

Life, Unity and Torah

As we continue our Summer of Life and thus relating aspects of Torah to Life, we come to one of the most challenging aspects both within the body of Messiah and even outside the body of Messiah, That challenge – Unity.

Outside of the body of Messiah our independent voice is challenged by factions, organizations and affiliations. Whether societal, political or familial there is division not seen since the civil war era in my opinion. Yet, the very pledge we make to the flag for which it is a symbol and thus a visual representation conveys that we are “one nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all” does not seem to be

While God is in the process of being removed from the fabric of our nation, division is flourishing.

Within the Body of Messiah, we are anything but what Sha'ul identifies...

1Co 12:12 For just as the body is one but has many parts; and all the parts of the body, though many, constitute one body; so it is with the Messiah.

1Co 12:13 For it was by one Spirit that we were all immersed into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free; and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

1Co 12:14 For indeed the body is not one part but many.

Sha'ul identifies the body as one, yet with many parts to it. He then goes through a further explanation as to how the body of Messiah is to function, relating it to the human body...

1Co 12:15 If the foot says, "I'm not a hand, so I'm not part of the body," that doesn't make it stop being part of the body.

1Co 12:16 And if the ear says, "I'm not an eye, so I'm not part of the body," that doesn't make it stop being part of the body.

1Co 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, how could it hear? If it were all hearing, how could it smell?

1Co 12:18 But as it is, God arranged each of the parts in the body exactly as he wanted them.

For Sha'ul identifies distinction, yet not at the expense of the Body of Messiah, the Messianic Community.

Today the body of Messiah is many parts, yet they are functioning contrary to what Sha'ul has outlined. They are functioning independently not in unison. Each with their own set of beliefs.

Is there a foundation?

You would think so, but in many ways it is not always obvious.

The unifying factor should be Yeshua, yet even in some instances, He is not even prominent in the discussion. Some denominations rarely speak of Yeshua whereas their focus is on social and lifestyle, being a good person rather than the pursuit of righteousness.

I could go on and on about what divides us as a body for there is a great deal, but I would rather focus on what is the issue that divides us and thus by identifying that issue encourage you to pursue the solution.

Even within Messianic Judaism we are not unified. There are at least five different organizations each offering a congregational component not to mention the many independent congregations that I would classify as unaffiliated.

We are a movement of Adonai, yet we are not functioning as one body.

I have included a link to a message that I shared back in October 2017 conveying the need as a movement to come together and unify as one voice.

http://www.shalommaine.com/sermon_notes_pdf/Measured_Magnitude_of_Messianic_Judaism.pdf

I talked with a few of the Rabbis in attendance and even at Messiah conference talked with one of the steering committee members and just as the division in the world is political in nature, so too the division within Messianic Judaism.

Whether the Church or Messianic Judaism we are not walking in the fullness of unity.

This dynamic of unity can be both evasive (tending to avoid) and elusive (difficult to find, catch, or achieve) yet not impossible to encounter. Unfortunately, today's message will not solve all of this nation's challenges, nor the challenges faced within the body of Messiah.

You would think that a unifying factor within the Body of Messiah would be God's Word? Unfortunately, think again. The Word of God, the Scriptures comprising the Tanakh and Brith Hadosah are divisive. Yet it is not the Word of God itself that causes the division but the manner by which God's Word is understood and utilized.

I have shared with you many times regarding conflict within Scripture, the issue is not God but us, more specifically our understanding of His Word.

Unity is talked about a great deal yet when it comes to truly seeking unity, it is more talk than action.

Do you unify for the sake of making peace, that is compromising?

Example – You know Shabbat is a day set apart by God and thus you honor Him on

this day. Yet in order to unify with other believers you are to set aside Shabbat and honor Adonai on Sunday. Thus you are expected to compromise because the majority believe one thing, while you in the minority believe something else.

You will see justifications, Scripture taken out of context and consensus views being used against your belief that is supported by Scripture conveyed in its context.

Thus the challenge of unity is evasive and elusive.

Consider the word Community - a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.

Thus within the word community is Unity.

Com = together

Thus a community is being together in unity.

And yet what I have shared with you regarding the body of Messiah is still a community for we do have a common factor that does bind us, Yeshua! Unfortunately, we all don't see eye to eye on how this common factor is to be expressed, embraced and thus lived.

An article published this week on JNS (Jewish News Syndicate) speaks to the issue of unity within the body of Messiah, specifically the church.

