

We must discover and emphasize the nature of our unity

MORAL PERSPECTIVES



REV. DAVID STRONG

I live in a place of great diversity. I experience a wide range of racial and cultural differences. I relate to people who are homeless or experience mental problems. I also work with professors, doctors and lawyers. This mix of people is a very stimulating environment.

We who live in this environment talk about diversity and how it can work for us. Even more important, we realize that we must discover and emphasize the nature of our unity.

I believe that Dennis Archer

was elected mayor of Detroit in part because he seems to be a person who can symbolize unity among diverse people. I believe that churches and other institutions in our society need to work toward a goal of unity.

What is happening in Europe is a terrible lesson of what we might face. Nationalism is rising in parts of Europe because political leaders stress a unity of the minorities. A narrow unity seems to provide security in a time of uncertainty.

Most religions have a unifying center. God is one. The universe is one. Natural life must be sustained because it is the work of the creator. Most religions emphasize love and peace at the center of life. However, we live in a

time when many religious leaders fail to lead us toward this critical unity.

I like to proclaim that we are all one. We are all connected in ways of which we are now only dimly aware. The economy of the world is becoming one integrated economy. The environment of the planet is one. Most religious teachings have not caught up with this reality of our oneness.

Some of the people who think about the future of the planet say that economics will be the driving force to demonstrate our oneness. Why will religion not take a lead

in creating unity among people and all creation?

I discovered something long ago. Religious leaders are often way behind their followers in this matter of unity. When I was a young boy, Roman Catholic priests and Protestant ministers pushed the thought of how different we were. The kids wanted to be in one community together. A few kids grew up thinking that everyone should be like them. Most of this came from religious schools, priests and pastors.

We cannot afford to allow our diversity to destroy our unity. Our

differences need to be stated in the context of our unity. This is a great challenge for our age. I hope that the younger generation will be free from some of the prejudices that destroy a sense of unity.

Our physical separation is a great barrier to our unity. Physical separation of people who are different breeds fear and misunderstanding. Prejudice is like weeds in the garden. Prejudice can grow unseen until the rooting out of it becomes painful.

Our greatest challenge is to acknowledge one God and one plan-

et earth and transfer this belief into unifying behavior. This is the religious challenge of our age. We can preach about love and God. Unless we behave as though this core unity affects people, we live out a lie. We must work at this challenge. Our future depends upon our commitment to the certainty that we are all one.

Rev. David Strong is pastor of Central United Methodist Church in Detroit. If you have a question or comment, call him at (313) 953-2047, mailbox number 1878, on a touch-tone phone.

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