

# Divine Fusion

*Cultivating Godly Partnership for a Kingdom Purpose*

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Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them.

Matthew 18:19 & 20

## GROWTH MATTERS

Every successful organization is the result of good leadership and committed teamwork. Every organization that multiplies exponentially does so because of strategic partnerships. There comes a time when we have to choose between the determination to build a name for ourselves, and the opportunity to change the course of nations for eternity. At times, it is merely the difference between doing what feels good, and doing what is right.

One of the greatest challenges to a pastor is achieving sustained church growth. How do we catalyze it? What programs do we implement? And how do we remain Christ centered in the process? I know these challenges well because I have struggled with them myself over the years as a pastor and church planter. I also know the feelings of disappointment and failure when we don't experience the kind of growth results we had hoped. *This* is not about church growth in the traditional sense; (although growth will happen) it is about kingdom growth. No other effort, program or event energizes the body of Christ the way spiritual unity can.

It is not my intention to offend anyone or any particular church/ministry organization. On the other hand, I want to make you so uneasy with the present condition of the church that you become bent on making a difference. It is time we let go of our spiritual idiosyncrasies, and genuinely love one another as Christ intended. The result of this will be a far greater intensity in our pursuit to reach the lost than ever in history. I share this from experience. It is scriptural; and it works.

I love God's Word. It transcends all of our human differences, both natural and self-inflicted. But it is not my mission to dissect every doctrinal statement or argue theology points among denominations.

I *also* love God's church. It is the greatest networking opportunity on the earth. Not in terms of business or climbing the ladder of success, but to prepare the world to see Christ return in all His glory. It is my love for His church, which motivates me to work for her wholeness. Together, we can turn the world upside down for the kingdom, in ways never witnessed until now.

For the record, when I refer to denominations, that scope also includes "Independent" churches that claim no denominational affiliation. The Body needs to recognize that a "denomination" is formed as soon as we separate ourselves from the rest of the pack. This applies whether you represent one local church or an organization of thousands,

### **THE VISION – One Lord, One Body**

"I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father protect them by the power of your name – the name you gave me – so that they may be one as we are one." John 17:11

I envision a church that doesn't care who gets the credit for leading a lost soul to Christ. I see a group of believers who rejoice when the church down the street is busting at the seams, instead of criticizing their evangelistic methods. I see a community that senses the positive impact in schools, business and government when God's people finally realize we are not in competition with one another. I envision our Creator looking down on us and exclaiming to the heavenly host, "Finally, they've got it!!"

If you've ever stood in front of a pawnbroker's shop you have probably noticed in some form, a triangular group of three spheres. Few people realize the significant meaning of these decorative globes as they walk through the doors. Yet they serve as a very boisterous reminder that the odds are against you... "Two to one, you won't get it back."

In a world motivated by money and power, it seems the odds are stacked against those simply trying to survive. The marriage union is often broken because people get "tired" of each other. Infidelity results from "The grass is greener on the other side" point of view. Business partnerships are dissolved over disputes about who puts in the most hours. A church prospers until a petty disagreement turns into a power struggle. And, seemingly overnight, a congregation is split for all the wrong reasons. Sadly, the

majority of Christian denominations were birthed from disputes among God's people.

In the spirit realm things are supposed to be different from the world. Jesus said, "Where two or three come together in my name, there I am in the midst of them." And "Anything you ask in my name, it shall be done." Success doesn't require masses, but it demands good partnerships.

As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" and the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you."

1 Corinthians 12: 20-21

Regardless of how we nurture it, God's design for us is relational. He blesses those who work together. If we think we have no use for another part of the body, our thinking has been tainted by a world in pursuit of superficial success.

## **A SIMPLE STRATEGY**

Two are better than one... Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

It doesn't get any easier than this! We don't need to network with *every* church in our community. The practical aspect of such a thing does not presently exist. Unity is not about gathering the masses; it is the formula God has given His people to achieve a spiritual breakthrough.

It's as simple as creating a reciprocal, supportive relationship with another group of Christian believers. It is not rocket science; it *is* biblical. Find one other church in your community and commit to be a blessing to each other; to help each other grow the kingdom. When congregations experience cross-denominational dynamics, it ignites an entirely different dimension of church growth. It disarms many of the enemy's tactics to undermine individual churches. And when a community witnesses church-to-church edification, it is such a shock they can't help but take a closer look.

A supportive relationship is based on two simple ideas:

1. If we have something you need, we will share it with you.
2. If we *don't* have what you need, we will help you get it.

