only members of their Sunday school class, show that lessons on unity and teamwork needed to be taught at BBCL.

Table 3. BBCL member’s attitudes of working with others

Survey Questions.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
Q2. I feel uncomfortable working together with people I disagree with.	0	9	7	3	0	1
Q7. I work well only with people I trust.	0	1	2	2	12	3
Q10. I dislike working in teams because I fear my opinion would not count.	5	10	3	1	0	1
Q13. I am on good terms with all the members of my Sunday school class.	0	1	1	0	4	14

Results for Goal 2

The second goal of this project was to develop a seven-session curriculum to assist in training on the biblical principles of unity and the importance of working together in ministry teams. This goal was accomplished a week prior to the start of the first session. The first draft of the seven-session curriculum was submitted to an expert panel comprising four members, who are experienced and have served and continue to serve at various capacities in domains dealing with unity and teamwork.¹⁷ After the expert panel reviewed and made recommendations to the curriculum, revisions were

¹⁷ See appendix 3 for Teaching Curriculum.

made and resubmitted to the panel for approval and implementation.¹⁸ After the final approval of the curriculum was done, implementation started June 23, 2020.

Results for Goal 3

The third goal was to improve unity by teaching the curriculum. This goal was considered successfully met when the curriculum was completely taught, and all participants attended all seven sessions, with evaluation indicator showing met or exceeded expectation. This goal was accomplished during the second session and the scriptural texts used were 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4:13. Students learned about unity in diversity and were called upon to consider a fellow brother or sister as a coworker in God's vineyard. Students were also taught that God's plan for the church was that it stays united, as mentioned in Ephesians 4:13. Students were also taught that God's name is also glorified when believers tolerate, love, and cherish the assembly of believers as mentioned in Hebrews 10:25. Session 2 was very impactful as many questions and concerns were raised by students for the absolute need for unity and togetherness to reign in every aspect of doing ministry in BBCL. The teaching of the curriculum went on for seven weeks without any interruptions and twenty members participated with fourteen physically present while the remaining watched recorded videos.¹⁹

The seven-session curriculum was taught to twenty students for seven weeks. The sessions ran uninterrupted from June 23 to August 4, 2020. The curriculum centered on the biblical principles of unity and the importance for BBCL members to work

¹⁸ The expert panel recommended that the purpose of the church should be added to the curriculum to give a clear understanding of why people come to church. The panel also recommended that it was good for participants to be taught on ways to move toward perfecting biblical unity in the church. Both recommendations were added to the curriculum and taught.

¹⁹ Rapheal Jumbuin, "Causes of Conflict in the Church," June 30, 2020, <https://youtu.be/B5reCnH-c2Y>; "Unity in Diversity," June 23, 2020, <https://youtu.be/qKUe1DRLLYw>; "Putting to Practice the Priestly Prayer of Unity in Our Church," July 7, 2020, <https://youtu.be/llrhYQ14oo4>; "Biblical Evidence of Teamwork in Ministry," July 14, 2020, <https://youtu.be/8NouF45hJ3c>; "Nature and Purpose of the Church," July 22, 2020, <https://youtu.be/1GNm6c3mjC0>; "Maintaining the Long Term Benefits of Team Ministry," July 21, 2020, <https://youtu.be/vP3IGmNKQgk> <https://youtu.be/WnNuevJKaq8>.

together to address disunity in the church. These teachings were very timely for BBCL because many church members were already frustrated with the increasing tension as a result of growing factions and disunity. Echoes of the changes this project made in the lives of participants and church members continue to resonate in the community of BBCL. The class sessions were punctuated with activities to get everyone to participate and to emphasize relevant issues.²⁰ An illustration of unity in diversity was conducted using a labelled diagram of the human body, with the different body parts used to describe a diversified church. Given the importance that this lesson brings, and given the urgent need for unity at BBCL, twenty students agreed that this curriculum be included to the church calendar of events for 2021 church activities.

Results for Goal 4

The fourth goal was to plan two service projects wherein members could practice unity in ministry. No service project was actually accomplished within the implementation of this project, but the projects were identified and planned for execution in 2021. The goal of planning two service projects was accomplished during session 5. Two proposed service projects to demonstrate unity and teamwork were chosen and agreed upon unanimously by participants. These service projects aligned with the vision of the church and centered on evangelism. It was agreed that both projects were going to be implemented simultaneously on the same day at the church premises. This goal intended to get all participants involved so that they could get a glimpse of what unity and working together looks like. In the course of choosing the two projects mentioned above, every student was given the opportunity to make their own contribution regardless of their opinions about the projects. Involving every student in a collective responsibility is more

²⁰ Concerning the activities, students were challenged to use one hand to tie a bundle to illustrate the importance of teamwork. This exercise was interesting because, not only was it difficult to use one hand to tie a bundle, but it also widened students' understanding that ministry requires teamwork (1 Cor 12:31).

likely to avoid contradiction and disagreement amongst members on these projects. The two service projects unanimously agreed upon were to (1) provide free car washes to single mothers and (2) serve the single mothers’ lunch. These projects were evangelism focused and were implemented in a “division of labor” manner, where some members did the car wash, some served food, and others provided pastoral care.