Jim Fletcher, an independent researcher and writer on evangelical issues has spent 15 years in Christian book publishing, conveys...

The Church Growth model has several unintended consequences, one of which is a "subtle" de-emphasis on the Bible.

The Church Growth model is a movement within [evangelical Christianity](#) which aims to grow churches based on research, sociology and analysis.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_Growth

For Fletcher observes...

"When I was growing up in the evangelical church—and I was born and raised Southern Baptist—we had congregational Bible reading, meaning a pastor would read scripture from the pulpit, and we would all follow along in our Bibles that we would bring to church," he relates.

"Now what they call Bible study is often a Bible study created by and for the lead pastor. So, for example, with Rick Warren, you have his famous book, The Purpose Driven Life. Well, [that] stepped in as a Bible-study substitute for actual Bible study.

Fletcher concludes...

The end result is you're not going to get a comprehensive view of scripture. You're not going to understand, in the context of what we're talking about, Jewish history,"

For the record here...you will not see me use someone else's book on Tuesday evening as the framework and foundation for any Bible Study we do. We started our Tuesday evening Bible Study in October 2014 and our emphasis has been Studying God's Word, not by processed

Another aspect of the Church Growth model is...

...such churches is they're nondenominational, drawing in people from many backgrounds. "You've got Baptists. You've got Assemblies of God. You've got Methodists. You've got some Presbyterians,"

Fletcher conveys...

"If you are a pastor and you want to teach about Israel, if you want to teach about Jewish history, if you want to teach about Hebrew scriptures, you're going to have people in that congregation who don't want to hear that, for whatever reason."

Fletcher concludes...

the pastor isn't going to want to offend them because a) once offended, they'll leave, and that reduces church coffers; and b) it goes against the Church Growth credo, which puts the congregants and their comfort first.

<https://www.jns.org/why-are-increasing-numbers-of-young-evangelicals-moving-away-from-israel/>

Fletcher doesn't lay all the blame on the Church Growth Movement. He says...

liberal theology has been a "huge problem" in the last 30 years, filtering down from pastors to congregations and Christian millennials. "Years ago, there was a Bible study developed in the United Methodist Church called 'Disciple Bible Study.' I was astonished when I went through these studies for the Old Testament at how much of it was relegated to myth. When you do that over time, especially in an entire denomination, you're going to wipe out any view that Jewish history is real.

Fletcher concludes...

"So if Jewish history isn't all true, then a Christian millennial today can say, 'Well, then why is the Jewish claim to the Land of Israel stronger than the Palestinians or anybody else?' And that is absolutely what's happened."

Those leaders that are Pro-Israel are retiring and dying off. They are not being succeeded by the next generation of Pastors who have the same belief, yet it is the next generation of Pastors that are defining how Israel is to be viewed.

Fletcher assesses...

"we have a serious education problem in the evangelical church. Too many people just don't know a lot about any given subject. They're smart, but they're starved for information because their pastor is up there hawking his latest book from the pulpit on

Sunday morning, instead of explaining serious issues."

There was a poll associated with the article that offered the following insight...

The poll does suggest a lack of basic knowledge about the Arab-Israeli conflict among young evangelicals. Even as it shows support for Israel dropping, more than 71 percent said "Jerusalem, in its entirety, should be the capital of the State of Israel, and its governance should not be shared with the Palestinians." Assuming a shift away from Israel, such a large number taking an anti-Palestinian position displays, at the very least, confusion on the subject.

What is happening in the body of Messiah as a result of these efforts?

Consider the McDonald's diet.

Back in 2004 ***Super Size Me***, an American [documentary film](#) directed by and starring [Morgan Spurlock](#), an American [independent filmmaker](#) is released. Spurlock's film follows a 30-day period from February 1 to March 2, 2003, during which he ate only [McDonald's food](#).

As a result, the then-32-year-old Spurlock gained 11.1 kilograms (24 lb), a 13% body mass increase, increased his [cholesterol](#) to 230 mg/dL (6.0 mmol/L), and experienced [mood swings](#), [sexual dysfunction](#), and fat accumulation in his liver. It took Spurlock fourteen months to lose all the weight gained from his experiment using a [vegan](#) diet supervised by his then-girlfriend, a chef who specializes in gourmet vegan dishes.

I would consider the diet by which many in the body of Messiah are consuming to be comparable to that of the McDonald's diet. Fast food for the soul. Quick to consume, and thus satisfies the immediate hunger yet offers little nourishing and sustaining impact.

