

Song Story #11 – For Your Church

It was 1999. We had stepped out in faith and had been pursuing this vision of racial reconciliation and unity in the Body of Christ called Heart of the City Ministries for about three years already. It had been tough. I noticed the divisions in the Church much more than I ever had before when I'd worked at a large church for 11 years. I also noticed how little attention was given to this problem – even though the New Testament has so many strong passages of Scripture calling for radical unity amongst Christians. I was blessed to be a part of a core group of multi-ethnic pastors and para-church leaders who had been gathering together somewhat regularly and had worked to pull together some city-wide consultations and other meetings to try to see the Church connect more closely together. Some of these events were well attended and seemed hopeful. Others had small attendances and it just seemed that getting Church leaders to see the value of coming together was so very difficult. Our fears, our prejudices, our doctrinal differences, our competitiveness and pride, our incredible busyness, our complacency and our focus on our own thing, just make real Biblical unity in the Church really low on the priority list of most Church leaders and their congregants. I was about to attend another gathering led by this group of leaders that I feared was going to have a small turnout. I felt burdened and as I pondered this reality, I began to write this song. I wanted to write a congregational song that would bring this issue to a forefront and reflect the heart of God as expressed in Scripture for His Church.

I wrote this song with what I'd call a slow Gospel feel. I later showed it to Jodie Sellers at a retreat we were singing at and she embraced it as her own. Two years later, we recorded it on our With One Voice CD. Jodie did a powerful job of singing the lead on it and I feel like the music, along with Jodie's lead, fully expresses what's being said in the song. This song has become our most performed song for all these years and has also become a theme song for the national Christian organization, Love In the Name of Christ.

John 17, which we've quoted so many times, is a big influence on our ministry and on this song. Jesus prayed that we would be one as He and the Father are one, so that the world would know that He was indeed sent from the Father. It's such a radical prayer with such huge implications about how we reach the world with the Gospel. Tolerance as a best case scenario isn't even considered in this prayer. This is radical one-ness that Jesus prays for. The influence of that passage weaves its way in and out of this song.

As I thought about and prayed about our divisions and why they exist, I came across a verse in James 3:16 that says, "*Where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.*" I wonder how many of our church splits and ethnic divisions are caused by this reality? This passage found its way into the 2nd verse of this song.

In Matthew 12:25, Jesus said, “*Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.*” To me, this verse expresses such urgency about the divided state of the Church. As the days become more evil, our need to be purified and stand together in submission to the Lord is so vital. How will we stand in the last days against evil and persecution if we can’t stand together now?

In Revelation 3, the church of Laodicea is confronted for being spiritually lukewarm. They were in this state because they said that they were rich and were content and in need of nothing spiritually. But God said to them that they were actually wretched, naked, poor and blind spiritually. He told that church in that well-known verse, Revelation 3:20, that He was standing outside the door of their church and hearts and if they would just open the door, He would come in and fellowship with them. It’s remarkable that we can be the Church and still keep Jesus outside the door knocking to get in. This song is an attempt to acknowledge our great need and invite Jesus in.

You can watch a You Tube slide show of this song by clicking on this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xLjZFIYeAc> If you don’t already have the With One Voice CD, you can order it from us at www.heartofthecity.org or you can also download it from ITunes and most other mp3 sites.

For Your Church

Words and Music Dan Adler

1. Lord for Your Church, we come to pray.

Show us Your will. Teach us your way.

We’re so divided, we’ve gone astray.

Lord, for Your Church, we come to pray

In Jesus’ name, we’ve fought and made war,

built our own kingdoms, trampled the poor

One race hurts another that you suffered for.

Forgive us Lord Jesus! Restore us, Oh Lord!

Chorus: Come heal us, Lord Jesus! Unite us again!

Join us in love and truth and tear down the doctrines of men!

Then come heal our world through a Church that’s restored.

We hearing You knocking. We open the door.

2. Selfish ambition, envy and pride

bring us confusion, make us divide

With much friendly fire, we’ve wounded our own

Not working together, we struggle alone

But a house that's divided, You said will not stand.
A world that is dying, will not understand
That God loved the world and sent us His Son
‘til love is what rules us and we live as one.
(to Chorus)

3. If we would live united as one
We'd be a great army, led by the Son
Conquering evil, setting men free
An army of servants the whole world would see

Chorus: Come heal us, Lord Jesus! Unite us again!
Join us in love and truth and tear down the doctrines of men!
Then come heal our world through a Church that's restored.
We hearing You knocking. We open the door.

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