During the planning phase of the two service projects, the focus was on three steps to ensure that everyone agreed with the approach before kick-off. The first step was the estimated cost of these projects. No amount of money would be needed because participants unanimously agreed to donate car washing supplies and to supply food. Concerning the scope of work, the cars would be washed by hand. The second step was to set up the project team. It was agreed that those participating in the class would make the team, but it would be open to other church member who wants to join. The third step taken into consideration was scheduling tasks, which is shown in the table 4.

Table 4. Distribution of tasks

Tasks	Number of persons	Duty
Publicity	2	Publicize events in church and public
Car wash Group 1	3	Wash car external
Car wash Group 2	3	Wash car internal
Car wash group 3	3	Dry car
Feeding Group 1	3	Dishing
Feeding group 2	3	Serving
Sharing/Prayer	3	Pastoral care

After consulting with the pastoral staff on the potential projects to be implemented, the church project and scheduling board was informed as per the decision of the pastoral staff to include these projects for action into the church’s 2021 calendar of events.

Conclusion

The success of this project depended upon fostering unity and development of ministry teams at BBCL. As a result of the teaching series, the participants augmented their knowledge on the principles of biblical unity and working together as teams in ministry. All twenty participants endorsed the curriculum to be included into the church program of activities for 2021 calendar and should be taught to the entire congregation. Participants also agreed and planned for two evangelistic activities to be carried out in summer 2021. The two activities were to provide a free car wash and free lunch for single mothers as a means to implement unity and teamwork at BBCL. They also pledged and committed to participate in these activities in future by voluntarily signing in their names as an act of covenanting with the rest of the church to effect unity.

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

This project gave me the opportunity to offload accumulated desires and zeal to teach about biblical principles of church unity and teamwork in ministry at BBCL. Over the course of teaching, this project gained steam as positive feedback from participants started attracting onlookers who acknowledged and expressed their desire to become part of the project attendees. It was not an easy task for such a project offered during the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic, but the enthusiasm and passion displayed by participants to mark these seven sessions unflinching to the end only supported the fact that unity can be achieved at BBCL.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose

The purpose of this project was to foster unity among members of Broadway Baptist Church Lexington by developing ministry teams through selected activities to enable them better to serve their community for God's glory. This purpose was successfully met not only because of the successes of the four goals, but also because it brought a significant change to BBCL. From individualistic tendencies in ministry, the training urged members to put aside the walls of division and extend a hand toward working with other church members as a unified body. As the church grows in the understanding of unity, other barriers of spiritual growth are removed, and a culture of love reigns (Gal 6:2) where members are encouraged to freely exercise their spiritual gifts. As a result of this project, BBCL is working on future church programs that will allow every church member to freely participate and by so doing use their spiritual gifts as a means to strengthen unity.

This project's purpose was consistent with what the Bible teaches on the principles of church unity and working together as teams in ministry. The Bible teaches in Ezekiel 37:27 and Leviticus 26:12 that the church finds its unifying principle in the covenant promise as quoted "my dwelling place will be with them: I will be their God, and they will be my people." The lessons taught, culminated with Ezekiel 37:27 and Leviticus 26:12 guiding students to the fact that the church belongs to God, and God is their Creator. The first lesson centered on the nature and purpose of the church taken from Matthew 18:16 and Ephesians 5:25. The second lesson focused on unity in diversity drawn from 1 Corinthians 12:12-31. The third lesson presented the biblical evidence of teamwork (Perichoresis) taken from Genesis 1:26. Infused into the project's purpose was the priestly prayer of unity in John 17:20-23 that petitions for unity amongst future believers. Finally, issues that cause division in the church was the last lesson centered on James 4 and Matthew 15:18-19.

Evaluation of Project's Goals

Four goals were indicated at the start of this project: to assess existing unity and attitudes of church members working together, develop a seven-session curriculum to assist in training on the biblical principles of unity and the importance of working together in ministry teams, improve unity by teaching the curriculum, and plan two service projects wherein members can practice unity in ministry. The goals of this project correlated with the purpose and were significant to the teachings to foster unity and to develop ministry teams that works together at BBCL.

Goal 1: Knowledge on Unity and Working Together

The first goal of this project was to assess existing unity and attitudes of church members working together. The assessment of this goal utilized a survey instrument which measured initial knowledge on unity and working together. The first goal was considered successfully met when 90 percent of participants completed in the

survey to assess their existing understanding of unity and could practice working together as a team.

Accomplishing this goal matters to BBCL because it is theologically crucial and aligns with Jesus' passionate prayer for unity in John 17:21-23. The unity of BBCL should be rooted in Christ's own unity with the Father, an idea the apostle Paul mentions in his own writings about unity and oneness as found in Ephesians 4:4-6: "There is one body and one Spirit-just as you were called to one hope at your calling-one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (CSB). The apostle Paul sees the church as a family, and as such, unity must prevail. One way this is practically carried out is to reach out to fellow believers through material solidarity as recorded in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 9:8-9, and Romans 15:26-27. An understanding of unity at BBCL exposes the current state of affairs within the church, thus giving members a reason to move toward a more unified congregation as the Bible warrants them to do so.

