



PLANNING A UNITED SERVICE FOR CHURCHES TOGETHER IN CORINTH

A drama sketch for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2013 – Is Christ Divided? (1 Cor: 1. 1-17)

- Church of Christ** Thank you for coming this evening to plan our united act of worship. I think this is the first time we have all done something like this together.
- Paulinists** I must say that for us in the Pauline Church it's difficult to share in worship with those whose doctrine may be deficient.
- Apollossians** I suppose you mean us.
- Paulinists** Well, there have been some serious concerns about your pneumatology.
- Cephasites** What on earth is 'new matology'? We haven't even got any OLD matology!
- Church of Christ** He means the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.
- Cephasites** Oh. Are you the ones who are still waiting for the Holy Spirit to come?
- Apollossians** That's all a big misunderstanding. It's true that in the beginning our dear founding Elder Apollos did have some points lacking in his preaching but Priscilla and Aquila sorted them out long ago.
- Paulinists** So why do you use such difficult words? Ordinary people can't understand them.
- Apollossians** You must realise that Apollos was a highly educated man. He'd studied in the best schools in Alexandria and spoke perfect Greek with a faultless accent.
- Paulinists** The Apostle Paul was well educated too, at the feet of the Rabbi Gamaliel in Jerusalem.
- Apollossians** Yes, I suppose that's part of the trouble. What with his frequent use of Jewish terms and his thick Cilician accent, it's a wonder the philosophers of Athens could understand him at all. Even so, they called him a seed picker!
- Cephasites** Old Father Cephas had an accent too, pure Galilean Aramaic. We reckon he spoke just the way Jesus did.
- Church of Christ** I'm glad one of you has mentioned Jesus; isn't it all really about following him? You may call yourselves Paulinists and Apollossians and Cephasites but the important thing is that we're all Christians, isn't it?

Paulinists I thought you'd say that. Even though you say "we're not a denomination, we're just Christians", I'm sure you've developed your own traditions, too. They didn't all start at the beginning.

Apollossians What do you mean?

Paulinists The traditions which really bother me are not the ancient ones but the new ones, especially any I might have started myself: once is an innovation, twice is a precedent, three times and "we've always done it this way!"

Church of Christ So let's get down to planning this service. Which hymnbook are we going to use?

Apollossians Ours is the finest collection of classical Greek hymns. Each one has been carefully examined to ensure that it is theologically correct and grammatically sound.

Paulinists Yes, and they sound awful! If any non-Christians hear you singing, they think somebody's died!

Cephasites We sing in Aramaic. Only one or two people have hymnbooks but most of us know all the hymns off by heart.

Paulinists But what about the Gentile Christians? Do they have to learn Aramaic in order to join in with Christian worship? That's getting too close to expecting them to become Jews before they can become Christians and we sorted that one out long ago.

Church of Christ We have a worship book full of songs in modern language with music of the present day.

Apollossians It might have been modern thirty years ago when it was written but popular culture moves at a pace so your modern songs aren't modern any more.

Paulinists What we need is a new start. Let's get together and write new words and new music for a new age when we worship all together and not just in our separate groups.

Cephasites Yes, let's do that... then nobody will know any of the hymns and we can all groan and mumble together! They say that the one sure thing about united Christian worship is that nobody will know all the hymns!

Apollossians Or even if we do manage to sing from the same hymn sheet, we are singing different tunes!

Church of Christ Let's not give up. If what we have in common is our faith in Jesus Christ and we are obeying his command to go into the world and make people his disciples, we must be able to build on the unity beneath our diversity.

Paulinists Why don't we each bring something distinctive about our Church as a gift which everybody can receive?

Cephasites Our cat brought us a present last night, something he thought was a precious gift: he laid a dead mouse on the kitchen mat! He couldn't understand why we threw it in the bin.

Paulinists Well if we're going to receive each other's precious gifts we'll need to learn how to appreciate a few dead mice too!