

# HEY!!

# WHY NOT??!!



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**A** few years ago I heard someone on the radio relate a hypothetical situation that has stayed with me for all these years. It went like this: If the Apostle Paul came to the borders of your town and asked someone, “Where is the church?” The response would most likely be something as follows: “Well are you looking for the Baptist Church?; the Methodist Church?; the Lutheran Church?; the Catholic Church?; the Episcopal Church?” The Apostle Paul may respond to that answer with, “No, I am looking for THE Church?” The response back to him may be something like, “Well, are you possibly looking for the non-denominational churches, we have a number of them. If you are looking for “spirit

filled” churches we have a few of them. Or are you looking for Evangelical Free churches?” etc. I think you are getting where I am going with this. In this simple little “parable” we have the state of the Body of Christ in today’s world. We speak and talk so much about unity. However, the very nature of the term “denomination” is a term used in the mathematical process known as “division.”

**W**e all know the prayer that Jesus prayed in John 17:20-23, *“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may 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. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be ONE, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in ONE; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”*

**N**otice how many times Jesus mentions the word “one.” He prayed it four times. This is His heart. This is the Father’s heart. Now, I realize that what I am saying is not new or that it has never been said before. However, I believe that we are in is so much of a “NOW” time for this. In November of 2012, there was a tremendous “line” drawn in the spirit realm. Notice, what I wrote - the line was drawn in the “spirit realm” which means that it was drawn not just for our nation but throughout all nations. The line was drawn to declare as Joshua declared in Joshua 20:15, *“...choose you this day whom ye will serve...”* Again, this is nothing new to us. Yet, I would like to take a closer look into the context of the scriptures that we just read from the Book of Joshua.

**W**e know the background of this scripture. Joshua spoke this after the people entered into the Promised Land and began to slowly but surely conquer all the “ites” that were in the land. Joshua was getting old and he knew that he was about to die. He is giving a farewell address that is inspired by the Lord (Joshua 24:2. *“Thus says the LORD God of Israel...”*) He has been with these

people from their days back in Egypt. He knows them all very well. He knew their fathers who were of the generation of those that rebelled and did not “pass over” the Jordan and into the Promised Land. He understood the tendencies of the people to fall back into idolatry and rebellion against the things of God. He recounts their history in Joshua 20:2-13.

**L**et’s continue and read Joshua 24:14-18

*“Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*

*So the people answered and said: “Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; for the LORD our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He is our God.”*

**J**oshua makes some very bold statements concerning commitment and such. I know we have all heard our pastors, teachers and leaders use these very scriptures to bring their church or ministry to full commitment to their church or ministry. Wait a minute!!! Did you “hear” what I just wrote!! We use these scriptures to bring those within our churches and ministries to bring them to a commitment in “serving our church or ministry.” That is not what Joshua is stating.

**A**s we look at these scriptures we know that He assembled all of Israel. That meant that He assembled all the tribes of Israel together in one place. Although they were of different tribes, they were one covenant people. Even though their tribal heritage may have been to that of Dan or Judah or Manasseh or any of the other tribes, their main identity was to be one covenant people of God. Joshua addressed them as such, together, as one people of the Lord. He did not go - tribe to tribe to tribe. Together he gave them an ultimatum. He told them to “...fear the Lord...” - honor, respect and reverence Yahweh. He told them to “...serve HIM...” - to serve and do all things unto Yahweh. He told them, “...put away the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River...” as well as to put away the gods of those who were in the land you just conquered. Then He declared, “...choose this day who you will serve.” The people responded with the overwhelming response of, “We also will serve the LORD, for He is our God.” WOW!!! This sounds like many of our church services, today.

**H**owever, in just a few years, as we read in the very next book of the history of the Israelites- the Book of Judges, they (the Israelites) did not keep their commitment. The sad commentary of the state of the Israelites is found written in the very last verse in the Book of Judges - “In those days [there was] no king in Israel: every man did [that which was] right in his own eyes.” What happened????!!!