Second, achieving goal 1 was important to BBCL because sometimes the church have to face the reality of a sickness before seeking the cure. Even though some members knew that the church was suffering from disunity, this project helped the church know that one of the greatest sicknesses at BBCL hindering spiritual growth is disunity. Indeed, many problems within the church are really just symptoms of the breakdown of unity. In a fragmented and divisive world where countercultural unity among diverse people stands out, a unified BBCL will serve as the strongest evidence of the truth of the gospel. When the rest of the world cannot seem to agree on anything or bear to be around people who are different, a church where natural enemies become brethren in Christ is a powerful alternative. A unified BBCL serves as a critical manifestation of a spirit-empowered church, as described in Ephesians 4:3.

Goal 2: Development of Seven-Session Curriculum

The second goal of this project was to develop a seven-session curriculum to assist in training on the biblical principles of unity and the importance of working together in ministry teams. The second goal was considered successfully met because when the expert panel made their evaluation using their criteria, their evaluation score exceeded the sufficient level of 90 percent. The development of the curriculum was done with one purpose in mind—to foster unity, taking into consideration the fact that the material used provided a teaching and learning that promotes faithfulness. The goal was successfully met because the evaluated criteria exceeded the sufficient level.

The success of goal 2 has a positive implication for BBCL in that it serves as a vision for change. Acts 2:42 states, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship.” Two things stand out from this verse: (1) members were hungry for teaching; and (2) leaders taught. The teaching of this curriculum opened the minds of participants to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:32). The curriculum is a roadmap that triggers change, defining clearly the scriptural passages relating to the needs of the church in times of conflicts. As the church makes efforts to move toward unity, the curriculum shall set the baseline, as a working document guiding members in their efforts toward unifying the church and working together as one body in Christ. The impact of this goal to BBCL is that the church must teach the Bible because it is God’s Word and has the power to bring lasting change amongst believers.

Another impact felt as a result of developing a curriculum at BBCL is the challenge that the church must teach the Bible to Christians. The ultimate source where Christians should seek help to grow spiritually is the Bible. The apostle Paul’s second letter to Timothy supports the importance of God’s Word to be taught to believers as he states in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” Jesus commanded his disciples

(believers) to make disciples, not just converts, and making disciples requires teaching to them the Word of God (Matt 28:20). The problem of disunity at BBCL was known by every church member, but the daunting task was how and when to resolve the problem. The curriculum represents that means to bring change, moving the church from point A (disunity), to point B (unity). The teaching curriculum motivated participants to put into practice what they learned, and also challenged them to live their lives daily as practical Christians who are willing to promote unity in the church and work together with other fellow believers as illustrated in chapter 2 and 3.

Goal 3: Teaching of the Curriculum

The third goal was to improve unity by teaching the curriculum. This goal was considered successfully met when the curriculum was completely taught, and all participants attended all seven sessions, with evaluation indicator showing met or exceeded expectation. The success of this goal not only positively reflection on the theological soundness of the lessons, but it also made relevance to the issues of teamwork and unity related to the Bible. This curriculum was a wake-up call for the church to turn back to God's Word and to reconsider the Bible as containing solutions to all problems. God wants his love for the church to be reflected in their love for one another (John 13:34-35). God wants Christians to resolve their problems with one another in a way that blesses those around them and strengthens their relationships (John 17:23).

To meet the sufficiency level, the numbered criterion had to score a numerical value of 3 (sufficient), out of a maximum of 4 (exemplary). For the sum of each lesson, the sufficient level was 24 out of a maximum score of 32. The sufficient level for the entire curriculum was 168 out of a maximum of 224 (see table 6). All criteria met or exceeded the sufficient level with 100 percent of the marks being exemplary.¹

¹ See table 6.

After the training, a t-test was conducted to give the raw score reporting for post-training and the result was as follows: t-test = statistically significant difference between pre- and post-training survey scores: $t(19) = -8.187, p < .0001$.

Table 5. Raw score reporting for post-test

	Pres-Test Total	Post-Test Total
Mean	91.55	100.7
Variance	11.62894737	8.642105263
Observations	20	20
Pearson Correlation	-0.234678846	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	19	
t Stat	-8.18788819	
P(T<=t) one-tail	5.92575E-08	
t Critical one-tail	1.729132812	
P(T<=t) two-tail	1.18515E-07	
t Critical two-tail	2.093024054	

Goal 4: Plan Two Projects

The fourth goal of this project was to plan two service projects wherein members can practice unity in ministry. The goal to plan for two service projects that would include participants working together was successfully met when the projects were included on the church calendar with the required number of participants signed up and ready to start on a stipulated date. It should be noted, however, that no service project was actually accomplished, plans were made to executed in summer 2021. Every participant had the opportunity to express themselves by contributing to the planning. Getting every participant involved helped to eliminate possible existing barriers (disagreements and conflicts) that made some participating uncomfortable to freely get involved in church activities.

The impact of the fourth goal was groundbreaking for the church, and its endorsement by the pastoral staff and project board for use in 2021 set the stage for a new

beginning. The planning of these projects brought clarity and better understanding of the church’s mission, vision, and core values. Planning these two service projects has also given the church the means by which they can evaluate current and new activities and build a plan for the future. Planning the two service projects also helped BBCL map out strategic steps to achieve its mission and vision so as to achieve success much quicker. The church can now identify its priorities and establish clear directions.

