

Thursday, May 19, 2010

Text: Genesis 11:1-9

Unity: Not At All Cost, But With Purpose

Key Verse: Then they said, "Come, let's build a great city for ourselves with a tower that reaches into the sky. This will make us famous and keep us from being scattered all over the world." Genesis 11:4 NLT

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Much ink has been spent on whether this story is a myth, or how much myth is in this story, or if there is history at all in this myth. I like to think of it as a true story and enjoy the condescending looks of some enlightened scholars about my theological naïveté.

Most people who have lived in a different culture with a different language at some point do not exactly bless those from Babel with their grandiose idea of building a tower in order to visit God, or to become like God or to do the first in order to become the last.

The fact is that sometimes human unity can be or become dangerous. When and wherever different groups of persons come together, they need a common goal to stay together. When this goal is reached – or lost in the process – unity becomes fragile. Small differences, which had passed to a secondary level during the pursuit of the main goal, arise again and break groups apart. The political and even ecclesiological history is full of examples.

God is not against unity among human beings. Jesus himself prayed for the unity of his disciples and promised that their unity would prove to the world the divinity of the Son and the love of the Father towards mankind (John 17:20-23). Unity itself is not the problem. But the goal this unity pursues can be a problem. Whenever human unity challenges the sovereignty of God, He is not pleased.

So, let's come together as Christians, not to demonstrate our strength to the world and their politicians, not to erase theological differences, not to water down biblical demands on ethical and moral standards. Rather, let's come together to experience and demonstrate the true love that sent the Son to this world so that we could become God's children.