**I** believe that this quite possibly could be the place in which the Body of Christ is headed in and may be headed towards. I believe the following may be said as a commentary concerning the Body of Christ today, “In these days [there is] no king in (insert the name of your town, city, state or country): the churches did [that which was] right in their own eyes.” Uh-oh!! I know I will not be getting a resounding, “Amen,” on that one. But please, indulge me just a little longer.

**J**oshua encouraged the people to be as one in serving and fearing the Lord. He encouraged them to not fall back into serving the gods which their fathers served when they were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the land that they had conquered and now dwell in. As I had mentioned previously, I believe a line had been drawn in the spirit realm a few months ago. I perceive this “line” to be a possible “crossing over point” in the Body of Christ’s path to its destiny. I see us now in a new “phase” or era, for lack of a better term. Some may call it a new paradigm. Whatever it may be called - things have changed. There has been a shift in the spirit realm. We have “crossed over that river” into a new day for the Body of Christ.

**T**his is where we should read and take careful consideration and listen to what Joshua expresses when he tells the people to *“no longer serve the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the river.”* I believe that the Lord is telling us not to serve the “god of church” that we are so familiar with. Whether we realize it or not, knowingly or unknowingly, we have served our churches and ministries in the guise and well meaning mindset, that in doing so we were serving God. We have become “tribal” in our thinking instead of being “One” as God’s Covenant People.

**W**e make declarations that the day is coming when Jew and Gentile will worship together as that “One New Man in Christ,” However, half of the equation (the Gentile believers) are not “as one” in themselves. Proof of that is found in the term - “denomination.” Paul declares in Galatians 3:28 - *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all **one** in Christ Jesus.”* And again in Colossians 3:11 - *“Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond [nor] free: but Christ [is] all, and in all.”* We can take this idea and extend it to also mean that there is to be no Methodist, no Baptist, no Non-denomination, no Full Gospel, no Presbyterian, no Catholic, no associations of Caucasian churches and ministers, no associations of Black churches and ministers, no associations of Hispanic churches and ministers, etc., in Christ - just those that are truly part of the Body of Christ through the Blood of Jesus that make up that aspect of the Gentile believers in the “One New man in Christ.”

**Y**ou see, we have come to the place where we think we are serving God as we serve the church we are a part of. In some ways, we are vicariously serving God through the church ministry. However, well meaning pastors and leaders have made the church the “god” we serve thinking that through the church institution we are serving God. This is not totally wrong. However, in doing this, each church has become a little “bubble church.” I am reminded of the Seinfeld episode that we have all heard of concerning “bubble boy.” Now I am not promoting Seinfeld nor was I ever really a fan of the show - so do not let that distract you. I am just using that as an example for our discussion. Let’s continue. “Bubble Boy” lived in a bubble, sealed off from the rest of the world, isolated so that he could not go out and nothing could come in because he was susceptible to disease. One day his bubble popped and ... the show ended there.

**M**any Churches today have become “Bubble Churches.” They have become independent of each other. Let’s face it. Every church has or strives, so hard to have a worship ministry with great musicians and singers. Every church has or strives, so hard to have a great youth ministry. Every church has or strives, so hard to have a great children’s program. Every church has or strives, so hard to have a food pantry. And the list goes on and on. We try to reach the needs of the poor by trying to attract the rich so they can fund our endeavors. We are all trying to meet the needs of the people that come to our churches for fear of losing them to some other church. We get caught into the “Mega-church” mentality. Therefore, each church becomes self-sufficient, independent and “isolated.” We live in our own little “bubble” which we call church. A type of “corporation” mentality rises up which breeds competition, pride, and even arrogance among and between churches, pastors and leadership which trickles down to the congregations.

**T**his kind of mentality has caused us to serve the “god of church” that our “church fathers served” on the other side of the “spiritual line of demarcation” that we crossed over a few months back. I believe that with all the secular geo-political changes and policies that have been established and continue to be instituted not just in America but throughout the world, Yahweh God, will allow and use these changes and policies to “pop” many of our “Church bubbles.” I believe God desires the “Church bubble” mentality to pop.