Last, planning the two service projects enhanced communication and fostered teamwork at BBCL. News of the projects gained ground quickly and attracted members who expressed their willingness to participate or make contributions in some way. The two projects selected and planned for were (1) washing cars for single mothers and (2) serving free lunch for single parents. These two activities will go hand in hand and will be used a means to evangelize. Students were assigned various functions in these projects, which are going to last for eight hours on the church premises.²

Table 6. Summative score for each evaluator

Evaluator	Ses. 1	Ses. 2	Ses.3	Ses. 4	Ses. 5	Ses. 6	Ses. 7	Total
Sr Pastor	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	224
Pastor 1	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	224
Pastor 2	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	224
Deacon	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	224
Average	32	32	32	32	32	32	32	224

Accomplishing the purpose of this project at a personal level was humbling, yet satisfactory. Many bridges are being built as a result of God’s Word put in display during this project. Church members who did not want to associate with other members are now actively involved in making plans to re-establish relationships with other members, thus promoting unity in the church. God’s Word has the power to change every situation

² See table 4.

in life. I am grateful that God used this project, which was meant for the fulfilment of an academic requirement, to touch the hearts of his people to bring change at BBCL.

I am convinced that when BBCL is unified as a congregation on the things that matter (serving the Lord), and living out the faith, the road to accomplishing the mission would be clear. Unity allows church members to see clearly how each ministry and member of the congregation functions together to accomplish what the church is striving for. When the church is in a state of disunity, everything becomes a matter of either/or decision which negatively affects the church.

Assessment of Project's Success

The focus of this project was to teach BBCL members biblical lessons on unity and teamwork to enable them to put away their differences and embrace each other as coworkers in God's vineyard. The seven-session training exposed to twenty participants some theological truths about unity, teamwork, and the nature and purpose of the church. At the end of session 7, the results of the pre- and post-training surveys were analyzed using a *t*-test for dependent samples to provide a statistical analysis for course effectiveness. The measure for this project's success included a post-training survey, and success was met when a *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive, statistically significant difference between pre- and post-training survey scores. The *t*-test shows a statistically significant difference ($t_{(19)} = -8.187, p < .0001$).

Two *t*-tests were conducted on each part of the survey on the last day of teaching to determine the knowledge of unity and attitudes toward unity. This *t*-test displayed in table 7 shows a statistically significant improvement ($t(19) = -6.177, p < .0001$) in the knowledge of unity. The teachings augmented members knowledge about unity as they saw the need for the church to work together to strengthen each other.

Table 7. *T*-test to determine knowledge on unity

	62	68
Mean	64.89474	71.68421053
Variance	12.76608	5.783625731
Observations	19	19
Pearson Correlation	-0.25624	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	18	
t Stat	-6.17719	
P(T<=t) one-tail	3.93E-06	
t Critical one-tail	1.734064	
P(T<=t) two-tail	7.86E-06	
t Critical two-tail	2.100922	

The *t*-test displayed in table 8 shows a statistically significant improvement ($t(19) = -5.412, p < .0001$) in the attitudes towards unity. After the teachings, members' attitudes towards unity changed significantly as they learned that a unified church is more advantageous and beneficial to the body of Christ as described in the Bible.

Table 8. *T*-test to determine attitudes toward unity

	28	30
Mean	26.63158	29.31578947
Variance	3.467836	1.005847953
Observations	19	19
Pearson Correlation	-0.05323	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	18	
t Stat	-5.41275	
P(T<=t) one-tail	1.92E-05	
t Critical one-tail	1.734064	
P(T<=t) two-tail	3.83E-05	
t Critical two-tail	2.100922	

Strengths of the Project

As demonstrated in chapter 2, and as described in 2 Timothy 3:16, all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and

instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. The main strength of this project was its alignment with Scripture. God's Word served as the source from which all information for this project was drawn. Relevant is that Scripture indicates the total truthfulness and reliability of God's words (Ps 12:6), revealing its flawlessness or absolute reliability and purity.

Another strength of this project was the unflinching support I received from the leadership of the church. After going through the curriculum planned for this project by the pastor and staff, the face of the project was uplifted as it was no longer schoolwork, but a timely need for the church, and especially the leadership. The pastor took upon himself to mandate his staff to record the sessions and send the link to all church workers, making sure that they watched the videos. Every material requiring printing was done in the church secretary's office at the cost of the church, and the responsibility to relay correspondence to participants was also assumed by the church.

This project revealed that the Word of God is powerful to change lives and turn situations around. The literature and scriptural passages read in the course of my studies also uplifted me spiritually to another dimension. Through this project I learned things as a Christian leader that I would not have understood on my own. The implementation phase also attests to the transformation power of God's Word. Many lives have been transformed at BBCL as members testify of seeing life with the lens of Scripture. The feedback and comments from participants speak a great deal that the Word of God has power to shape lives.

Last, all references made during the training sessions tied to the life of the church. The sessions were interactive, punctuated with question and answer sessions centered on issues relating to the church. Class participation was elevated, and participants took turns being involved in demonstration exercises. At the end of the last session, participants responded positively in a personal survey, stating their intention to participate if this project were to be organized again in the future.

