

In 1987 the Seekers released the song *I am Australian, We are one, but we are many And from all the lands on earth we come We share a dream and sing with one voice: I am, you are, we are Australian.*

We are one, but we are many they sang. Jesus prays for the disciples that they may be one, one in him.

The other day I read that there are two fundamentals of life.

1) to be an individual and 2) to learn to be a member of a, community.

[And According to thechangeblog.com/30-fundamentals-of-a-wonderful-life/](http://thechangeblog.com/30-fundamentals-of-a-wonderful-life/) #1 of a wonderful life is.....

1) Defining what success means to YOU:

Deciding what is important to you, and not wasting time chasing someone else's idea of success.

2) Strong work ethic: expecting great success without being willing to work hard for it is a recipe for mediocrity.

But It is the third one that is highlighted for me

3) Focus on adding value: stop focusing on what you *want*, and start thinking of how you can **add value** to other people.

Sounds like kingdom values! That is sort of what Jesus says – love one another

The whole prayer of Jesus in Jn 17 is that his disciples be one. This goes on from John 15 where Jesus talks about the vine and the branches, being connected and remaining in Christ.

Jesus prayer was that the ones close to him, would become a community, a congregation, a community, a church, a movement, a people who know themselves to be bound to God, and to each other and who would be, one – one body!

Community is fundamental for Jesus. I don't believe it was unintentional that Jesus, when asked to teach the disciples to pray, said, "When you pray, say, **Our** Father...**our** daily bread, **our**

trespasses. The whole of the Lords prayer is communal in nature, said by the individual, yet centered in community.

The gospel of Jesus Christ calls us to change the dominant thought of society from an emphasis on the individual, or the singular, to the plural, to be inclusive, to say **our** instead of **my**, **we** instead of **me**.

What would that look like if we really lived the command, to love one another as Jesus loves us? to love sacrificially, intentionally and whole heartedly?

So Jesus prays in John 17, for his disciples and us. He prays that he and God be one, that the disciples and he be one, and therefore one in God, as Paul reminds us, we are **one in Christ**, for in Christ Jesus, he says, there is neither male nor female, Jew or Greek, slave or free, for Christ died for all.

That is the benchmark for the church and for the world. That's the standard. God in Jesus, Jesus in God. We in Jesus and Jesus in us. Us in each other. All that adds up to Unity, unity in diversity.

But do we have to be all the same?

We are created in the image of God, but does that mean sameness? We only have to look around and see that this cant be. We are diverse, we are unique, we are individuals with different traditions, experience, shape and size, age and gender. Yet what is it that we have in common?

What is it that unites us if we are not all the same? It is our common identity in Christ.

Jesus is praying for his disciples (which means us). Were they one? Most likely not, in the common sense. There were 12 disciples at least and therefore 12 different people. Yet Jesus' prayer is that they be one.

So if we are all diverse, different, share unique gifts and talents, how might we be unified in a common cause?

By working independently? Or working and living in unity?

St Paul reminds us of the unity of the body in 1 Corth 12. there are many parts that make up the body and many functions, yet there is one body. Each part is vital to the rest and each part is part of the team.

We are a church with a common purpose. We are united in Christ and united by Christ. How we live that out, **is the exciting part.**

Our mission statement encourages us to remind ourselves that we follow the ways of Jesus, he is our model, coach and he is our way.

As a church we have been unified through past experiences, some of which have caused divisions. We have worked through hard times and testing times and also times of joy and celebration. There have been times of common and shared experiences. And through all this, the glue that has held us together is our common faith and unity in God, and faith in Jesus Christ.

Yet on a micro level we may not be as unified as Jesus would pray. We might not get on with everybody, all the time. We might form groups and factions and even disagree at times. These are the things that we hold in tension, Yet, (the optimist in me says) they are that which we can work on.

Sometimes disagreements and working through disagreements can be a catalyst to raise the bar of expectation and seek common goals. Our differences can become opportunities for growth and even conversion, reconciliation and wholeness.

One of the great things about the church is that its not our church. Sometimes we might think it is, we might have spent all our life in it, but its no more our church than it is some else's. it Jesus' church!

You know its God who has brought us all together, each and everyone of us, and each made in the image of God. It is the Holy Spirit which is poured out on all flesh, not just a select few.

Jesus' final prayer, his heart burst prayer is for unity. That his church, be one in him.

So let us celebrate our oneness, our uniqueness and even our diversity, all within the inclusiveness and welcoming embrace of God, with all the love of Christ and with all the power and energy of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus prays for his church, he prays for us. Today is an encouragement, and an affirmation of our life in God, our union with God in Christ. After all we are the Uniting Church, whose publicity campaign is called *uniting church uniting people*. How unifying is that.

We, we are the church- us, not the building, nor the institution, for we are the body, dispersed and diverse, but one body of and in Christ Jesus. The church is outside the building –currently locked out, dispersed – which sounds a bit like the NT church

We are one in Christ, for he has ordained it. And to quote from a modern day prophet/vocalist – Bobo from U2 -We are one, but we're not the same and yes, we get to carry each other. One!
One love... one life