What's the statement..."a moment on the lips, a lifetime on the hips."

This diet being consumed by the body of Messiah in general is just as dangerous to the body of Messiah as the McDonald's diet is to the human body.

Consider "Community First"

Yeshua addresses the Messianic Community seven times in Revelation.

Sha'ul addresses the Messianic Community as a body and its composition in his letters, and here identifying the composition of the community that is necessary, in order that it may thrive and thus flourish.

1Co 12:28 And God has placed in the Messianic Community first, emissaries; second, prophets; third, teachers; then those who work miracles; then those with gifts of healing; those with ability to help; those skilled in administration; and those who speak in various tongues.

The Remedy

Adonai said He would create a nation through Avraham...

Gen 12:2 I will make of you a great nation, I will bless you, and I will make your name great; and you are to be a blessing.

Through a single family...

Gen 17:7 "I am establishing my covenant between me and you, along with your descendants after you, generation after generation, as an everlasting covenant, to be God for you and for your descendants after you.

And through this Nation, Adonai would establish an order for which I shared with you last week. Through that order would come a means by which a people, a nation would have in common. A means by which community (together unified) would be established through Adonai.

Exo 19:3 Moshe went up to God, and Adonai called to him from the mountain: "Here is what you are to say to the household of Ya`akov, to tell the people of Isra'el:

Exo 19:4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

Exo 19:5 Now if you will pay careful attention to what I say and keep my covenant, then you will be my own treasure from among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine;

Exo 19:6 and you will be a kingdom of cohanim for me, a nation set apart.' These are the words you are to speak to the people of Isra'el."

Exo 19:7 Moshe came, summoned the leaders of the people and presented them with all these words which Adonai had ordered him to say.

Exo 19:8 All the people answered as one, "Everything Adonai has said, we will do." Moshe reported the words of the people to Adonai.

There was a common mind among the children of Isra'el at Sinai that established the foundation of Community.

Within this community there would be one way for Jew and Gentile, the foreigner who would reside in the land that is within the community, with the people of this covenant.

Num 15:14 If a foreigner stays with you—or whoever may be with you, through all your generations—and he wants to bring an offering made by fire as a fragrant aroma for Adonai, he is to do the same as you.

Num 15:15 For this community there will be the same law for you as for the foreigner living with you; this is a permanent regulation through all your generations; the foreigner is to be treated the same way before Adonai as yourselves.

This Community, the community of Isra'el is the very community by which Messiah would come. Messiah of Isra'el,

Mat 15:22 A woman from Kena`an who was living there came to him, pleading, "Sir,

have pity on me. Son of David! My daughter is cruelly held under the power of demons!"

Mat 15:23 But Yeshua did not say a word to her. Then his talmidim came to him and urged him, "Send her away, because she is following us and keeps pestering us with her crying."

Mat 15:24 He said, "**I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Isra'el.**"

Mat 15:25 But she came, fell at his feet and said, "Sir, help me!"

Mat 15:26 He answered, "It is not right to take the children's food and toss it to their pet dogs."

Mat 15:27 She said, "That is true, sir, but even the dogs eat the leftovers that fall from their master's table."

Mat 15:28 Then Yeshua answered her, "Lady, you are a person of great trust. Let your desire be granted." And her daughter was healed at that very moment.

Savior of the world.

Joh 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only and unique Son, so that everyone who trusts in him may have eternal life, instead of being utterly destroyed.

Joh 3:17 For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but rather so that through him, the world might be saved.

This is what should bind communities together within the body of Messiah. Yet so many within the body of Messiah are lacking knowledge, the very definition of ignorance, because they are being fed a McDonald's diet of Scripture. As one's body is deprived of the nutrients it so needs to function, it becomes weak and thus is unable to fend off all ailments and inflictions. So too our Spiritual nature, our New nature is malnourished from Spiritual fast food.

For the Word of God is what should unify believers, yet it is believers who are dividing themselves because of the Word of God.

Though Yeshua may divide a household and a family due to lack of trust in Him,

Luk 12:49 "I have come to set fire to the earth! And how I wish it were already kindled!

Luk 12:50 I have an immersion to undergo—how pressured I feel till it's over!

Luk 12:51 Do you think that I have come to bring peace in the Land? Not peace, I tell you, but division!

Luk 12:52 For from now on, a household of five will be divided, three against two, two against three.

Luk 12:53 Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

Yet has come to reconcile creation with Creator.