Weaknesses of the Project

The first weakness of this project was that seven sessions was not enough to extensively cover all of the prepared material. Scripture covers a lot of teachings about unity and teamwork, so effectively teaching on such topics requires time. Another handicap was the days within the week that this session was held. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was difficult to find a suitable day within the week to accommodate as many people as desired. Also, 9:30 a.m. was the start time for each session, and was not convenient because every session was done in a rush since I had to leave for work, which started at 12:30.

Another weakness of this project was that I underestimated the amount of participation during implementation, and limited participation to twenty. The ongoing crisis in the church created a vacuum in the lives of many Christians and many were looking for someone to give them an answer. Even though the project was announced in the church for over a year, many did not understand the whole concept, and it was only when news started circulating about the implementation that many opted to be part of it. At that time when more members expressed interest to participate in the teaching sessions, it was already too late, and the curriculum was halfway taught.

What I Would Do Differently

If I were to start this project over again, I would do some things differently. First and foremost, I would have loved for the whole church to participate in these teachings because the problems this project sought to address affects the whole congregation. Some of the feedback from participants made reference to the fact that it would be good if the lessons are taught to the entire church body. Even though the current pandemic could have posed a problem for all to attend the teaching sessions, those who could not have come to church could have watched the teachings online. I went through a lot of stress because I did not know if participants would attend the

sessions due to government restrictions on churches and social distancing challenges imposed by coronavirus.

Also, at the implementation phase, I would plan for longer sessions to give me ample time to effectively teach all the lessons and to involve more than twenty participants. Saturdays would be an ideal meeting day for more people to attend and to avoid rushing in-between class and work. Planning and devoting more time to effectively educate church members on any project is a good idea. Communication is important in many churches and can affect church relationships either positively or negatively. When people are not well informed and when communication becomes distorted as it moves from one person to another, the feedback is always poor.

Theological Reflections

In Ephesians 4:1-3, the apostle Paul tells the church at Ephesus that to walk worthy of their calling in Christ Jesus, members of the church body must work diligently to keep the spirit of peace that holds them together. Unity of the church is important because it testifies to the unity of the Godhead. When the body of Christ operates in disunity, it paints a false picture of God to the world. Wayne Grudem teaches, “All Christians are to strive to excel in building up the church (1 Cor. 14:12), an exhortation that applies not only to an increase in the number of church members, but also to the edification of the church towards Christian maturity.”³

Second, another important theological reflection when the church body unites is that the unity testifies to the unity of the gospel message of Jesus Christ’s petition in John 17:21. The one hope, one faith, and one baptism stated in Ephesians 4:5 show that unity in the body of Christ should testify to the unity of the gospel message. There is not more than one hope for salvation, there is not more than one object of faith who can save,

³ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 875.

and there is not more than one baptism that identifies a born-again believer as a follower of Christ. When believers in a church body are divided, it communicates to the world that the message of salvation in Christ Jesus is subject to amendment or discontinuity. The unity of the church body must model the unity of the gospel, which is why Jesus petitioned in the priestly prayer in John 17:21, “May they all be one as you, Father, are in Me and I am in you.” Lack of unity in the church affects the world’s understanding of the testimony about Christ Jesus.

Last, unity of church affects the church’s ability to be productive for God’s kingdom. Grudem notes, “There is a strong emphasis in the New Testament on the unity of the church. Jesus’ goal in John 10:16 is that there shall be one flock, one shepherd, and he prays for all future believers to be one.”⁴ This unity will be a witness to unbelievers, for Jesus prays “that they may be become one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (John 17:23). The church must work together to follow the direction of God’s instituted leadership, where the head turns, the body follows. Anything short of unity affects the church’s ability to be productive for the kingdom of God.

Personal Reflections

Information gathered when I interviewed some senior members at BBCL revealed that some problems at BBCL emanated from the fact that many church members put their faith on pastors rather than on God’s Word. One common mistake that many churches make during the course of transitioning into a new pastor is that they raise the bar of expectations higher than the incumbent can handle. Church members often forget that the pastor is also human, having strengths and limitations, and has his own personal issues to deal with just like any other person. Christians are often swift to throw blames at the pastor when their selfish expectations are not met or when there is a problem in the

⁴ Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 877.

church, even though they may be the source of the problems. Alfred Poirier describes pastors as “waiters serving the Lamb to sworn enemies. Pastors are busboys washing the dirty dishes of our hatreds, anger, lusts, deceits, malice, and filthy words in the purifying stream of Christ’s blood.”⁵

Learning from Ken Sande, I believe that trusting, obeying, and imitating Christ are essential to responding to conflict in a God-pleasing manner. When Christians live as described above, they glorify the gracious and loving God.⁶ In contrast, when Christians falter and fizzle out, they lack a high degree of collaboration with one another and wind up feeling at best confused about what they were supposed to do. Practically speaking, as Sande teaches, “in times of conflict, believers can focus on Jesus by asking themselves one central question during any sort of conflict: how can one please and honor God in this situation.”⁷

It is time for believers to be reminded of the mission of the devil (John 10:10). The devil is out to cause division in the church and to put an end the evangelistic mission of the church. The church must realize that the orchestrator behind conflicts is the devil, and the church should deal with the problem according to the prescribed Word of God to help a fellow brother or sister come out from Satan’s trap. When the church stays united in love, it will be difficult for them to fall to the devil’s snares because, as 1 Peter 4:8 says, “Above all, maintain constant love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins.”

