

"CALLED IN ONE BODY"

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Why is it so hard for some who call themselves Christians to accept and affirm the comforting blessing that they have been “called in one body”? The passage that teaches this truth is Colossians 3:15, “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”

A preacher from Louisville says efforts to plead for these precious principles are nothing more than “blasting away at others” and “must be stopped.” Interestingly, he fails to see the hypocrisy of “blasting away” at someone who gives book, chapter, and verse for the teaching being presented. His specific objection is to a concisely worded, thoroughly documented article titled “The Larger Community of Believers” in which individuals and institutions that not only have taken public positions embracing denominational division but who are utilizing a significant amount of their influence to advance those positions through their classrooms, lecture halls, papers, and books were dealt with after the manner urged by the apostles (Rom. 16:17-18; II Pet. 2:1-22; I John 4:1). Jude taught that the loving and compassionate thing to do is to make an effort to “pull them out of the fire” (Jude 21-23). Clearly, there are those occupying pulpits in churches of Christ who avoid Colossians 3:15 like the Catholics avoid I Timothy 2:5 or the Baptists avoid Mark 16:16 or the Methodists avoid Romans 6:4. It is both shocking and sad when preachers and the elderships behind them are deceived into believing there is a “politically correct” way to deal with “false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies” (II Pet. 2:1). If the apostle Peter did not do it in II Peter 2, then why should an uninspired man be expected to do otherwise? Peter said, “Ye are the children of the prophets,” and it is high time in churches of Christ that especially preachers and elders ought to begin to bear the family resemblance (Acts 3:25).

“Ye are called in one body.” The call is the call of the gospel, “Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Thess. 2:14). In the gospel account of Mark, the Lord Jesus Christ affirmed, “He that believeth [number one] and is baptized [number two] shall be saved [number three]; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). When Peter taught baptism was for the remission of sins, “they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41). The ones added were added to the church by the Lord

as Luke wrote in Acts 2:47, “Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

No one is saved outside of the church. Paul wrote, “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23). The body of Christ is the church of Christ, for Paul explained, “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23). Therefore, the call of the gospel to be saved in Christ is the call of which Paul spoke in Colossians 3:15 when he said, “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”