

# Unity

**By President  
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(1897–1988)**

First Counselor in the  
First Presidency



*Marion G. Romney was ordained an Apostle on October 11, 1951. He served as a member of the First Presidency from 1972 to 1985 and became President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles*

*on November 10, 1985. President Romney died on May 20, 1988, at the age of 90. The following talk was given in the April 1983 general conference.*

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**O**ne of the central themes of the gospel of Jesus Christ is unity. The scriptures teach that equality and oneness should prevail among members of the Church.

You will recall that on the night of the Last Supper, as the Savior met with His Apostles, He prayed that they might be one with Him, as He was one with the Father. He prayed not for them alone, “but for them also which [should] believe on [Him] through their word;

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:20–21).

Always the aim has been unity, oneness, and equality among the members of the

Church of Christ. As an example, I call your attention to the record of Enoch, how he and his people reached a state of unity when the rest of the world was at war.

“And there went forth a curse upon all people that fought against God;

“And from that time forth there were wars and bloodshed among them; but the Lord came and dwelt with his people, and they dwelt in righteousness.

“The fear of the Lord was upon all nations, so great was the glory of the Lord, which was upon his people. And the Lord blessed the land. . . .

“And the Lord called his people Zion.” Why? “*Because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them*” (Moses 7:15–18; italics added).

During His mortal ministry Jesus taught His disciples the same doctrine. After His Ascension, “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common” (Acts 4:31–32).

After the resurrected Savior’s ministry among the Nephites, they “were all



converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another.

*“And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift”* (4 Nephi 1:2–3; italics added).

Today we are the Church of Christ, and the Lord expects us to come to this same unity. He has said to *us*: “Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27).

Some members assume that one can be in full harmony with the spirit of the gospel, enjoy full fellowship in the Church, and at the same time be out of harmony with the leaders of the Church and the counsel and direction

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they give. Such a position is wholly inconsistent, because the guidance of this Church comes not alone from the written word but also from continuous revelation, and the Lord gives that revelation to the Church through His chosen prophet. It follows, therefore, that those who profess to accept the gospel and who at the same time criticize and refuse to follow the counsel of the prophet are assuming an indefensible position. Such a spirit leads to apostasy. It is not new. It was prevalent in the days of Jesus and in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith.

It is good to remember the great lesson the Savior taught the Nephites on this subject as He began His ministry among them. Said He:

“There shall be no disputations among you, as there have hitherto been; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine, as there have hitherto been.

“For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another” (3 Nephi 11:28–29).

There is but one way that we can be united, and that way is to seek the Lord and His righteousness (see 3 Nephi 13:33). Unity comes by following the light from above. It does not come out of the confusions below. While men depend upon their own wisdom and walk in their own way, without the guidance of the Lord they cannot live in unity. Neither can they come to unity by following uninspired men.

The way to unity is for us to learn the will of the Lord and then to do it. Until this basic principle is understood and observed, there will be



no unity and peace on the earth. The power of the Church for good in the world depends upon the extent to which we, the members thereof, observe this principle.

The major reason for the world's troubles today is that men are not seeking to know the will of the Lord and then to do it. Rather do they seek to solve their problems in their own wisdom and in their own way. The Lord, in the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, which He revealed as the preface to the book of His commandments, pointed this out and marked it as one of the causes of the calamities which He foresaw coming upon the inhabitants of the earth. Listen to this ringing declaration:

“They have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant;

“They seek not the Lord to establish his

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righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way” (D&C 1:15–16).

Brethren and sisters, do not rely upon the counsel of men nor trust in the arm of flesh (see D&C 1:19), but seek the Lord to establish His righteousness (see D&C 1:16).

We of this Church can come to a unity and a oneness which will give us strength beyond anything we have yet enjoyed if we will obtain a sounder understanding of the principles of the gospel and come to a unity in our interpretations of present world conditions and trends. This we can do by prayerful study of the Lord's word, including that given to us through the living prophet.

This is the way to come to a unity. If we will study the word of the Lord as it comes to us through the standard works and through the instructions of the living prophet and not harden our hearts, but humble ourselves and develop a real desire to understand its application to us in our own peculiar circumstances, and then ask the Lord in faith, believing that we shall receive (see D&C 18:18), all the while being diligent in keeping the commandments of the Lord, surely the path we should follow will be made known unto us, and we will be able to face the world as a solid unit.

Surely we need this unity and this strength in this day in which we live. We have a great opportunity, the opportunity to rise heavenward, to gain the spirit of the gospel as we have never enjoyed it before. This we can do by developing among us that unity required by the laws of the celestial kingdom. . . .

It is my conviction that, since we are engaged in the Lord's work, we can accomplish everything He requires us to do if we will but be united. ■

*Punctuation and capitalization standardized.*