

Mankind Divided

Some of our teens in residential treatment are from dangerous neighborhoods, and one of them has been in lots of fights. In his home town, if you're from one side of the city, you stay there. If you "slip" into the other territory, the locals assume you're up to no good, and you'd better be ready to rumble. I've asked the kids why this is so, and who made up these territorial "rules"? No one knows. They just say, "That's how it is," and shrug their shoulders.

We find this tendency towards division in the earliest historical records and certainly in the first chapters of Genesis. So, is it any wonder that, despite the revelation of Jesus, the miracles He performed, and all that followed, within a generation or two after the crucifixion, new factions arose, claiming to have the 'real' truth?

There are plenty of areas in which we're tempted to behave badly, but at this moment I'll address just one: the tendency to assert one's own interpretation of truth—I guess that's what we call 'opinion'—over and against the group's unified acceptance of a truth. I'm talking about factionalism, or sectarianism. We're right, you're wrong.

You'll be able to tell that this brief inquiry is based on my work as a therapist. No excuses. Now, I've heard various explanations for the motive to separate into factions. Probably the most common is the issue of control, or power. In their urge to be in charge, some people can't resist putting their unique spin on things. The trouble is that some folks not only want things "my way", they insist that others see things "my way". Throw in a touch of charisma, a few emotionally needy, mentally lazy followers, and voila! A belief system is born, and a competing group emerges.

But wait! Is there another explanation for the drive toward division? I say it's not always about power; it can be about people's pressing need to be heard, to be affirmed, to be acknowledged. Some call it the need for significance, to know that 'I make a difference in this world. I have value. I am somebody.' The need to garner significance from the opinions of others can be so powerful, that anything else will be sacrificed to it. On the family front, a parent who becomes attached to his/her 'rightness' in dealing with the kids can destroy the couple's unity. This will put a strain on the marital relationship and on the children's emotional security. I've worked with such families, and, whether the parents are divorced or together, divisiveness is more common than one might think. Jesus says that unity rules, not division, and He prayed that for us, but do we respect it? If so, let us live it. - **Bob Kallus, Family Institute Director**



In *The Second Inaugural Address of President Abraham Lincoln*, the President observed that both North and South read the same Bible and pray to the same God. He said, "The prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully."

We might wonder how the irony of these words was heard by Lincoln's audience. Thinking about the way we do things today, how does this apply to us?

Jesus Prays for All Believers John, Chapter 17

²⁰ "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they all may be *one*, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be *one* in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²² And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be *one* just as We are *one*. ²³ I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in *one*, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me." [Bold italics added by B.K.]

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See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Christian_denominations_by_number_of_members

To see the staggering number of world denominations.



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Actual Bulletin Announcements

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"Don't let worry alone kill you off - let the Church help."

"For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs."