

Inclusive Diversity or Exclusive Singularity – which is of God?

The Bible answer would be both. But it depends on the setting. For example, most are inclusive of a diversity of food from potatoes to potluck but they are exclusive of eating garbage. Most include a variety of friends for their children but would exclude criminals.

There are three major areas in which God operates: the world of nations, the church of Christians and the kingdom of heaven (to come). Let's consider the strategy of all three.

1. The World *“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”*

God's agenda to the world is salvation and His tool is the gospel of Christ. The gospel (good news) of forgiveness, pardon from judgment and acceptance with God through the Lord Jesus Christ is open to all nations. Salvation is inclusive of all continents, classes, cultures, conduct and color. One's religious upbringing, politics, gender, morality, finances, or sin does not exclude them from repenting and trusting the Lord Jesus. When saved they are equally forgiven, given the Spirit of God, and have His everlasting life.

The Corinthian church was taught about fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners, and told, *“such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”* Yes, the gospel invitation is the most inclusive, pluralistic and diverse offer in the world.

2. The Church *“the church of God at Corinth ... for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are”*

God's agenda with the church is edification in holiness. His tool is the Holy Spirit. The Lord's goal in salvation is to have a separated people for Him. The saved church, unlike the condemned world, is to be an exclusive place from sin and error so God alone is glorified. While believers can befriend the world and aren't to punish it (God will), yet *in the church* there is to be discipline of those practicing sin to maintain holiness unto God.

All believers are given the Holy Spirit. A transforming work begins to conform them alone into the image (likeness) of His only Son, Jesus Christ. The church has a single head – the Lord Jesus. It has a single power – the Holy Spirit. It has a single body of truth – one faith. It has a single authority on morals and truth – the Holy Scriptures. It is to have unanimity of mind, message and judgment under one Lord – Jesus Christ. It has one God and Father. And it has one hope for the future – the coming kingdom of heaven. Rather than staying a pluralistic diversity the church is to become a singular similarity.

3. The Kingdom *“the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD”*

God's agenda with the kingdom is peace on earth with justice for all. His tool is the return of Jesus as King. Only the righteous inherit the kingdom (God's church is to be a microcosm of this coming kingdom). It's where Christ alone will be the world king. It's where all nations shall come to the Lord Jesus alone for teaching and worship. The unrepentant, the unbeliever and the unrighteous are excluded from it. And it is because of this exclusion that there will be peace at last and glory unto God as the whole earth will be at rest. Like having peace in a marriage, all other woosers must be excluded.

{**Some Scriptures:** #1. **The World.** Mark 16:15 / Gal. 3:28 / Col. 3:11 / Rev. 5:9 / 1Cor. 6:9-11.
#2. **The Church.** 1Cor. 1:2, 3:17 / Acts 15:14 / Eph. 3:21 / 1Cor. 5:9-13 / Gal. 4:6 / Rom. 8:29 / Eph. 1:22,
23, 4:3-6,13 / 1Cor. 1:10. #3. **The Kingdom.** Zech. 14:9 / Rev. 19:11-21 / Isa. 2:1-4, 11:1-9 / Gal. 5:19-21
/ Eph. 5:5-6.}

Practical Application From Above: Same Sex Marriage

This is the teaching of Scripture concerning the sins of the Gentiles (nations). Their depraved sins are a result of God in wrath giving them up to a depraved mind. This is because they intentionally pushed God from their minds. Their impaired mind will cause them to self-destruct morally, physically, and spiritually without knowing it. (Romans 1)

Therefore, God has a day that He will judge the world. (Rom. 2:5 / Acts 17:31). But until that day the church is to take them the merciful gospel of salvation. We are not to punish the world or disassociate from them - yet we are not to be partakers of their sin. For if they repent and believe on the Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ, they too are called out of this world for His Name, Acts 15:14. They will be forgiven, saved from wrath and given a new mind. We must not be sidetracked in fighting for political issues of social change. A straight married couple without Christ will go to the same hell as a same sex married couple. The answer is the gospel conveyed by our good works and word, Philp. 2:15, 16. The solution is not a better world now but the coming kingdom tomorrow, Rev. 11:15.

However, in the church we *are* called to judge within. We must obey God rather than man, Acts 5:29. If the church is commanded to perform sinful marriages, or allow such in fellowship, or if we must personally marry the same sex, or change the truth of His Word – then we must be prepared to suffer persecution by His grace. The church is the pillar and ground of the truth as God’s holy house, 1Tim. 3:15. The 7 churches were exhorted by our Lord not to judge the corrupt world they were in but to judge themselves and repent of certain things so that they might please Him as His house and lamp stand.

1Cor. 5:9-13 puts it concisely:

:9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:
:10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.
:11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.
:12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?
:13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

In the world we are to be a pacifist but in God’s holy church we are to be an activist. In the church, Titus was told to exhort and rebuke with all authority. But in the world he was told not to fight or speak evil of men but be gentle unto all – for we used to live in sin too, and are only what we are because the Lord’s kindness came to us, Titus 2:15, 3:1-8.