Share Resources – Pray for each other – Fellowship together – Encourage one another – Challenge each other to excel

## **THE DYNAMICS - 2:1 *Our Favor***

“One can put a thousand to flight, two can put ten thousand to flight.” Deuteronomy 32:30

Over the years, I've seen 2:1 ministry work in many ways. On an international scale, it is common to partner with a pastor/church who is indigenous to a culture. Churches with a world mission mentality release the blessings of the great commission through foreign soil. Stateside, a relationship with churches in another region can foster encouragement that is often a timely antidote for struggles common to all of us.

Locally however, the impact is raised to an entirely different level. It's usually easier for us to support something when it is at a safe distance, than when we view it as our competition. By forcing ourselves to overcome our insecurities, it enables us to finally go all out on our God-given mandate.

When you partner with another local congregation:

- Denominational walls are removed
- Leadership insecurity is overcome
- An environment for God to bring new revelation is created
- An example for the community in genuine love for one another is set
- Proximity makes for a more practical, ongoing relationship
- Your kingdom impact compounds over time
- The Body of Christ is more complete and God is glorified

## Confronting our Hypocrisy

Jesus tells us this is *how* we should pray:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...”

We say it. We pray it. And then we sabotage God’s will by going completely against what we know His will is. I have heard (and said) many times, that when we get to heaven, God is not going to send the Baptist to one section and the Pentecostals to another. So why are we so determined to isolate one another now?

In 2001 we were five years into a church plant when I sensed the Lord calling us out of our denomination to broaden our territory. He said, “Where I’m going to take you, the denomination will not go.”

This was not a hasty decision for me, nor was it easy. *Every* organization has strengths and weaknesses, but I was not resigning because of anything negative. I have the leadership in that denomination to thank for mentoring and teaching me to obey the voice of God; and that (obey His voice) is what I had to do. God granted us favor, and we were able to leave with a blessing. And we continue to have a healthy working relationship with the denomination today.

Something has to change. I am not saying (and I’m not thinking it either) that denominations must be dissolved. Nor do I encourage you to “pull out” of your denomination. On the contrary, diversity is our strength. But like gears in a precision built machine, when not synchronized and working together, the outcome can lead to dysfunction and even disaster.

### THE LINK

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:3-6

My goal is to encourage Christian unity at every opportunity I get. I believe it is the key to preparing the Bride of Christ for her wedding day. When I teach it at pastor's conferences, or even consult with a pastor one on one, the most common response/excuse I get is: "How do we know which church or denomination to partner with or support?"

Many Christians fear they will have to compromise their personal/denominational beliefs. Not so. But we must agree that as Christians, *we follow Christ and no other*. Yet our differences determine our personality and giftedness. By learning to appreciate and respect one another first, we can then learn from one another and help each other in our God-given task.

Years ago, the Lord gave me a vision, to be a bridge that connects Christian leaders and churches over implied boundaries to reach a greater harvest. I call it LINK. (Leadership to Influence the Nations for the Kingdom) For the first few years I felt the mission was overwhelming. How could we manage such an effort? The answer came in a dream in 2006. I was asked by a local church to speak and receive the Sunday offering. As I stood in the pulpit to invite the people to honor God with their giving I said, "As you give this morning, make your check payable to: *Two Churches, Working Together*. Shortly after I awoke, the Lord said to me, "You've been making it more complicated than it has to be."

One person cannot do it alone. It is not for one organization. It is for *every* pastor, *every* church and *every* Christian believer on the planet. It is not practical or doable for any one pastor to effectively network with every other pastor in a community, much less develop meaningful relationships with them all; but we *can* partner with one. By doing so, we form an alliance that instantly multiplies our impact for the kingdom.

### **We can stand solid on three basic truths:**

1. Jesus is the only way of salvation.
2. God's Word contains everything we need to know to prosper.
3. If we agree on 1 & 2, we can (and will) work through all of our differences.

*All roads do not lead to Christ, but you can get to Him from wherever you are.*

## A CALL to REPENTANCE

Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same manner you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Matthew 7:1

It is time to repent of a judgmental spirit towards our brothers and sisters in Christ. Jesus said, “everyone will know you are my disciples if you love one another.” We may not see eye to eye on some things, but we have to admit that none of us has all the answers. We should continue to grow in grace, and from revelation to revelation as long as we are on this earth. You see, the world gauges Christian love not on our good works, but how we treat each other. Until a sinner comes to Christ they are on the outside looking in. The question is: Do they respect what they see?

It is time to stop making wisecracks about the church/pastor down the street in hopes it will ease our insecurity and bring new tithe payers into our pews. We have to model unity for our congregations. Overall, the church has paid an enormous price to prove her theological arguments; boasting how each of us has discovered the most refined path to Christ. Our stubbornness has set us back tremendously in local evangelism over the years. We can make a difference. We have to.