⁵ Alfred Poirier, *The Peace-Making Pastor: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 188.

⁶ Ken Sande, *Peacemaking for Family: A Biblical Guide to Manage Conflict in Your Home* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2002), 36.

⁷ Sande, *Peacemaking for Family*, 36.

Conclusion

In *How People Change*, Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp help the reader to understand that “everything each person of the Trinity is and does is always in union with the others. . . . We were made in the image of this glorious God. Is it any wonder, then, that this deep longing for intimacy is woven into the fabric of our nature?”⁸ I have put every effort into this project to align the passion of BBCL to the cause of the glorious God we serve. The project has been successful, which is very gratifying to the student who pursues a degree and also as a servant of God craving to see the spirit of unity reign in the church of God. The positive feedback I received from participants tells me that they understand unity and the importance of working together in ministry as a team. I have been blessed during the implementation of this project at BBCL and I pray that many lives will be transformed as people come in contact with the transforming truth (the Word of God). My prayer is that the blessings from this project would be translated to the entire church so that unity would reign.

⁸ Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2006), 72.

APPENDIX 1

DEVELOPING MINISTRY TEAM SURVEY

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify the current understanding and practices of spiritual leadership of the participant. This research is being conducted by Rapheal Jumbuin for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project, and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. Participation is strictly voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. By completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Participant PIN #.....

Part 1: Knowledge about Unity

Directions: Respond to the statements by circling your opinion using the following scale:

SD = strongly disagree D = disagree DS = disagree somewhat,
AS = agree somewhat, A = agree, SA = strongly agree

1. I have received training on teamwork at church.
SD D DS AS A SA
2. I do not feel comfortable working in a team with people I disagree with.
SD D DS AS A SA
3. Jesus and His disciples worked as a team to preach and teach.
SD D DS AS A SA
4. The Bible teaches and encourages believers to stay united and work together.
SD D DS AS A SA
5. Working together makes a group stronger, powerful, and more unified.
SD D DS AS A SA
6. I find it difficult to embrace new ideas, hence I prefer doing things the old way.
SD D DS AS A SA

7. I develop trust and work better with people I am acquainted to than those I do not know.
SD D DS AS A SA
8. I tend to perform well working with people who are as friendly and peaceful as I am.
SD D DS AS A SA
9. The Bible encourages Christians to work together to sharpen each other in faith as recorded in Proverbs 27:17.
SD D DS AS A SA
10. I honestly do not like working together in a team because I am afraid my ideas will not be considered.
SD D DS AS A SA
11. The Bible compels believers to love and cherish the assembly of the righteous.
SD D DS AS A SA
12. The Bible teaches that unity of the body of Christ brings glory to God.
SD D DS AS A SA
13. I am on good terms with all the members of my Sunday school class.
SD D DS AS A SA
14. A Unified church brings glory to God.
SD D DS AS A SA

Part 2: Attitudes toward Unity

Directions: Answer the following questions by putting a circle round the right answer based on your knowledge of the statements using the following scale:

NI= Never Interested, NA= Not at all Aware, SA= Slightly Aware, MA= Moderately Aware, VA= Very Aware, EA= Extremely Aware

15. Each believer has been given specific gifts freely by the Holy Spirit to serve the church.
NI NA SA MA VA EA
16. Under normal circumstances, members of a team feel comfortable working together when they can trust each other.
NI NA SA MA VA EA
17. Poor relationship amongst church members negatively affects the church.
NI NA SA MA VA EA
18. The output for two workers is better than one.
NI NA SA MA VA EA
19. The same Holy Spirit is present in all believers.
NI NA SA MA VA EA

APPENDIX 2

CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

Developing Teamwork Curriculum Evaluation Tool					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Criteria	1	2	3	4	Comments
The lesson is clearly relevant to the issue of teamwork related to the Bible					
The material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on unity.					
The material is theologically sound.					
The feedback from the trainees was good.					
The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis.					
The lesson contains points of practical application.					
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.					
Overall, the lesson is clearly presented.					

APPENDIX 3

TEACHING CURRICULUM ON PRINCIPLES OF UNITY

1) Bases of Unity

a) Unity Is Based Upon Revealed Truth

- The gospel calls us to a unity which is based upon the revealed truth of God (Eph. 4:1-6; 1 Cor. 1:10)
- The only credible standard of authority to which we may rightly appeal to establish unity is the revealed word of Christ, the New Testament (John. 17:20-21; Col. 3:17).
- It is His word that establishes faith and enables unity.
- The inspired teachings of His apostles make it possible for us to have fellowship with them and with God (1 John 1:1-4, 5-7).
- When we go beyond the teaching of Christ - His New Testament - we forfeit our fellowship with the Father and the Son (2 John 9).
NOTE: The unity we are talking about is not an Ecclesiastical union, but unity within a church through diversification of different spiritual gifts.

b) Humility and Unity

- Humility is being offered by some as one of the planks in the platform for unity among brethren.
- The principle of humility (Prov 11.2; 12.15; Mic 6.8; Lk 18.13-14; Rom 12.3,16; 1 Cor 10.12; 13.4; 2 Cor 11.30; Gal 5.26; Eph 4.2; Jas 4.6; 1 Pet 5.5-6).
- Humility demands that we not be so arrogant as to think that we are perfect in our knowledge and that every position we hold is God's position and every position that someone else holds that differs from ours is wrong.

