

A U N I F Y I N G D E F I N I T I O N

By Garrie F. Williams*

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4-6, NKJV).

The church in Ephesus was made up of two distinct groups—Jewish and Gentile Christians. Because they were constantly in conflict, Paul reminded them of the essentials that they had in common. Would Paul need to remind you and your church of these seven "ones"? Would the agreement of your congregation on these basic points pave the way for revival?

Instead of using the numeral *one*, which can confuse the intent of Paul's remarks, read the verses using the word *same*, applying them to your church. All members, no matter what their socio-economic, racial, religious, or cultural background, may now through their conversion belong to the "same" body. They all have the "same" Spirit, the "same" hope, the "same" Lord, the "same" faith, the "same" baptism, and the "same" God, who is actually in them all and is the Father of them all.

The unifying intent of Paul's words has sometimes been missed through dissension caused by taking

his "ones" numerically. Is there one body or two (the church visible and invisible)? Is there one Spirit or two (both the Father and the Holy Spirit are called "Spirit")? Are there two Lords (the Father and the Son are given this title)? Is there one faith or three (saving faith, the spiritual gift of faith, and the Christian faith)? How many baptisms are there (the Bible lists at least six—Moses' baptism, the baptism of suffering, the baptism of fire, John's baptism, water baptism, and baptism with the Holy Spirit)? Is there one Father or two (both God the Father and Jesus are called "Father")?

Perhaps this will be a good test of the willingness of you and your church or group to be open to the unity of the Spirit. After having discussed the "ones" numerically, there will be divergences of belief. Can you now use the word *same* and say, "We may have different opinions, but we are part of the same body and all want to be filled with the same Holy Spirit"? When that happens, you will have taken a giant step toward the last great revival. □

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