

# Reply to the topic “Apostolic Ministry and the Unity of the Church”

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All texts that speak of structural order and ministry of the Church have a strong emphasis on unity in their contents. This is because the design of the Church comes from eternity. It was made by the Trinity. In the new covenant there is no room for independent individuals, since the Church was designed by God, as part of his eternal plan of having one family into His likeness. If this is so, it is because God in his divinity is an example of unity and full functionality without having difficulties in equality.

In God's eternal plan, a clear model of this is the change of role existing between the Son and the Holy Spirit. We see Jesus submitting himself to the Father and the Holy Spirit. When Jesus is made Lord, the Holy Spirit submits to the Father and the Son. This is a wonderful example.

## **Levels and process of unity**

It is very difficult to advance in the levels of unity, if the guiding levels within the Church are not operating. Just as it is very hard to construct a building without the consent of an architect, the structural engineer, the builder or the specialists needed in such a construction.

It is utopian to think that God's plan will become a reality apart from what He prepared before the foundation of the world.

## **The Apostle and Unity**

If there is something transcendent in the apostolic ministry is the understanding of what the Church is. This has to be revealed by the Lord. For the Apostle bears the divine burden of design Jesus proclaimed for the Church, its edification and unity.

The Apostolic Ministry has received the revelation given by the Lord concerning the mystery of Christ and His body, the Church, as well as the responsibility of safeguarding the principles of the Kingdom of God.

If we remember that the Church is the only instrument of authority on earth, then we understand that when Jesus gave his disciples the task of discipling the nations, it has to be done on the basis that the Holy Spirit would teach them to do this, reflecting His divine essence here on earth.

In the words of Jesus when praying to the Father we see the dramatic request: "that all of them may be one, Father." John 17:21.

He also shows the result of this situation "...so that the world may believe that you have sent me."

All this reveals his love and the unparalleled unity of the Trinity in the pursuit of our redemption.

Therefore, one of the functions of the Apostles is to lead the Church to its divine origin, to the life of unity and thus encourage other ministries to do the same.

## **The responsibility for building unity**

Unity can only be built on the basis of ethics and mutual respect, becoming a reality through the recognition of the gift that God has given each one of us.

### **The building process**

In the process of building we need to understand that the apostolic ministry has the characteristics of service and authority (Diakonia and Episcopate). In these functions, it is plurality aligned with authority without which it would be difficult to build up the Church. Service and authority cannot be missing. Because responsibility without authority is a utopia and service without love sounds like something empty or hollow.

So the *koinonia* of the Apostles was and is essential if we are to achieve the desired end point of being the family that the Father longs to have. The apostle does not have an individualistic function but rather a function of body or team.

### **Thanks for the Kairos of God**

The wonder of the movement and outpouring of the Holy Spirit is that the Lord did not ask our permission to act. In His sovereign will, He did it and will continue doing it because it is written in his agenda. Acts 2:16-18

16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 "In the last days, God says,

I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy,

your young men will see visions,

your old men will dream dreams.

18 Even on my servants, both men and women,

I will pour out my Spirit in those days,

and they will prophesy.

So we rejoice because today the Holy Spirit is restoring what was distorted throughout history and, I think, we will continue to be surprised. What seems difficult is a matter of God's sovereignty. The divergent paths are experiencing a change in the geometry of God, because now we see how we are moving towards convergence.

Ephesians 2: 13-22

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.