



"When a man's knowledge is not in order, the more of it he has the greater will be his confusion."

—Herbert Spencer

29-Jan-21

The Same Mind, Judgment, and Speech (Part Three)

As we saw in Part Two, the apostle Paul pleads with the divided congregation in Corinth—and with us—to "all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" ([1 Corinthians 1:10](#)). Much of the rest of the epistle provides teaching that can help Christians to pursue this commonality of mind, judgment, and speech that the spirit of [the world](#) continually works to erode. While such sameness is not fully attainable while we are in the flesh due to our differing experiences, knowledge, and levels of [faith](#), Paul urged the Corinthians toward unity because they could have unified more closely than they had. Despite inherent human shortcomings, we must continue to strive for this most worthy of goals.

The critical question, though, is how? The basic principle, we learned, is for everyone to use and continue to pursue the mind of Christ. When we all see things as He sees them and respond accordingly, we will be of the same mind, judgment, and speech. Despite our differences in experience, knowledge, and faith, Christ is our commonality. As we pursue His image, we will have greater harmony with those seeking the same thing.

In his second epistle to them, Paul uses the phrase "[ambassadors for Christ](#)" ([II Corinthians 5:20](#)), a concept of which we may be generally aware yet not have seriously considered. It is a solemn responsibility, grounded on the third commandment: "You shall not take [or better, *bear*] the name of the LORD your [God](#) in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who [bears] His name in vain" ([Exodus 20:7](#); [Deuteronomy 5:11](#)). Paul bases his plea to the Corinthians on this principle of lordship: "Now I plead with you, brethren, *by the name of our Lord [Jesus Christ](#)*, that you all speak the same thing" (emphasis ours). If we are called by Christ's name (and thus bear it), we must exercise great caution in all we say and do lest our representation—our ambassadorship—of Him and His Kingdom bring dishonor to the name by which we are now called.

In the context of relations between countries, an ambassador conducts himself humbly and graciously as he advances his nation's interests rather than himself. He is a representative and a steward of his homeland and its leadership, and he feels the weighty responsibility of properly exemplifying them with everything he says and does. He helps non-citizens learn more about his country and its culture. An ambassador is circumspect in what words he uses and how they will be received, never needlessly offending ([I Corinthians 10:32](#)).

What we do and say and post and retort all reflect on our spiritual Kingdom, for good or ill. Consider that if the carnal Israelites angered God by murmuring *in their tents*, how much more accountable are spiritual Israelites for what they share *publicly*? With the tap of a finger, we can broadcast ill-fitting, discordant, or even defiling words around the globe—shameful words, ones that do not reflect well on our holy and awesome King.

The question is fanciful, yet still has merit: If Jesus Christ were to use social media, how closely would our posts and feeds resemble His (cf. [John 14:7](#), 9)? How well do our feeds, posts, and activities witness for Him and the culture of the Kingdom into which we have been graciously conveyed ([Colossians 1:13](#)) and of which we are now ambassadors?

The principle of ambassadorship undoubtedly applies in representing God to those outside the faith—non-citizens of our heavenly Kingdom. But it also pertains to interactions with others who are already of the same Kingdom,

whose knowledge and spiritual experiences, despite their differences, are much closer to our own. To them, we still serve as ambassadors through focusing on the truth we hold in common, remembering the innate tendency of knowledge to puff up and how incomplete our knowledge is. Also, even as an ambassador promotes his country's position without regard to his feelings or perspective, so must we practice subsuming our opinions and views to the overriding reality of our King and Kingdom, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of [peace](#)" ([Ephesians 4:3](#)).

Solomon says in [Proverbs 15:28](#), "The heart of the righteous studies how to answer." The righteous are those who, rather than letting their words pour out (see [Proverbs 29:11](#)), carefully—even prayerfully—evaluate what should be said and how. How many comments online give evidence of someone studying how to answer so that his remarks reflect the mind of Christ? We tend to value being right, or at least being heard, without regard to what God thinks. Representing Him accurately, though, involves a great deal more contemplation and self-restraint. It requires serious seeking—studying—of what He thinks on a subject, and the right answer rarely comes all at once. Nevertheless, that knowledge is worth far more than any earthly knowledge.

As we close, we return to the shores of Loch Ness and what my wife and I saw there, as related in Part One. The creature we saw that resembled a small brontosaurus with a long, curving neck was not alive. It was a molded-plastic replica about the size of a pickup, staged for tourists and their cameras.

That key piece of knowledge may change our entire mental picture of the scene. What other ideas or impressions do we hold that would change significantly with the clarification of a single detail? How forcefully should we be willing to defend the things we believe to be true that have little or nothing to do with the things of God? Truly, knowledge changes things. Even so, all earthly knowledge is trivial compared to the spiritual knowledge that God has made available to us, which is about knowing how to live as He lives.

- David C. Grabbe

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

From the Archives: Featured Article

[How to Conduct Ourselves as Ambassadors for Christ](#)

by David F. Maas

Do we have what it takes to be ambassadors of Jesus Christ? Do any of us know how an ambassador should behave? David Maas uses his experiences with ambassadors to provide some insight.

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