



## 1 corinthians 12.<sup>14-27</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>For the body is not one member, but many. <sup>15</sup>If the foot shall say, "Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body;" is it therefore not of the body? <sup>16</sup>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? <sup>17</sup>If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling?

<sup>18</sup>But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. <sup>19</sup>And if they were all one member, where *were* the body? <sup>20</sup>But now *are they* many members, yet but one body. <sup>21</sup>And the eye cannot say unto the hand, "I have no need of thee:" nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." <sup>22</sup>Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: <sup>23</sup>And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness. <sup>24</sup>For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked: <sup>25</sup>That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another. <sup>26</sup>And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

<sup>27</sup>Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Today's meditation might more accurately be called a jeremiad.

Upon returning from a month long tour across the southern part of the subcontinent of India, I was interested to learn of the little dust up over Dallin Oak's here-today-gone-tomorrow video (unfortunately, he says and does nothing in it to earn the title "Elder," "Apostle," or "President") in which he seemed to poopoo diversity and any notion of the Lord's responsibility for, interest in, or use of diversity within the body of Christ.

"Jesus did not pray that his followers would be diverse," he intones. "He prayed that they would be one..."

His declaration is so knuckleheaded on so many fronts that it is hard to know where to even begin a discussion. Hearing his unfortunate declaration concerning diversity, unity, and the relationship between them, my wife wondered out loud, "What does that even mean?"

While I have some sympathy for my wife's sense that the declaration was nonsensical and off kilter, I nevertheless find significance in it. It seems to me an example of the quiet part being spoken out loud. I would be willing to bet that this ugly and inciting aphorism has been bandying about the echo chambers of the church's highest leadership councils for some time. In this rarified, artificial, and vanilla environment of self-perpetuation devoid of self-reflection, it has almost certainly reverberated back and forth with little or no resistance. But when tried out and uttered outside in the real world where such declarations enter rather than bounce off actual human beings it landed with a deafening thud rather than exalted echoes.

Enter the public affairs wizards to attempt a white wash.

I have little doubt that this and many other ugly assertions that seek to justify a host of institutional errors and defame those perceived as threats to the status quo bounce around uninhibited inside the carefully maintained echo chambers of church leadership. I would be willing to bet that, while those “who seem to be somewhat”<sup>1</sup> lament the decrease in new members entering and the increase in old members exiting, within the leadership echo chambers there is a wizened, self-satisfied, and self-righteous nod of the head that this decrease in coming and increase in going is, in the end, inevitable—simply a matter of prophecy being fulfilled: an increasing and clearer demarcation between the goats and the sheep, the wheat and the tares.

Convenient echo, this, since it allows the shouters to continue the status quo and avoid the sort of change that we call repentance and associate with progression. Here we recall that it was this same man who asserted that the church felt no need to apologize for past church errors—probably as much a dig at, say, the Catholic Church and its willingness to admit past errors as belligerent refusal to confess sin and error and ask for forgiveness. We also call to mind the church’s passive, responsibility-avoiding “mistakes were made” rather than the active and accountable “we made mistakes” when addressing its twenty-year-long fraudulent and unethical investment practices that have recently come to light. Those who lead the church simply seem incapable and/ or unwilling to admit error and make godly confession of sin as God requires of disciples.<sup>2</sup>

Troubling, to say the least.

It is such maintenance of the status quo and avoidance of repentance and progression that Oak’s latest howl concerning diversity seems intent on setting in concrete. But through scripture, we can easily identify the sophistry of his strange assertion and that has likely bounced about and then escaped the self-perpetuating echo chambers of the church’s leading councils. We can call to mind scripture’s insight that it is God, Himself, who appreciates, creates, and utilizes diversity. If this passage is not a paean to diversity, I don’t know what is.

“Jesus did not pray that his followers would be diverse,” but one, you say? Well duh. Of course, Jesus does not pray for diversity within the church. There is no need! He created diversity; built diversity into it from the very beginning! He is pleased with diversity. Finds it necessary. Mixes and combines diverse elements to form a healthy whole. Diversity keeps the more “valued” and “honorable” members—those such as Oaks?—from thinking more of themselves than they ought and allows the less valued members to think more of themselves than they are otherwise inclined to do.

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”<sup>3</sup>

And you do know, don’t you, that diversity and unity are not mutually exclusive? That, in fact, they belong together, go hand in hand? All are profited; all are blessed through the diversity God makes and cherishes as part of His Kingdom. Diversity is fundamental to the advancement of the institutional church and its individual members.

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<sup>1</sup> See Galatians 2.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> According to one GA’s recent ridiculous assertion, one can replace the name of the church with “Jesus.” It is, then, disconcerting to witness mere humans fining Jesus for fraudulent financial practices.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 12.<sup>4-7</sup>

Oak's sophistry rejects divinely ordained diversity and falsely characterizes unity and oneness. But the sophistry goes further. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, it defames those who laud diversity, suggesting that they are somehow uninterested in and even adverse to the idea of unity and oneness in Christ when, in fact, those who laud diversity actually assert that a recognition and respect for diversity is a key to unity and oneness. The sophistry is more than gaslighting. It is itself divisive and inciting. If left to stand, it will do as much as anything to create disunity.

Those who seem to be somewhat in the church seem to become ever more reactionary and irrational in their defense of a status quo that is increasingly indefensible. Here's hoping they can be constrained in their irrational reactionary impulses by something more than a bunch of hired public affairs professionals. Here's hoping they can find their way to humble acknowledgement of imperfection and error that leads to godly repentance.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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