

What Is Convergence?

by Bishop Quintin Moore

To converge, according to Webster, simply means to move towards one point, to come together or to meet. For far to long the church has been divided and separated from one another.

"There are so many denominations and independent churches it is almost unbelievable, and yet there is only one Bible. It is evident that God has one thing to say to all people, one plan for our conduct and relationship with Him; but we have developed many churches and church groups to suit our own varying ways of interpreting what the Bible says. I have come to understand that none of us are 100 percent correct. Most of the things that separate us are very petty. Jesus told the Pharisees that they strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel. (*Matthew 23:24 KJV*). They had gotten so picky about little things that really did not make any difference; it prevented them from centering in on the main things that were truly vital."

"For it has been made clear to me, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions and wrangling and factions among you. What I mean is this, that each one of you [either] says, I belong to Paul, or I belong to Apollos, or I belong to Cephas (Peter), or I belong to Christ. Is Christ (the Messiah) divided into parts? Was Paul crucified on behalf of you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:11-13 AMP)

Christ is not divided into parts, and neither can His body be divided. In Matthew 12:24 He warned "...Any Kingdom that is divided against itself is being brought to desolation and laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will last or continue to stand." As members of the church, the body of Christ, we are powerless as long as we are filled with prejudice and disharmony. Agreement brings power.

The convergence movement is a coming together of the three major historic branches of the Church, the Sacramental, the Evangelical, and the Charismatic. Each of these expressions of the Church of Jesus Christ have been carefully nurtured by God and greatly used to establish and to expand the His work on earth. Our Lord's Prayer for his church was, "Father that they may be one even as we are one." (John 17:21) Ecclesiastes 4:12 tells us that, "a cord of three strands is not easily broken." When the three strands of God's Church are braided together there will be a new strength and unity in the church.

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. (1 Corinthians 12:4-7 NIV).

The Convergence Movement has identified the three living streams of the Church and invites God to bring them together as one complete and life-giving river. "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the Place where the Most High dwells" (Psalm 46:4). The Convergence Movement seeks to blend or merge the essential elements in the Christian faith represented historically in three

major streams of thought and practice: the Evangelical, the Charismatic and the Sacramental. These three streams each in their own way have defined the map of Christianity through the ages and will merge like a flood into the future to bring reconciliation and unleash God's powerful purpose for his Church. For the present time, Convergence Churches will be powerful symbols and agents of reconciliation and harmony of God's people.

EVANGELICAL (SCRIPTURE)

The Convergence Church has a high view of Holy Scripture; it believes that all things necessary for salvation and godly living are found in the Scriptures. It is committed to the faithful reading, studying, teaching, and preaching from the Scriptures; as well as believing that the Holy Scriptures are a wellspring for spiritual maturity. It believes in the necessity of a personal conversion and relationship with Jesus Christ. It believes in the priesthood of the every believer, a holy life, it is committed to evangelism and missions, and the importance of Spirit-anointed preaching as contrasted with mere ritual.

CHARISMATIC (SPIRIT)

The Convergence Church emphasizes the free expression of the gifts and Person of the Holy Spirit, especially in expressive praise and in signs and wonders. It believes that God's people have always been a spiritually gifted people. From the Apostles to the modern Church, Christians have been endowed with a power beyond themselves; a power from the Holy Spirit Himself. The Convergence Church not only allows, but also anticipates the Spirit's presence and working through this gifting in both worship and in daily acts of service.

SACRAMENTAL (SACRAMENT)

The Convergence Church practices the living historic rites of the Church, which are vital to worship and have been preserved and practiced throughout the ages. The sacraments of Holy Eucharist (the Lord's Supper) and Baptism are essential to the life of the church. It draws on the traditions and wisdom of the Historic Church and is unashamedly part of the Apostolic Church. At the center of its worship is the sacrament of Holy Eucharist (The Lord's Supper) in which it believes that grace is imparted by the real presence of Christ.

Since we each carry certain values forward from the church background from which we come, when it comes to building unity in the Church, we are open to each person. If we allow one another's differences of emphasis within our own sphere of ministry, yet work hard to find points of agreement, then we have the basis of true unity and cooperation in the Body of Christ. The respect of differences and belief that God is the author of these differences is central to our mutual success.

The particular blend of these historic streams is left to the leadership of each local church or diocese, but an acknowledgment of common values is necessary. A Convergence Church is not bound by any other body to determine its own unique way of blending these three streams. Each church must be sensitive to the local culture and to the specific needs of those whom it serves.

COMMON ELEMENTS OF CONVERGENCE CHURCHES:

"The Blending of the different practices of the different streams is evident, yet each church approaches convergence from its own views and emphases.

- "A restored dedication to the sacraments, especially the Lord's Table.
- "A love and embrace for the whole church and a desire to see increased unity and cooperation.
- "An interest in a harmonious mixture of structure; symbolism, biblical preaching and Spirit-led worship.
- "A comprehensive commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.
- "An identification and connection with the historical church, particularly the church of the first four centuries.

Respectfully,

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