

PRAYER BULLETIN #211, 07MAY2022

MAKING EFFORT TO KEEP THE UNITY

"Be completely humble and gentle;

be patient, bearing one another in love.

*Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through
the bond of peace."*

Ephesians 4:2,3

REFLECTION

There is a new church being launched in the USA. It is the Global Methodist Church which broke away from the United Methodist Church. This development is long-time coming. Over the years the United Methodist Church had been distracted and fractured by incessant bickering over many political and theological issues. The straw that broke the camel's back was the pressure asserted by the more vocal liberal wing of the denomination to accept LGBTQ and same sex marriage. The more conservative wing of the church decided that they have had enough, and they wanted out so that they could focus on letting the Church be the Church instead of wasting energy and time squabbling and being forced to accept agenda which goes against their conviction.

In many ways it is ironic that a denomination that calls itself "United Methodist" is more disunited than united.

But what has happened to the United Methodist Church is not unique. Sadly, throughout history, there have been many divisions in the Church. Some are major ones like the parting of ways between the Eastern Church and the Western Church; between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant denominations. But easily missed out are the myriads of church ruptures, usually caused by disagreement with church practices, irreconcilable relationship between certain leaders, party politics within the Church, and power grabs among members.

As early as the New Testament time there were visible disunity seen among certain groups of Christians. We read about squabbles in the Corinthian Church over the issues of spirituality, spiritual gifts and party affiliation. Against human tendency to be divisive and to "play politics" even in the local church, Paul advises the Ephesians to "make every effort to keep the unity." It is clear that unity does not just happen. We have to put in effort to foster unity. Apart from working hard at ensuring unity, we have to cultivate virtues which will make it easier for us to desire and work for unity.

Humility, gentleness, patience and love - these are the virtues we should acquire.

People who are known to be humble, gentle, patient and loving, will be less likely to be disruptive, self-centred and divisive. Aim to be such a person for God.

PRAYER

Almighty God, our heavenly Father. Forgive us if we have been divisive and troublesome instead of being people aiming for unity in our family, our churches and our country. Help us to grow in humility, gentleness, patience and love, so that we can be used by you to be instruments of peace, reconciliation and unity. Amen."

SUPPLICATION

- We offer thanksgiving to God for the relative peace we have enjoyed for more than 50 years in Singapore. We pray that our country will continue to be blessed by peace and growing prosperity. We say the same prayer for other countries as well.
- We lift up to God the leaders of churches in our country. Pray that God will watch over them and grant them wisdom, courage and resources to guide Christians under their care to be faithful and fruitful disciples of Christ.
- We call on God to intervene in the troubled spots of the world - Ukraine, Yemen, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Mali, Syria, Afghanistan, Sudan, Nigeria - for cessation of war and restoration of peace with justice.
- We bring before God those who are struggling in life because of illness, loss of jobs, stress, addiction to drugs and pornography, and broken relationship. Pray that God, in His mercy will heal them, provide for their needs, and give them a more fulfilling and wholesome life.

"Lord make me an instrument of thy peace,

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

where they is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

Where there is sadness, joy;

and all for thy mercy's sake.

- St. Francis

***If you need any prayer or pastoral care support, kindly
contact the pastoral care team via:***

Email: wecare@brmc.org.sg

Contact: 6592 4011