

*The Christian World View of
Christian Unity*

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What is the Coalition on Revival?

The Coalition on Revival is a network of evangelical leaders from every major denominational and theological perspective who share a vision for and a commitment to revival, renewal, and reformation in Church and society in America.

People of Anabaptist, Arminian, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Wesleyan denominational backgrounds are all represented among COR's leaders. Pre-, a-, and post-millennialists are cooperating with each other, sharing the exciting task of getting God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven insofar as that is possible between now and whenever Christ comes back to Earth. Charismatics and non-charismatics, covenant and dispensationalist theologians, have joined arm in arm in prayer and hard work to see revival, renewal, and reformation in the Christian Church and the American culture.

COR's vision is to see Christians everywhere doing all they can in the power of the Holy Spirit to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:5), in every aspect of life. Toward that end, we have developed a series of worldview documents that set forth what we believe are the fundamental and essential points of the total Christian world and life view. The COR worldview documents state what we believe are the biblical principles for all spheres of human life including theology, evangelism, discipleship, law, civil governments, economics, education, family, medicine, psychology and counseling, arts and media, business and professions, and science and technology. We believe that the COR worldview documents state where the entire Church must stand and what action it must take to accomplish its task in the remaining years of the Twentieth Century and on into the next century.

COR steering committee members from all walks of life were joined by many hundreds of other interested Christian scholars, pastors, and laymen in developing the COR documents during many series of workshops and conventions. Each document therefore, reflects input from theologians, philosophers, professionals in their respective fields, pastors, and lay Christians. We have sought to avoid denominational and theological bias in the documents; our aim has been to focus on principles so fundamental that we are convinced no Bible-believing Christian who studied the major questions related to each sphere of life would come to a contradictory conclusion.

COR views itself as a "Bible obedience, holiness movement" that crosses denominational and theological lines. The next step on its agenda, now that its basic documents are complete, is to disseminate them widely and to educate hundreds of thousands of Christians on how to make Christ Lord of absolutely every aspect of life. We plan to do that through publications, and through seminars, and training workshops in the major cities of America and Canada. COR will also work in cooperation with other Christian networking groups to help unify the pastors in major population centers around the vision of mobilizing their people to "Get God's will done in their city as it is in heaven" to whatever degree that is possible before the return of Christ. We believe America can be turned around and once again function as a Christian nation as it did in its earlier years. We believe that wherever the pastors of any city in the world join together in unity to make Christ Lord of every sphere of life, and, with Spirit led strategy, mobilize their people into a unified spiritual army; that city can and will become "a city set upon a hill" and be "a place where righteousness dwells."

About the 17 World View (Sphere) Documents

COR developed the 17 World View Documents, which set forth what we believe are fundamental and essential Biblical principles governing 17 major areas or *spheres* of human life and activity: law, government, economics, business and professions, education, art and media, medicine, science and technology, psychology and counseling, Christian unity, local and world evangelism, discipleship, helping the hurting, educating Christians about social and political moral issues, revitalizing Christian colleges and seminaries, marriage and the family, and pastoral renewal. These documents offer Christian leaders concise and comprehensive Biblical principles of how to apply the Truth of the Bible to all spheres of life and ministry. Each document includes short, creed-like statements of affirmation and denial that we believe state non-negotiable Biblical truths for that sphere of reality.

The 17 World View Documents were developed within 17 different committees made up of leaders with experience and expertise in the 17 different fields over an intensive three-year period of dialogue, critique, editing, and finally, a consensus conviction. Sixty of COR's National Steering Committee members with over 300 other theologians, pastors, lawyers, doctors, businessmen, and Christian workers made up the 17 committees. COR sends forth these documents to the Church at large with the prayer that they may be used by God's Spirit to get God's will done on earth, as it is in heaven—to whatever degree that is possible prior to the Return of Christ.

Preface

The Unity of Christ's Body the Church

Christians possess a unique oneness because we belong to Jesus Christ. Belonging to Him, we belong to one another. Just as there is “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5), so also there is only one Head and only one Body.

The unity of the redeemed is not only doctrinal and organizational but also relational and attitudinal. Our task is not to produce, but to acknowledge and express through relationships, the spiritual unity that already exists in Christ’s Body, the Church. We cannot fully understand and practice Christian unity so long as “we know in part, and we prophesy in part” and “we see in a mirror dimly.” We will only express our unity perfectly after “the perfect comes” (1 Corinthians 13:9,12,10). However, we do expect that the unity of the Spirit Christ prayed for in John 17 will include a unified commitment to living under the lordship of Christ as expressed in obedience to His inerrant, written Word, and a commitment to historic, orthodox doctrine. We should speedily tutor into a more healthy and Biblical view of Christianity and unity those with whom we unite who question these basic unifying essentials.

The Present Situation

For too long many Christians have accepted as normal, healthy, even “Biblical,” that Bible-believing churches, pastors, and Christian leaders ignore each other, fail to get personally acquainted and pray with each other, and seldom support each other or seek together God’s will for their region.

Would an observer at a typical local ministerial meeting ever suspect that these men were called on to lay down their lives for each other and share each other’s burdens? Would he suspect that they were engaged together in the same mighty, life-and-death battle of cosmic proportions that requires a united front in standing for God’s truth and righteousness? All too often, no. This deplorable situation must be changed.

