

Christian Unity Ministries:

...exists to assist and equip Christian organizations to experience Biblical unity.

...accomplishes its mission through training events, conflict intervention, and publications to churches and Christian organizations across all evangelical denominational lines, with the objective of moving brothers and sisters in Christ toward Biblical interpersonal relationships with one another.

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“Formed for God’s Family”? ABSOLUTELY!

by
Blake Coffee



What a wonderful thing God has done through Pastor Rick Warren’s *Purpose Driven Life* material! Literally thousands upon thousands of church bodies around the world have been touched by the “40 Days of Purpose” process. For years to come, my own church will be counting God’s blessings received through our recent 40 Days of Purpose. God’s hand in the writing and the distribution of that material within the context of today’s generations is so very clear—His timing is always perfect, isn’t it?

Furthermore, the receptivity of our culture to the *Purpose Driven Life* material has been a confirmation of our own ministry and the message God has given us to speak. Already, we have had calls from church leaders who have recognized how the Biblical message of unity fits with Warren’s second purpose: “Formed for God’s Family”. Indeed, all five purposes (worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and evangelism) have strong components of Biblical unity within them. The parallels are not coincidental. They are scriptural.

***What better way
to drive home the
concept of Fellowship
than with a unity
conference with the
entire congregation?***

If your church has not yet looked into a “40 Days of Purpose” campaign, I cannot recommend it strongly enough. Its challenge to your membership at every level is remarkable. If, on the other hand, your church has already gone through it, or is preparing to go through it, do not miss the unity principles throughout the *Purpose Driven Life* message. In fact, as I write this article, I am preparing for a *One Body* unity conference at a church on

its second Sunday of its 40 Days of Purpose: the Sunday devoted to the purpose of Fellowship. What better way to drive home the concept of fellowship? I am anxious to see how God will use our time that day!

I am grateful for *Purpose Driven Life*. I thank God for Rick Warren and other church leaders like him, whose gifts and talents are devoted unto God and used for the edification of God’s church.

Controlling the Tongue

by Connie Whilden

But Joshua commanded the people, “You shall not shout or let your voice be heard, nor shall any word proceed out of your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you shall shout!”

Joshua 6:10

There is an important lesson here about controlling the tongue. The lesson is not at all about preventing people in the church from communicating—that would be a sure sign of Spiritual abuse. Rather, the lesson is about staying focused on what God is about and not being a distraction with our careless murmuring and mindless criticism.

Do you suppose there were those among the people of Israel who, even while dutifully marching around the walls of Jericho, were wondering what the point was and exactly where Joshua was leading them? Can you even imagine what the people would like to have been saying after the fifth or sixth time around the city? How might Jericho have turned out if the people had not controlled their tongues and had given way to murmuring, complaining, and backbiting? But Joshua’s orders were clear—say absolutely nothing until given specific orders to do so.

Maybe God gave Joshua an insight into the hearts of the people and Joshua recognized the danger of whispering complaints and murmuring. Surely, Joshua understood that, even in the midst of an assignment from God, the tongue was capable of derailing the people despite the best of intentions.

Being on mission with God has not changed much since the fall of Jericho. In the church today, when we find ourselves in the thick of Spiritual warfare, the tongue can turn a sensitive situation into a disaster. Especially when dealing with broken or damaged relationships, even the best of intentions can produce hurtful and confusing counsel. Paul’s advice that we should *“let no corrupt word proceed out of [our] mouth, but only what is good for necessary edification...”* is right on target when we are on mission with God. The truth is, when dealing with relationships within the church, we don’t find wisdom in the careless words of men, but in the perfect Word of God. Careless, hurtful words, then, should be neither spoken nor heard.

When God is about to do something amazing among us, how often do we allow grumbling and murmuring to grieve the Spirit and to rob us of God’s victory? In virtually every conflicted congregation to which our ministry has been exposed, what started as a mere difficult situation was escalated tremendously

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by the careless words of Christian brothers and sisters. James 3:8 says: *But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.* This being the case, rather than trying to mold our words, sometimes it is better just to stop them all together!

