



Contemporary Comments

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"The Most Convincing Proof"

December 1, 2018

Texts: John 11:51, 52; Ephesians 2:13-16; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Ephesians 4:25-5:2; Romans 14:1-6; Acts 1:14

Nothing brings people together quite like a disaster. The catastrophic Camp Fire, which basically devastated the town of Paradise and killed over 85 people, also took out nearly 14,000 residences. Thousands of evacuees have been huddled in shelters and missing the comforts of home.

That's why several non-profits came together last Thursday to host a world-class Thanksgiving dinner for the survivors. Top chefs brought their culinary skills to Cal State-Chico to an event called "Thanksgiving Together," which was billed as "a chance to bring together and bless the community through the unifying and healing power of food."¹

One noted chef, José Andrés, said the Camp Fire is "a fire like no other fire in America. You feel for the people who had to go through it. We hope that plate of food gives them a sense that America cares for them." Another chef, Guy Fieri, adds, "When you notice this happening, you just gotta come and help. We need more coming together."

Fieri's last line captures this week's Sabbath school lesson titled, "The Most Convincing Proof." Unity in the church doesn't just happen through theoretical discussions or the work of a few committees. Genuine community occurs when God's people all recognize their common need of salvation by grace through faith. We are all homeless and need of divine love to shelter us from the storms of this world.

Heartfelt service toward others brings divided people together toward a common cause. Unselfish help toward others was the very nature of Christ and should compel us to live by the same mindset. And when we live to serve, we form a bond of fellowship with those in the church—even those with whom we may disagree.

Standing together in love and unity creates an impenetrable mission in the church and holds up convincing proof to the world that Christianity is more than a slogan. "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35, NKJV).

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1. nbcnews.com



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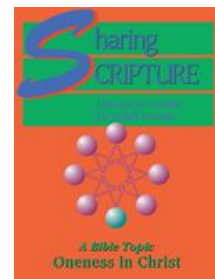
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~ For Reflection

Connecting: Imagine that your group is doing a weeklong lock-in in your church fellowship hall. Each person must bring one item to contribute to the group's living situation. What would you bring? List everyone's items on the whiteboard. With these items, could you survive a whole week together?

Sharing: Read Ephesians 2:13-16. We need to be reconciled to God first because:

1. Nothing else matters if we are not right with God.
2. When God united the Jews and Gentiles, it proved to the world that the hope of salvation could bond all humanity.
3. We can have a uniting influence on the world only if we're united with God first, through Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.
4. When we're reconciled to God, we have a spirit of peace that attracts others to want to be reconciled to God, too.
5. It would be a shame to help others receive salvation but lose it ourselves because we are not truly reconciled to God.
6. Other...

Applying: Think about unity in your church congregation and rate your church on the kind of witness it presents to the community. Be honest but kind in your assessment. If you see things that cause you concern, discuss how important the divisive issues are in the grand scheme of eternity.

Valuing: Think about unity in your church congregation and rate your church on the kind of witness it presents to the community. Be honest but kind in your assessment. If you see things that cause you concern, discuss how important the divisive issues are in the grand scheme of eternity.

About Us

Since 1988, the Center for Creative Ministry has been serving local church leaders and individuals around the world. Formerly known as the publishers of ABBA Newsletter and the Baby Boomer Ministries Resource Center, we have now broadened our generational/ministry focus to include our children. The Center for Creative Ministry took on its new name on June 1, 1996.

The Center for Creative Ministry, formerly Baby Boomer Ministries, is a privately funded and managed para-church ministry fully recognized by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. We are dedicated to supporting the local church in outreach and nurture ministries by providing resources, information, training, and consulting.

