

Confession of Sin and Affirmation of Faith: An Invitation from the Stone-Campbell Dialogue*

Stone-Campbell Dialogue Group
June, 2000

Confession of Sin

Division in the body of Christ is sin — contrary to Christ's will
(John 17).

As Christians, we who are members of Churches of Christ, Christian Churches and Churches of Christ, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are part of a movement that was in its beginning given a special trust to promote the visible unity of Christ's church. This movement, begun in the early nineteenth century by leaders like Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell, has a great heritage of focusing on Christian unity.

Instead, we have been guilty of dividing the body of Christ in thought, word, and deed. Many of us have fortified the spirit of division and have failed to do what we should have done to prevent or overcome division.

This betrayal of our trust has impoverished the whole church of Christ and weakened its mission.

* This paper was presented at the meeting of the Stone-Campbell Dialogue in June, 2000 at Madison Church of Christ in Nashville Tennessee..

We have deeply wounded one another through misrepresentation, suspicion, mistrust, and defamation.

We, therefore, participants in the Stone-Campbell Dialogue, confess to God and to each other that we are guilty of the sin of division and of harboring and maintaining a spirit of division.

We now bring to God our brokenness and repent of the sin of division. We ask God for forgiveness. We ask God to heal us so that our Movement within Christ's church can more perfectly embody the unity to which we are called.

Assured of God's mercy and forgiveness, we pledge to move forward in the service of unity within this family of faith to benefit the whole church and the world.

An Affirmation of Faith

As disciples of Jesus Christ:

We confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and proclaim him risen Lord and Savior of the world.

In Christ's name and by his grace we accept the mission to proclaim the gospel to all the world and live in loving service to all people.

We rejoice in God, maker of heaven and earth, and in the covenant of love that binds us to God and one another.

Through baptism into Christ we enter into newness of life and are made one with the whole people of God.

By the gift of the Holy Spirit we are joined together in discipleship and in obedience to Christ.

At the table of the Lord, each week we celebrate with thanksgiving the saving acts and presence of Christ and proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Within the Body of Christ we receive the gifts of ministry and accept the authoritative witness of scripture.

In bonds of Christian faith we yield ourselves to God and one another that we may serve the One whose kingdom has no end.

Blessing, glory and honor be to God forever. Amen.

We invite all those of this heritage to join us in this confession and affirmation of faith, and to make them their own.

Signed:

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