We do not propose to disregard denominational or doctrinal distinctives, to unite all churches under one organizational umbrella, or to join all of a congregation’s life and ministry with other local churches. But our ministries must reflect the truth that we are all part of Christ’s one Body, serving the same Lord, indwelt by the same Holy Spirit, and laboring to accomplish the same Great Commission.

Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you...By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34,35). Therefore we must make nothing a requirement for fellowship that God has not required for our being accepted “in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:6).

Statements of Affirmation and Denial

Basis of Unity

1. We affirm that true Christian unity must have a doctrinal basis.

We deny that true Christian unity can be expressed and experienced apart from a doctrinal foundation.

2. We affirm that true Christian unity must be based on a doctrinal foundation that includes historic Christian doctrine as revealed in the inerrant Scriptures and expressed in the Apostles' Creed.

We deny that true Christian unity can be divorced from the foundational truths of the Christian faith.

Witness of Unity

3. We affirm that believers should strive to present a united and harmonious witness before a skeptical and critical world of unbelievers.

We deny that a united and harmonious witness can be assumed, and that disunity and division ought to be accommodated.

4. We affirm that endless divisions among Bible believers should be avoided.

We deny that divisions among Bible believers please God or benefit His work on earth.

5. We affirm that Christ's command for the witness of unity requires us to pursue ways to enjoy and employ our union with Christ for His glory.

We deny that obedience to this command of Christ can be claimed while we ignore active pursuit of ways to manifest this union we have in Christ.

Fellowship of Unity

6. We affirm that it is God's will for pastors to have fellowship with other Christian leaders who are committed to scriptural Christianity by getting acquainted, praying together, discussing current issues of concern, and developing a relationship of love, trust, and accountability.

We deny that it is scriptural for pastors and other Christian leaders to remain personally or emotionally aloof from other Bible-believing leaders.

7. We affirm that pastors and Christian leaders in any local city or county ought to seek God's will for what He wants done in their area, and that the normative scriptural pattern is for them to do this in fellowship rather than independently.

We deny that any one Bible-believing church or organization is capable of accomplishing all that God wills in any given area if other Bible-believing groups minister in that same area.

8. We affirm that it is wise and appropriate for God-fearing pastors and leaders of good reputation (Galatians 2:2) to form a local fellowship to give a united witness on what is harmful or what is wholesome and edifying in their locality.

We deny that any agency has the authority to prohibit any fellowship of Christian leaders to exercise the responsibility God has entrusted to them, and that they can rightly refuse their responsibility to work together against evil in any form.

9. We affirm that national or state-wide organizations that exist to promote evangelism or to solve social and political moral evils should seek to get the cooperation of local pastoral fellowships before proceeding with their programs locally.

We deny that any Christian and/or parachurch organization from a national or state-wide level should seek to solve local problems without receiving the approval and cooperation of existing pastoral fellowships.

A Call to Action in Christian Unity

General Actions

Because of the preceding convictions, we call upon all men and women who name Christ as their personal Savior and Lord to join us in:

1. examining earnestly these affirmations and denials in the light of God's Word to see if they are true, and informing us directly of those points in which they believe we have departed from Scripture or logic;
2. re-examining, and asking God to examine, our own theories and practices of Christian unity so that we may see where we are falling short;
3. confessing sins of division, disunity, and self-interest; asking forgiveness of God and those parties offended; repenting; making whatever restitution is necessary; and aggressively seeking unity;
4. praying for God to fill all of His people with the enabling power of the Holy Spirit in order that we may bring our personal lives and our theories and practice of Christian unity into closer conformity to His revealed will on a permanent and consistent basis;
5. seeking guidance from our brethren and local church authorities as to how we can mutually support and influence one another to make our practices of Christian unity glorifying to God.

Having dealt with our own personal sins and failures, and placing ourselves accountable to the Bible and to the brethren, we now commit ourselves to:

1. influencing any known Christians or Christian associations with whom we work to consider seriously our affirmations and denials with the goal of enlisting their responses;
2. influencing others who agree with our affirmations and denials to implement these proposals in their work toward Christian unity;
3. mobilizing and networking our Christian resources and working in concert with the other professional spheres both inside and outside COR, to see the behavior of the Body of Christ and our nation changed to approximate more closely the view of reality and morality presented to us in the Holy Scriptures;
4. determining how we can support and encourage one another in God's work and witness in this unbelieving world.

Specific Actions

To these ends, we make the following commitments:

1. issuing a call to Bible-believing pastors and leaders who can agree with these affirmations and denials to turn from independence and superficial relationships to serious heart fellowship, to seek God's will together, to present a united Christian front, and to hold each other accountable to live and minister in accord with Biblical standards;
2. establishing monthly prayer fellowships of pastors and Christian leaders in every city where they are willing to meet together to pray for each other, to share their hearts, to hold each other accountable for living and ministering Biblically, and to seek God's plan of action for their city;
3. explaining in writing our vision for local leaders' and ministers' fellowship groups and showing others how to start and nurture such groups to full effectiveness;
4. encouraging pastors within these fellowships to work to prevent and heal wounds in the Body—especially, when church members seek to change affiliation from one congregation to another, by checking with the staff of the previous church to see why they left and to ensure that every effort is made to resolve any conflict involved;
5. locating and using local denominational and interdenominational fellowships and other Christian organizations to facilitate such unity.