God inhabits the praises of His people. Maybe the opposite of inhabiting our praise is leaving us with our gripes, criticisms, and complaints. It is a blessing to our Lord when, in the interest of unity, we learn to control our tongues and build each other up with words rather than tear each other down. Sure, it’s a free country and we’re free to speak our minds, even in church. But how much sweeter it is, when the Church imitates the Father, and responds to relational distress by pouring out favor and grace on one another rather than bitterness and complaints. By learning to control our tongues, we invite the Spirit to move among us in any way at any time... and when that happens, the walls come tumbling down!

Connie Whilden is a Christian mediator and Advisory Board member of Christian Unity Ministries. She resides in Cedar Hill, Texas with her husband, John, and their four children.

The Languages of Worship

The Languages of Worship

Where worship is concerned, you may have at least two distinct groups of people in your church: the traditional folks who have been reared on a steady diet of hymns and reverence, and the contemporary folks, who prefer a more expressive and free worship style. The differences are so profound, you are beginning to see little choice but to go to separate services. But deep down inside, you know that is dangerously close to having two congregations under one roof.

If worship style has become an issue in your church or in a church you know, this conference is for you. It explores the Biblical foundations for worship, both in the Old and the New Testaments, and teaches the fundamental difference between drawing near to God by yourself and drawing near to God *together*, as a congregation.

Drawn specifically for worship leaders, but appropriate for the entire congregation, this 3-hour conference also takes a practical look at how we are each “wired” differently in terms of how we draw near to God and helps the participant manage those differences and move beyond them.

Finally, the conference walks the participant through the Five Principles of Unity and applies each of them specifically to the area of corporate worship.

If having your congregation motivated to learn each other’s worship languages is something that would help your church, then contact Christian Unity Ministries and schedule a *Languages of Worship* conference.

Introduction

Do you really believe it was God himself who put your local body of believers together? Do you suppose that, in doing so, He understood fully the languages and styles of worship which each of you possessed and that He intended that your worship together would not only bring glory to Him but would also make each of you better worshipers? If so, then it is never a question of “whether” we can worship together, but “how”. And it is a question which, once answered today, must be asked again tomorrow, and the next day, and the next. Because the “wineskins” of worship are changing. Always. It is an eternal truth.

*But the wine itself is not changing. Ever at the center of our worship is Christ, both the object and catalyst of our efforts. It is His majesty and glory which we praise. And it is His spirit who resonates in each of us when we praise Him together. Thus, when we worship together, the Christ whom I worship **exists in my co-worshiper**. This makes corporate worship a much different experience than personal worship—and it motivates me to better understand my co-worshipers’ “languages” of worship.*

My prayer is that, in our time together in this conference, and in the days to follow, you will experience a transformation through the renewal of your mind, and that you will become an instrument of God’s peace and unity in your own church’s worship experience.

May God have his way with us, and with our worship.



Christian Unity Ministries
P.O. Box 701685
San Antonio, Texas 78232

How Your Church Can Partner With Christian Unity Ministries

God is at work, restoring health and unity to His church. Christian Unity Ministries has joined that work, bringing His message of Biblical interpersonal relationships and Christian community to local congregations. We do this through a multi-piece training program aimed at various aspects of church life.

God has begun to call churches to partner with us in this effort—churches who not only are intentional about their own health, but who also feel a responsibility for contributing to the health of other local congregations.

Would you pray, and seek to know whether YOUR church is called to be a partnering church with Christian Unity Ministries?

For more information, contact us at:

Christian Unity Ministries
P.O. Box 701685
San Antonio, Texas 78232
Phone: (210)386-7895
E-mail: info@christianunityministries.org

BECOMING A PARTNERING CHURCH WITH CHRISTIAN UNITY MINISTRIES

*Our **Partnering churches** are intentional about preserving the unity of the Spirit in their own congregation and receive all of our training at significantly reduced costs. They partner with us in each of the following ways:*

- *Regular monthly financial support in any amount;*
- *Being proactive about sharing testimony with other churches' leadership about this ministry;*
- *Sending their pastor or other designated representative to the Unity Ministries Annual Conference in San Antonio.*

*Join us in equipping God's people for unity. **Be a part of what God is doing!***