2Co 5:14 For the Messiah's love has hold of us, because we are convinced that one man died on behalf of all mankind (which implies that all mankind was already dead),
2Co 5:15 and that he died on behalf of all in order that those who live should not live any longer for themselves but for the one who on their behalf died and was raised.

2Co 5:16 So from now on, we do not look at anyone from a worldly viewpoint. Even if we once regarded the Messiah from a worldly viewpoint, we do so no longer.

2Co 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is united with the Messiah, he is a new creation—the old has passed; look, what has come is fresh and new!

2Co 5:18 And it is all from God, who through the Messiah has reconciled us to himself and has given us the work of that reconciliation,

2Co 5:19 which is that God in the Messiah was reconciling mankind to himself, not counting their sins against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Through reconciliation of Creator and creation, then He unifies us in His body.

Eph 2:11 Therefore, remember your former state: you Gentiles by birth—called the Uncircumcised by those who, merely because of an operation on their flesh, are called the Circumcised—

Eph 2:12 at that time had no Messiah. You were estranged from the national life of Isra'el. You were foreigners to the covenants embodying God's promise. You were in this world without hope and without God.

Eph 2:13 But now, you who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of the Messiah's blood.

Eph 2:14 For he himself is our shalom—he has made us both one and has broken down the m'chitzah which divided us

Eph 2:15 by destroying in his own body the enmity occasioned by the Torah, with its commands set forth in the form of ordinances. He did this in order to create in union with himself from the two groups a single new humanity and thus make shalom,

Eph 2:16 and in order to reconcile to God both in a single body by being executed on a stake as a criminal and thus in himself killing that enmity.

Notice this last verse and compare it to this...

Gen 2:18 Adonai, God, said, "It isn't good that the person should be alone. I will make for him a companion suitable for helping him."

Gen 2:21 Then God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the person; and while he was sleeping, he took one of his ribs and closed up the place from which he took it with flesh.

Gen 2:22 The rib which Adonai, God, had taken from the person, he made a woman-person; and he brought her to the man-person.

Gen 2:23 The man-person said, "At last! This is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh. She is to be called Woman [*Hebrew: ishah*], because she was taken out of

Man [*Hebrew: ish*]."

Gen 2:24 This is why a man is to leave his father and mother and stick with his wife, and they are to be one flesh.

The idea of two becoming one is a common reality within Adonai's plan and thus His purpose.

Thus, destroying that which divides. Unfortunately, the body of Messiah has resurrected that which once divided us and to this day divides us.

It will not be until we all find ourselves on the same page of understanding, letting Torah speak for itself as has been done through Messiah...

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 He was with God in the beginning.

Joh 1:3 All things came to be through him, and without him nothing made had being.

Joh 1:4 In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind.

Joh 1:14 The Word became a human being and lived with us, and we saw his Sh'khinah, the Sh'khinah of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

Yet we must perserve in the vision Adonai has given us as we come alongside those in the church world, being a light and an example without condeming or being judgmental, but rather demonstrating what we believe, walking in it and living by it.

It is His grace and truth that reconciles a community that is together but not unified. Yet, we must first be willing to set aside our own understanding and trust in Him.

Pro 3:1 My son, don't forget my teaching, keep my commands in your heart;

Pro 3:2 for they will add to you many days, years of life and peace.

Pro 3:3 Do not let grace and truth leave you—bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart.

Pro 3:4 Then you will win favor and esteem in the sight of God and of people.

Pro 3:5 Trust in Adonai with all your heart; do not rely on your own understanding.

Pro 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge him; then he will level your paths.

Pro 3:7 Don't be conceited about your own wisdom; but fear Adonai, and turn from evil.

Pro 3:8 This will bring health to your body and give strength to your bones.

Pro 3:9 Honor Adonai with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your income.

Pro 3:10 Then your granaries will be filled and your vats overflow with new wine.

Pro 3:11 My son, don't despise Adonai's discipline or resent his reproof;

Pro 3:12 for Adonai corrects those he loves like a father who delights in his son.

Pro 3:13 Happy the person who finds wisdom, the person who acquires understanding;

Pro 3:14 for her profit exceeds that of silver, gaining her is better than gold,

Pro 3:15 she is more precious than pearls—nothing you want can compare with her.

Pro 3:16 Long life is in her right hand, riches and honor in her left.

Pro 3:17 Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace.

Pro 3:18 She is a tree of life to those who grasp her; whoever holds fast to her will be made happy.