**L**et’s be real. No one person or one church assembly can do it all and do it all well. We try to do all. Most of the time we really only succeed in doing one or two of those things (ministries) well, while the other things (ministries) are “half-baked.” We try and try and try, yet with no real success or excellence. We are trying to build our churches, while God desires for us to build His Kingdom in that town or city or region. Maybe, just maybe, each church is called to do one thing well while the next one is called to do something else well, while the next one is called to do something else well and so on and so on and so on.

**L**et’s take an example of what I am discussing: Maybe, just maybe, I shepherd a group of people and I am called and gifted in teaching. Yet, I have a group of people in my sphere who desire to evangelize. Why not send them and support and help the ministry in our town that is called and gifted in evangelism. In doing this the Body of Christ can be involved in and experience excellence of ministry in both teaching and evangelism. In the same way, maybe, I shepherd a group of people and I am called and gifted in youth ministry. Yet I have a group of people who also feel a desire to intercede for our community and region. Why not send them and support and help the ministry in our town that is called and gifted in intercession and does this with excellence instead of me trying to struggle in starting something that I am not called or gifted in doing.

**O**f course we can all start our own evangelism ministry in our own church. Of course we can all pray and we can start an intercessory ministry within our own church. But do we do it all with excellence? Do we really see the success that we desire within our cities? We must get out of our own little bubble and allow for true unity within the Body of Christ. We would become as one Body of Christ within that city, region, and nation which we have been sent to and entrusted with by our God. Can you grasp the concept?

**W**e read about the account in Acts 2:42-47 where the early church that was in Jerusalem made a decision through the prompting of the Holy Spirit to “have all things in common.” Again, every church uses these scriptures and relates them to building up of their own church. However, if we truly read the account there was really only one church in the city of Jerusalem yet they met in different houses. I’m sure this did not mean that not all met in one house - after all we read that there were over 5000 believers - but rather they did meet in homes in the different neighborhoods or streets. Yet they still had the mentality of having all things in common and were as one. In verse 43 we read that the “*fear (of the Lord) came upon every soul.*” The very same “fear of the Lord” we read in our account in Joshua. What was the result - the result was that “*the Lord added to the church - daily.*” WOW!!

**T**hey were as one - everyone - as one. Yes, they met in various homes. However, they were as one - one mind, one heart, one spirit, one purpose. There were no denominations by homes or neighborhoods. They were as one “Body” with Jesus as the Head. When someone walked into the city and asked someone for the church, they knew exactly where and who to send them to because there was one church - not different denominations of that church. They were not just Christians (actually, they were not even called Christians yet) they were just true disciples -those that changed their lifestyle to that of the One they were following - true disciples of Jesus.

**U**nfortunately, down through time, the church had crossed over another river called “cultural and societal acceptance.” During the time of Constantine, the church became accepted into the culture and society. The problem was that instead of changing the culture, the culture changed them. The Body of Christ turned into looking more like the assemblies, practices and culture of Roman and Greek society along with their mythological gods, than that of the early Jerusalem Church. In place of people worshipping and seeking the Lord as One, they began to cause separation such as separation between the priests and the laity. They began to have wonderful oratory by well versed men who were linguistically talented and could, what we call today, “preach up a storm.” We became listeners listening about the Kingdom rather than seekers seeking after the Kingdom and our God. The church, slowly but surely, began to slip away from its roots and values.

**T**hen along came Luther and started what we call the “Reformation.” What it actually caused was another division. Even though Luther had some right ideas, and he exposed the evils and false doctrines of the time, it still caused a division and not a unity. Out of Lutheranism came more divisions - Calvinism, Anabaptists, etc. All these new “movements” continually were dividing the Body of Christ. However, in spite of all of these divisions, God still had a remnant that was in one accord with His Spirit and He did move. There were times of awakening and times of what we call, “revival.” However, the Body of Christ was still not “as One” as Jesus had prayed on His final night here on earth.

