

A PRAYER FOR UNITY



“That they may all be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me”

(John 17:21)

These are words lifted from the Lord’s Prayer. This is not the Model Prayer but the high priestly prayer that Jesus offered to the Father shortly before his arrest, trial and crucifixion.

It is reported that at the funeral services for Dr. King in Atlanta, FBI agents, with their expected resourcefulness were chatting on their radios, “*find out what the dream is!*” A very important part of Dr. King’s dream was the unity of community. He once said, “We are bound in an inescapable network of mutuality; tied in a garment of destiny.” He said as well, “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

It occurred to me that as we prepare to commemorate the birthday of the patriarch of the civil rights movement that so much will be taking place surrounding unity on today and tomorrow. There will be marches for unity, readings for unity, and preaching for unity. Jesus taught us that we must first pray for unity. He models this in this epic passage. Perhaps this is the prayer that caused him such agony in the Garden of Gethsemane that sweat ran down His brow like drops of blood.

The initial object of the Lord’s Prayer is His relationship with the Father. Jesus prays passionately for the renewal of the pure and pristine glory He shared with the Father before the world began (See John 17:1-5). Interestingly, Jesus does not make a request (He doesn’t have to) He only expresses a deep desire. It is this unfathomable desire gushing up from the deep springs of His eternal and uninhibited communion with the Father that prompts Him to express in verse eleven, “Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom thou hast given me that they may be one, as we are one.” Jesus recognized the destructive, divisive power and potential of sin and ambition. He had already seen evidence of it as the disciples jockeyed for position and power.

However you or I commemorate Dr. King’s birthday and legacy, we must remember that we are God’s image bearers. The church and every child of God is “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). We are what the ancient Church fathers called the *imago deus*. Our commitment to unity, to inclusion and building community must reflect the heart of Christ for a broken world.

It is our commitment to these values that have compelled the decision to postpone our Annual Unity Celebration until the Year 2013. We want to make sure that as good stewards of the grace of God. We are determined to effectively and strategically leverage our vision and resources in order to plan a celebration here in West County worthy of Dr. King’s legacy and commensurate without ongoing commitment to being a local church with a global mission. To that end, I am excited about what I know God will do. As we move forward in faith, may our prayers mimic and model the Master’s. “That we may be one even as the Father in heaven is one.”

Dr. T.D. Stubblefield, Pastor-Teacher

Our Vision :

To move “*Forward in Faith*” emulating the work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, ministering to all people, exalting the Savior, equipping and supporting the members for ministry, and evangelizing the lost, while continuing to share our rich Christian and cultural heritage.

Our Mission:

To advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in accordance with Matthew 28:18-20, through preaching of the Gospel, consistent Christian living, personal evangelism, missionary endeavor, Christian education and the public worship of God.