

KEEPING WITH UNITY

GBC EQUIPPING HOUR | MAY 24, 2020



Class 7 - Unity Goals & Challenges with *The Gospel Coalition*

PURPOSE: Local church and global church sustainability.

Introduction

Begun in 2005, at the onset of the “New Calvinism” movement, *The Gospel Coalition* (TGC) united many reformed evangelicals desiring a non-denominational gathering point to do outreach from. Fifteen years later it has stood the test of time, enlisting well-known pastors and writers, intent on invading the culture with the Bible’s amazing redemption story.

I. Unity Goals for Strengthening Churches

For I delivered to you as **of first importance** what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures..

-1 Corinthians 15:3

When **all things are subjected to him**, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, **that God may be all in all**.

-1 Corinthians 15:28

I in them and you in me, **that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know** that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

-John 17:23

A. Reading the Bible as One Redemption Narrative

1. In the Bible, all of the material between the fall of Adam and Eve to the final consummation have to do with gaining back that which was lost (e.g. the win-it-back themes of Job, Abraham, Joseph, Ruth, and David); Christ is the crown of all these.

2. TGC acknowledges the value of inductive studies, drawing specifics from the Bible –gems of wisdom here, doctrinal treasures there.
3. However, TGC mainly draws its strength from the big panoramic view of Scripture having to do with God’s majestic plan for the redemption of whole people groups, brought into *one divine covenant*.

B. Humble Approach to Gospel Delivery

1. As the political-cultural divide widens in the U.S., churches have huddled to their one favorite side.
2. Young-Calvinist churches, sitting on top of tomes of rich historical theology, can easily become callous to the needs of the unreached world.
3. TGC fights against this smug attitude, making gospel love a mandate and not an option. (“At one time we too were naked and lost...”).

C. Insightful, Discerning Writers on Outreach

1. *Rosaria Butterfield*. Her conversion story is amazing: steeped in the lesbian culture, the gospel brought her out of darkness, into the light of Christ. She biblically addresses identity politics.
2. *D.A. Carson* has long called for the church to return to her true reformed heritage: that is, to be reformed by the Truth of God’s Word.
3. *Joe Carter* gives informative rundowns of “nine things you need to know about _____” which keep you primed and ready to go for those cultural dialogues leading up to the gospel.
4. *Kevin DeYoung* has called a sometimes-wobbly church to holiness and doctrinal resolve, yet with compassion, winsomeness, and at times, humor.

5. *Julius Kim* -the new president of TGC who is carrying the torch for founders D.A. Carson and Tim Keller. Julius is humble; he doesn't want people to neglect their own local church for his Coalition. By the same token, he wants churches to be spiritual beneficiaries of his Coalition.

II. Unity Challenges Further Up Ahead

So then, as we have opportunity, let us **do good to everyone**, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

- Galatians 6:10

To the contrary, “**if your enemy is hungry**, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.”

- Romans 12:20

But **avoid foolish controversies**, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, **for they are unprofitable and worthless**.

- Titus 3:9

A. Harmonizing 'Peripheral Issues' with the Gospel

1. The Gospel and Social Justice.

- a. *When the church lives in smug insulation:* as when the watching public fails to see God's attribute of Omni-benevolence in and through the lavish giving of the gospel (cf. Luke 10:25-37).
- b. *When the church spreads herself too thin:* as when the depth and breadth of the soup kitchen effort replaces the depth and breadth of the gospel (cf. John 2:1-5).
- c. Does the gospel have a kind of *intrinsic*

adornment? Yes. See 1 Peter 3:1-4.

2. The Gospel and Kingdom Living.
 - a. On the one hand, the big picture of *the Kingdom* can be realized today in our renewed zeal for social justice, raising the quality of life for all God's image-bearers...
 - b. ..On the other hand, it would appear the N.T. missionaries put more emphasis on "repent and believe" than on sociology.
 - c. Not as easy as it looks: we cannot just pick and choose which parts of the Bible are favorable to our pet social causes. The Bible actually allows for a *sanctified form* of slavery, patriarchy, and totalitarian rule.

B. Giving Grace to an Ungracious Culture

1. Tribalism has become a breeding ground for animosity from both the young and the aged.
2. The Kingdom of grace is in a unique place.

Conclusion

"You are the light of the world. **A city set on a hill cannot be hidden..**"

- Matthew 5:14

Keeping with Unity Course Outline:

- The Ascent of Unity (Psalm 133)
- The Depth of Unity (John 17:20-23)
- The Body of Unity (Ephesians 4:1-16)
- Unity Goals & Challenges with *Ligonier Ministries*
- Unity Goals & Challenges with the *Southern Baptist Convention*
- Unity Goals & Challenges with *9 Marks Ministries & T4G*
- Unity Goals & Challenges with *The Gospel Coalition*