2) Nature and Purpose of the Church

- The church is the covenant people of God—the body of people to whom God has made the promise to be their God and they to be his people and he to dwell with them.
- The church is the covenant people of God in all ages and among all nations

a) Nature of the Church. (Matt. 18:16; Eph. 5:25)

Def.: The Church is the community of all true believers for all time.¹ This definition understands the church to be made of all those who are truly saved. Paul says, “Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Eph. 5:25).

- The church is used to apply to all those whom Christ died to redeem, all those who are saved by the death of Christ.
- Jesus Christ himself builds the church by calling his people to himself. He promised, “I will build my church” (Matt. 16:18).
- Eph. 2:14. The author sees Jewish believers and Gentiles believers alike to be now united in the church.

Note: In the New Testament the word “church” may be applied to a group of believers at any level, ranging from a very small group meeting in a private home all the way to the group of all true believers in the universal church (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; 1 Cor. 1:2; Acts 9:31).

b) Purpose of the Church. The purpose of the church can be understood in the following three ways:

I) Ministry to God (Worship).

1. Col. 3:16, Paul directs the church at Colossae to “sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”
2. Eph. 1:12, God has destined us and appointed us in Christ “to live for the praise of his glory.”

II) Ministry to Believers (Nurture).

1. Col. 1:28, As Scripture stipulates, the church has an obligation to nurture those who are already believers and build them up in maturity in the faith.
2. Eph. 4:12-13, Paul told the church at Ephesus that God gave the church gifted persons to “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

III) Ministry to the World (Evangelism).

1. Matt. 28:19, Jesus told his disciples that they should “make disciples of all nations.”
2. Acts 11:29; 2 Cor. 8:4. Ministry of mercy accompanies evangelism.

c) Identification of Spiritual gifts

- Romans 12:6-8
- 1 Cor. 12:8-11, 28-30.
- Ephesians 4:11

Purpose of Spiritual gifts:

- 1) 1 Cor. 12:7, “... given for the common good.”
- 2) Ephesians 4:12. “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...”

d) Unity in Diversity (I Cor. 12:12-31)

a.) What is unity of the church (Col. 3:14; Eph. 4:13)?

-The unity of the church is its degree of freedom from divisions among true Christians.² The definition specifies “true Christians” because there are some people in church who are “Christians” by name only but have had no genuine experience of repentance by the Holy Spirit.

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 853.

² Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 874.

- The state of being united or joined as one, a whole, oneness, combined into one.
- b.) The Body- diversity in unity (1 Cor. 12:12-14)
- I - Analogy of the body: (Diversity)
 - The church is the body of Christ and there is no schism in the body (cf. 1 Cor. 12:25).
 - As in the human body, there is diversity in unity and unity in diversity (cf. 1 Cor. 12).
 - The body is one but has many parts (members).
 - All members though many, are one body.
 - So also, is Christ.
 - II - Work of the Holy Spirit in baptism (v 13): Common Experience of Conversion.
 - All baptized by one Spirit
 - Into one body (Christ)
 - All made to drink from one Spirit (whether Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free).
 - On the world's platform, we can refer the "all" to anyone who is born again from any tribe, nation, race, continent, etc.,).
 - The body is not one part but many (v 14)
 - III – Application of membership (1 Cor 12:15-26)
 - All members are necessary if there is to be a body and not a monstrosity.
 - The true nature of the body as divinely ordained: one body with many parts.
 - The whole body is not to assemble and only perform one of the gifts as mentioned in as mentioned in verses.
 - Every member is vital and essential to the body (1 Cor 12:15-17).
 - Diversity of the body (18-23).
 - Unity of the body (24-26).
 - Different gifts to the body (27-31)
- c.) Why call for church unity?
1. Because it is Jesus' goal. John 10:16 "there shall be one flock, one shepherd."
 2. Because Jesus prays for all future believers to be one. John 17:21 "that they may all be one."
 3. Because unity will be a witness to unbelievers. John 17:23 "so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."
 4. Because believers are compelled to be united. (1 Cor. 1:2, 10, 13).
 5. Paul encourages the Christians to be eager to maintain unity at Ephesus (Eph. 4:3).
 6. Paul command the church to live in unity because there already is an actual spiritual unity in Christ which exists among genuine believers.
- d.) Warnings against disunity/those who cause division.
- 1.) They shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:20-21).
 - 2.) They are worldly and devoid of the Spirit (Jude 19).
 - 3.) "Such people do not serve the Lord Christ, but their own appetites.
- (Rom. 16:17-18).

Moving Toward Perfecting Biblical Unity

- The unity of the church is in Christ and it is both a given reality and a requirement. The unity of the faith is both gift and mandate.

