



Sermon Starter: 'Oneness'

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



by Anthony B. Robinson

“That they may all be one.” (John 17:21)

Our denominational motto, taken from Jesus’ prayer for the church in the Gospel of John, is “That they may all be one.”

“Oneness” seems like something we ought to want, and yet at least sometimes we aren’t all that good at it. I am helped by a remark made by the preacher Tom Long, who said, “A congregation is the place where a person goes in order to be with people he or she may not want to be with under other circumstances.” You could probably say the same for a denomination.

Maybe we have a better shot at oneness if we assume that we don’t all like each other all the time and don’t have to. If we just figure that being part of a church will put us in proximity to at least some people we might not want to be with under other circumstances (and who feel the same about us).

Then “oneness” isn’t as much about us as it is about God. We work and worship together not because it was our bright idea, but because in God’s strange wisdom God has chosen to put us together and make use of us.

It’s actually one of the things I like best about the church: God puts me with people I would not have chosen for myself and who wouldn’t have chosen me. It’s sort of the opposite of when kids choose up teams. In the process, I learn things and grow. I learn about my blind spots. Sometimes I learn to love people I don’t like. Sometimes we share in a common sense of hope and purpose despite our rough edges.

In this sense, it could be that our “oneness” is not so much a project we have to do or a goal for us to accomplish as it is a gift given to us, a gift given to us by God. This messy thing we call “church” and “denomination” is God’s odd gift to us. Against all the odds, you/ we are, by the grace of God, one. Congratulations God, you’re amazing.

Prayer

O God, Eternal Spirit, we thank you for our church, which despite its foibles and failures, is yours. Make us more truly so. Amen.

Learn more at <<http://www.ucc.org/mission1>>.

Mission:1
| | | | | - | | | | |
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST