

“The Mystery . . .”

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September 27, 2009

Read Ephesians 3:1-13

A mystery implies uncertainty. It conjures up question and vagueness. Our text speaks of mystery. It speaks of something that was previously unknown to the recipient but is now unveiled and open.

The earlier revelation from God spoke to the idea of inclusion and openness. There were means whereby some would conclude that all non-Jews were outside of God's purpose. Yet the revelation spoke to an inclusiveness and provision for those who believe, regardless as to gender and geography.

The mystery is how God in Christ unites all those who believe into one new man where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free, male nor female. This union contains significant diversity. It is diversity without schism, bigotry, or animosity.

What does this unified diversity look like? Perhaps like flowers. There is tremendous diversity as it relates to flowers both geographically and in their purpose. Which one is the best? Perhaps like stars or snowflakes or literary genre or personal tastes or preferences, there is enormous diversity within the created order of God. Why conflict, why tension, why schism, why animosity? . . . because of self-importance. We assume there is only one way that is right, and the right way is the one which is most natural to us. The church should be very diverse as it relates to culture, ethnicity and economy.

God's story is the oneness of all things in Christ. It is the fall that caused the conflict. Yet it is the cross that conquered the curse. The mystery is now how all things, in Christ, have become new (2 Cor. 5:17). The body of Christ, the Church, is His workmanship. This reconciliation is what God determined beforehand.

What does this mystery look like within the one body of Christ? Perhaps it means we determine what is and is not really important in describing who God is and what He has done. Perhaps it means we stop name calling and isolating ourselves from those who are something other than what we are? It is not for us to correct every thought that disagrees with who we are in the journey. In addition, we look past culture, ethnicity and economy.

As a part of Christ's one body, I find no compelling need to denounce those who disagree with my personal position on various ideas. Protecting the flock from wolves does not mean we reject genuine Christians who simply disagree with our present theological presuppositions.

What does this mean on a local level? First, there should be a spirit of tolerance toward those with whom we differ. Second, there is rightness in ministering to the larger body of Christ as fellow brothers and sisters. We need to look past culture, ethnicity and economy. Each of us gravitates toward those things we hold in common. Thus we often believe the same thing, do

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the same thing, look the same way and follow a pattern of morality and conduct that reflects our economical status. It is simply who we are. But let us not conclude or assume that what we are in all of our diversity is absolute or always right. Let us accept the diversity that exists within the one body of Christ and celebrate the differences rather than demand compliance. Oh may God teach us to enlarge our hearts so that the church in her community becomes an open manifestation of God's manifold wisdom. May the local church display within her immediate community the unfathomable riches of Christ by celebrating the overpowering diversity of His one body. This we ask and this we pray, Amen.

Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.