

... that single state of union with one's fellows which parallels the musical harmony of the multistringed instrument or of the chorus of voices itself. In battle, *exōterikē harmonía* guides the phalanx to move and strike as one man, of a single mind or will. (p. 80)

It is this Greek term for the unity or harmony of a group that is exhibited in a church when all of its individual members simultaneously function under their own spiritual gift from the same inventory of doctrinal ideas developed from systematic Bible study taught by their pastor-teacher.

- 4) We know this group harmony was not evident in the Corinthian church because of the next verse:

**1 Corinthians 1:11** - For I have been informed concerning you, my fellow believers, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you.

- 1) Chloe was a respected believer in Corinth and it is obvious that Paul trusted her analysis which he knew those in the church would not dare challenge.
- 2) Notice Paul has no reticence in calling her name to document *how* he knows *what* he knows: there are contentions among them.
- 3) Also do not assume that Chloe was guilty of gossip or as the ladies refer to it in the South, "Telling the news." Paul asked her what she knew and she told him the facts, but without names.
- 4) The word for "contentions" is **ἐρις (éris)** and means "strife, discord, quarrels, and wrangling." In other words, civil war.
- 5) Paul now reveals what these schisms are all about and the warfare they have fomented.

**1 Corinthians 1:12** - Now this I say, that every one of you says, "I am of Paul" [ doctrinal guru ], and "I of Apollos" [ skilled orator ], and "I of Cephas" [ Κηφᾶς (*Kēphás*): Peter's Aramaic surname whose trend was legalistic ], and "I of Christ" [ self-righteous followers ].

- 1) There are four factions fighting for supremacy in the church each forming a fifth column that has destroyed church unity. And interestingly enough the major reason given by each group to support its claim was who baptized them.
- 2) Each group is motivated by arrogance. The people chosen as their heroes are not involved in these schisms. They are instead used as rhetorical veils to conceal while advancing each faction's hidden agenda: to run the church and then get rid of all who disagreed with them.
- 3) Those that drop Paul's name are those who have grown under his ministry, but in arrogance are unable to make proper application of doctrine and thus misuse it in order to gain power.
- 4) Those who assert allegiance to Apollo are those who are attracted to the sophisticated oratory of the Greeks. Apollo was such a speaker who was trained in Alexandria and was attracted to the Hebrew Scripture, but was not well advanced in the doctrines of the New Testament. But he sounded good from the pulpit.
- 5) Then there were the legalists who wanted to be associated with Peter. Peter was strong on the Mosaic Law, but his doctrine was a good ways away from being as sophisticated as Paul's. His advocates were most likely Jewish believers, probably Judaizers, who were attracted to Peter since his ministry was to the Jews.
- 6) And finally the most brazen of all – the bunch so self-righteous its proponents had the brass to allege they were of Christ. Now who can argue with that? They had outdone everybody in their campaign to be king of the spiritual mountain by selecting the One Who trumped all others.

- 7) Paul now turns his rhetorical skills against them by posing rhetorical questions revealing each schism's human-viewpoint rationales:

**1 Corinthians 1:13** - Is Christ divided? No! Was Paul crucified for you? No! Or, were you baptized into the name of Paul? No!

- 1) When anyone believes in Christ he is baptized by the Holy Spirit into union with Christ where he becomes a member of the body of Christ, the universal church, possessing top-circle assets. Christ cannot be divided.
- 2) However, those who are in the body of Christ can be temporally divided among themselves and when they are there is discord. Paul refutes this in 1 Corinthians 12:25 where he writes, "... there should be no schism in the body."
- 3) Paul is not impressed that he has been chosen by one of these factions to justify its claim to power and asks, "Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?"
- 4) The proper answer to all of Paul's questions are resounding no's. Christ is the preeminent personality and should be worshipped by all members of the church. To place emphasis on human personalities is the road to ruin.
- 5) The Pauline fifth column emphasized the communicator when it should be concentrating on his message.
- 6) Paul next addresses the false issue that motivates these schisms:

**1 Corinthians 1:14** - I thank God that I baptized none of you except Chrispus [ **Acts 18:8** ] and Gaius [ see **Acts 19:29** ],

**v. 15** - that no man should say that I had baptized into my own name.

**1 Corinthians 1:16** - And I baptized also the household of Stephanas [1 Corinthians 16:15]; beyond that I do not know whether I baptized any other.

- 1) What was happening in the Corinthian church is what continues to occur in the various denominational churches today. Baptism continues to divide, form factions, create schisms, cause disharmony, and foment discord within the body of Christ.
- 2) Paul was glad that he had very little to do with baptizing any of them. He was adamant that those he had baptized were not done in his name but that of Christ.
- 3) Paul's job was to teach doctrine to a church that was ignorant about its obligations before the Lord. They were stressing to the point of conflict on secondary issues at the expense of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Word of God.
- 4) Regardless of who baptized any of them they are all out of line, in status quo carnality, and in rapid descent through reversionism.
- 5) Why? Because they were emphasizing a ritual over the reality it portrays.
- 6) Paul makes this crystal in the next verse:

**1 Corinthians 1:17** - For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, that the cross of Christ should be neutralized.

- 1) The top priority in a local church is communication of the Word. When false issues encroach on this responsibility, then the cross of Christ is neutralized.
- 2) This is made evident today in so many churches. There are those who will turn away believers from the fellowship simply because they have not been baptized in the desired fashion.