PASTORS, yours is not an easy job. Without the church, this world would be in a much bigger mess than we can imagine. The local church is a training ground, a safe haven, and a base of operation for God’s people to carry out the work He has called each of us to do. And it is the vehicle by which the Holy Spirit speaks to His people corporately. I know how it feels to take every failed event, or “AWOL” church member personally. But Jesus said, “My yoke is easy, and my burden light.” – we were NEVER designed to die from stress related diseases.

One Sunday I overheard two parishioners talking. They were discussing various churches in the area when one mentioned the name of a pastor and congregation of nearly ten thousand people that was located only 20 minutes away. The other person had been in the community for years, but had no knowledge of that church’s existence. Soon after, in another conversation the name of Dr. Cho in Korea (pastor of the world’s largest congregation at that time) was mentioned. There were several people who did not recognize his name or accomplishments.

Through those conversations the Lord showed me that regardless of the size of my congregation, it was

small in comparison to the overall goal. I immediately stopped envying churches larger than mine. You can't impress God with the same achievements that impress man. His greatest concern is your obedience. And He will only reward you according to it.

## **JUST DO IT!**

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.

Colossians 3:12-15

Every time I teach at a pastor's conference or minister's association, I see those who get excited about strategies but never put it into practice. Don't procrastinate. I challenge you to grab hold of this hour of opportunity to shake the nations of this world for the kingdom of God. The United States Army has a slogan that refers to it as An ARMY of ONE. Our aim as fellow believers in Christ should be no less.

You may not be a pastor of a church, but you can still use these principles. The Word tells us we are all part of a royal priesthood. So don't underestimate your calling. You have neighbors and co-workers who attend other churches; you can share this and be a blessing to them as well.

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to direct you to one other local pastor or church.
- Ask him/her if they have any other local churches that they are working with.
- If so, find out the extent of their partnerships.
- Share the 2:1 Kingdom Strategy and that you would like to establish a partnership to help each other build the kingdom.
- Be creative in lending support to one another.
- Go public: One of the most liberating things I have ever experienced as a pastor was to regularly pray for God to bless other pastors and churches from my pulpit on Sunday morning.

This is not a “How-to” manual; this is a “*What-to*” manual! You are intelligent enough to let the Holy Spirit show you the “How”. The fact is, there are hundreds of other churches in your community who have the same goal to reach the lost as you do, and nearly every one of them feels like *they* are the only one in the trenches. There are pastors about to quit the ministry because they are tired and lack support. There are people hungry to find a solid community of Christian believers, and they’re confused because “Christians” have been stabbing each other in the back for centuries.

We live in a world that is saturated with every kind of religion you can imagine, all claiming to be the true way to eternal bliss. It is TIME for the Body of Christ to show the world how big she really is!!!!!!!

How we do it, is not so important as just doing it. MAKE THAT CALL!!!! We can re-attach the hands, arms, legs, eyes, and ears to give our savior a whole and spotless bride to return to.

## MEETING RESISTANCE

Without a doubt, this can be messy at times. For most traditional denominations, this thinking stretches us way out of our comfort zone. It’s almost an impossible task to just get churches from the SAME denomination to support each other! The biggest obstacle we often have to overcome, is trusting God to work and bless more through our unity than our division.

Originally, this is the spot I was going to include a list of Frequently Asked Questions. I have decided to eliminate this section, (though I continue to work on the list) since those who do not see this vision yet will argue no matter what; raising more questions for each one answered. I trust the Holy Spirit to bring clarity to those who give Him room.

**Here’s a final thought:** Suppose your best friend who was not a Christian came to you excited that a neighbor had just introduced him to Jesus Christ. He goes on to say that he joined a church right down the street from yours; a church who’s denomination is the very extreme of yours; a church who’s worship style is completely different and the pastor even teaches from one of those “modern” translations. Would you feel intimidated, angry, or betrayed? Would you find it difficult to refrain from making derogatory comments about the other church in order to share your friends joy? Could you praise God for the faithful soul who led him to Christ regardless of your differences?

It is time we stop making excuses for our stubbornness, and portray the love and compassion for one another that Jesus commands. We can NEVER miss the mark by showing too much grace. And we can NEVER underestimate the value of the human soul.

**Lord,** help us to no longer allow our differences to be our weakness. We repent of a judgmental and prideful spirit. Forgive us for being selfish and conceited. Remind us of Your grace and use us to show grace to others. Grant us the wisdom to find strength in our diversity, and to appreciate the uniqueness with which You have created us. Show us how massive Your kingdom is. Let Your glory shine through our unity; and let Christ be revealed through Your people.

AMEN