- The church is compelled to give expression to this reality and requirement, this gift and mandate, by actively seeking the promised goal, namely, that of being one body which serves the Lord in perfect peace, purity, and unity.

- The unity of the church is unity in Christ, unity in the gospel of Christ, "unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God" (Eph. 4:13). This Christ, this gospel, this faith and knowledge, the church must confess. It is summarized for us in our Confession of Faith.
- There should be mutual agreement on what the gospel is. The churches must confess in their official documents of faith and life the same gospel.
- Reconciliation between the bodies (the sin that is involved in the separate existence must be faced and resolved: this may be only the sin of separate existence; or a sin which has historical roots; or doctrinal error; or error in the life of the church).
- Self-examination on the part of each believer.
- Maintaining the peace, purity, and unity of the churches.
- There would then be the actual uniting into one organization.

3) Putting to Practice the Priestly Prayer of unity in our Church (John 17:20-23)

a) The evangelistic nature of Christian unity

- Disunity in the church is a reason that people are pushed away from the Christian faith
- When churches fight, bicker (argue about petty and trivial matters), and divide, they provide no incentives for unbelievers to come to faith in Jesus.
- The Evangelistic Nature of Christian Unity (17:20-23)
 - i-The Bible.
 - ii-The Spirit.
 - iii-Doctrine.

Ways to promote unity in the church (Eph. 4)

i)- BE HUMBLE.

Always be humble... Ephesians 4:2

Unity requires humility. A humble person is willing to sacrifice their ego and desires for the sake of the group.

ii) BE GENTLE

"... and gentle..." Ephesians 4:2

- A gentle person as a way of calming those around them. They have the ability to deal with hard situations in a graceful way. Inevitably there will be conflict within the Church. A gentle person will know the right way to deal with it.

iii) BE PATIENT

- *“...Be patient with each other...” Ephesians 4:2*

A patient person keeps calm even when those around them are being irritating

iv) WORK HARD FOR PEACE

- *Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. Ephesians 4:3*
- Unity and peace take hard work. You must be willing to put in the effort to make unity really happen

v) CELEBRATE EACH OTHER’S UNIQUE GIFT

- *However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. Ephesians 4:7*

- Each person should faithfully use the gifts they have been given, while at the same time celebrating the gifts of others. Problems come when a person with one gift looks down on others who do not exhibit the same gift they have.

vi) SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE

- *Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. Ephesians 4:15*

HOW TO MAINTAIN UNITY IN THE CHURCH (PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4)

a) To Be Unified, Christians Must Focus on the Right Resources

with the Spirit If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship, if any tenderness and compassion (Philippians 2:1)

1) 1. God has given us encouragement in Christ (John 15:26)

The word “encouragement” means to come alongside someone, to give assistance by offering comfort, counsel, or exhortation. It means to come alongside to help. “It combines encouragement with alleviation of grief.”

God has given us comfort from Christ’s love (John 3:16/Romans 5:8).

Another commonality and empowerment for unity that God has given us is “comfort from Christ’s love.” Each believer became a recipient of Christ’s love at spiritual birth.

3) God has given fellowship with the Spirit. (1 Cor 12:13)

“For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”

4) God has given us tenderness and compassion (Philippians 1:8)

b) To Be Unified, Christians Must Develop the Right Attitudes

then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose (Philippians 2:2)

Disunity always begins in the heart—the mind, will, and emotions—before it manifests outwardly. Therefore, if we are going to be a unified people, we must work on the inner man; for it is from the inner man that all divisions come.

ATTITUDES TO CULTIVATE

1) Believers must have the same thoughts (Philippians 2:5).

Paul says that believers must be “like-minded.”

It literally means “to think the same thing.”

2) Believers must have the same loving attitude

The next attitude Paul says we must develop to be unified is a loving attitude. He says make my joy fulfilled by having the same love

3) To Be Unified, Christians Must Develop the Right Practices

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Philippians 2:3-4)

1) 1. Believers must practice forsaking selfish ambition and vain conceit.

Paul gives us an exceedingly difficult challenge. He says, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition and vain conceit” (v. 3).

2) 2. Believers must practice the humility of a servant. Paul said, “in humility consider others better than yourselves” (v. 3)

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ABSTRACT

DEVELOPING MINISTRY TEAMS TO FOSTER CHURCH UNITY AT BROADWAY BAPTIST CHURCH, LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020
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Today's world is surrounded by conflict of different kinds. Most conflicts, if not resolved, cause divisions amongst brothers and sisters, neighbors and colleagues, and even tribes against each other. The Christian church and family, such as Broadway Baptist Church are not immune to this "conflict" epidemic that causes disunity and separation amongst its members. This project seeks to resolve the problem of disunity at Broadway Baptist Church by developing ministry teams in the Young Married Adult ministry to foster unity in the church through selected activities. Chapter 1 gives a summary of the project, emphasizing the purpose, goals, and methodology used to execute the project. Chapter 2 presents the biblical and theological basis for the project, while chapter 3 presents the theoretical/practical/historical basis related to the project. Chapter 4 gives a detailed description of the project, and lastly, chapter 5 presents an evaluation of the project.

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