**A**nd here we are today. Things haven’t changed much. There are times and seasons of some change and movement and what we label as “revival.” Some men and women have been inspired by the Lord to take this challenge on and change things. They start off inspired by the Lord with correct motives. Unfortunately, most of the time, the force of “church gravity” ultimately seems to take over and pulls us all back to the “church as usual” mentality.

**T**he time is now. We have “crossed over the river.” It is time to put aside and no longer serve the “god of church” that our “church fathers” served on the other side. We are now on a new shore. The words of Joshua ring true to us today - “*choose this day who you will serve.*” The people in their exuberance declared with a resounding, “*The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.*” Joshua made the people covenant with him and God and set a “stone of remembrance” of this covenant for them to always see and remind them that the Lord had **HEARD** them and if they did not keep their vow it would mean that they had “*denied their God.*” Well, as we have discussed and learned from their history, the stone probably became overgrown with grass and weeds because the people “denied their God” and “did what was right in their own eyes.”

**T**oday, it may seem that many churches are failing. Maybe, God is “popping their church bubble.” Remember, not everything that is successful, including what we think are successful churches and ministries are successful because God is in it. The same is true concerning churches or ministries that may seem to be failing. It may not be the devil doing it. Maybe, God is popping the Church Bubble so that we can connect and become one Body of Christ.

**I**n the human Body if an air bubble is found in the circulatory system and travels to the brain it can cause a stroke or aneurism and even death. Doctors go in and send medication to try to pop the air bubble to save the body. God is doing the same, today. He is sending the Holy Spirit and “popping some Church Bubbles” to not just save the Body of Christ, but to cleanse and purify it so as to present to Jesus a Bride that is without spot or blemish.

**P**lease, understand that I am not one of those who are, “anti-church.” I believe very strongly in Godly authority through God appointed pastors and leaders. I also believe that God desires and is calling pastors and leaders who have the “attitude of heart” willing to hear what the spirit is saying and who are beginning to understand this aspect of the Body of Christ for this hour. He is calling those who are willing to persevere, to be bold and be courageous enough to “cross over.” I believe in the Body of Christ and the unity of different members that are fitly joined together that make up the Body.

**A**ll I am suggesting is that we to listen to what Paul is telling us in Ephesians 4:16 and 1Corinthians 12:14-20 and apply it to the entire Body of Christ and not just within the local churches. The local church that is called to be the hand should function in their call as the “hand.” They should stop trying to be the hand *and* the foot *and* the eye *and* the ear, etc. We need to become fitly joined with other local assemblies - one called to be the hand being fitly joined with the one that is called and functions with excellence, as the eye, being fitly joined with that one that is called and functions with excellence, as the ear, being fitly joined with one that is called and functions with excellence, as the foot, etc. Then we will not just be a “church” but we will be a full functioning “Body of Christ” with Jesus as our Head.

*Ephesians 4:16 - “From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”*

*1Corinthians 12:14-20 - “For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body [were] an eye, where [were] the hearing? If the whole [were] hearing, where [were] the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where [were] the body? But now [are they] many members, yet but one body.”*

**I** am well aware that what we are discussing may seem as though it is impossible or that I am living in a dream world and naïve about the “real world” of how church is and should be. I do not know how God will orchestrate all of this. In this, I am reminded of and encouraged by some familiar scriptures and quotes. They are as such:

*“(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, [even] God, who quickeneth the dead, and **calleth those things which be not as though they were.**” - Romans 4:17*

*“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of **things not seen.**” - Hebrews 11:1*

*And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and **your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:** - Acts 2:17 (ref. Joel 2:28)*

*“Some men see things as they are and say why - **I dream things that never were and say why not.**” - George Bernard Shaw*

**I** believe it is possible that very soon someone will walk into our cities and ask someone, “Where is the church?” The answer will be something like, “Well, we only have one church but they cover the entire city. Anywhere and everywhere you go you can’t miss it.”

Hey Why not??!!